Teaching a Literary Text: A Template

The goals of this process are to situate the text in the course, give the students enough background and confidence to perform a reading of the text, and then open up the text to new avenues of exploration.

1. Establish teaching and learning goals for the text
   a) Think about the features of the text that will be meaningful in the context of the course. (Questions: "Why are we reading this? What do you want them to notice?" Depending on the course, this could be genre characteristics, historical context, style, characterization, themes, motifs, etc.)
   b) Think about features of the text that will be difficult for at least some of the students. How will you address them? (This might be such things as difficult or old-fashioned vocabulary, exotic cultural concepts, or potentially undetected irony.)
   c) List what students will know or be able to do after reading and working with the text. (These are your learning goals for the text, which should be consistent with the overall learning goals of the course.)
2. Preview the text
   a) Provide contemporary, relevant references that highlight some aspect of the content they will read
   b) OR provide some form of summary, context, keywords, etc. that highlights what to read for, the "thread" of the first reading.
3. Read the text
   a) Trace the thread established in the preview. (This is only one way of reading the text. It is a starting point for the first reading.)
   b) Note details that that might conflict with this thread.
4. Re-read the text (what might be called "close reading")
   a) Find an alternative thread to trace to show them multiple modes of reading (sometimes this involves invoking a literary theory).
   b) Look for patterns, connections, contradictions, repetitions (motifs), juxtapositions, tropes and figures, etc. relevant to the themes of the text.
   c) Build a multi-faceted view of the text with many possible threads woven together.
5. Post-read "assessment"
   a) Ask students to choose a new thread to follow in more detail.
   b) Evaluate your learning goals through some appropriate mechanism (writing, comic book, movie trailer, discussion, presentation).