

Teacher's Perceptions of Literature Circle as a Technique to Teach Creative Writing using Literary Texts

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ABSTRACT: This paper highlights findings of a workshop based on responses given by practicing teachers on the use of Literature Circles (LC) as a technique to develop students' creative writing skills. It uncovers teaching techniques that have been used by teachers to promote and enhance students' writing skill using literature as a resource. The other issue initiated in this paper is the teachers' opinion on the suitability and practicality of applying Literature Circles in their classroom. The overall response shows that, prior to the workshop session, the teachers have used conventional methods in their classroom. Interestingly, it is discovered that they are very receptive of the idea of using the technique introduced in the workshop despite the challenges they may face in their classes.

KEYWORDS- creative writing, teacher, technique, perceptions, literary texts

I.INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of teaching literature on developing creative writing from teachers' perspectives. To best understand English literature and be involved and equipped of carrying out such critical work or analysis it is essential to first consider how texts are written before they come into being. Therefore, this study investigates to establish a theoretical approach to undergraduate creative writing development through teaching English literature. The study sample consists of fifty English language university teachers. This paper presents the results from teachers' questionnaire. Generally, the results show that teaching English literature can enhance students' creative writing of short stories, dramatic scenes and develop creative imagination. The results also reveal that students develop their language use when writing. Teaching literature can also improve better use of literary techniques, figures of speech and literary elements in creative writing. Literature as a subject of study trains every learner to develop love for reading and most important, develop reading and writing skills. The area of study was Anambra State, Nigeria. All the literature teachers in the state constituted the population. All the 320 male literature teachers and 680 randomly selected female teachers constituted the sample for the study. One research question, one hypothesis, a 15 item, duly validated and reliability tested researchers-developed questionnaire were used for the study. Mean values were used to analyzed the research question while t-test statistic was used to test the hypothesis. Findings revealed that literature teachers do not perceive literature circles, multimedia resources, think aloud amongst others to be effective teaching strategies. Based on the the findings, the researchers recommended that literature teachers should utilize all effective strategies in teaching to enhance students' learning. The following article examines two important components to aid students develop their English language oral skills and to enhance their understanding of literature and thinking skills. The first component is the use of the Question and Answer Relationship Format to help teachers elicit appropriate questioning and use strategies to understand literature and non-fictional text in a deeper fashion. The second component is the use of Literature Circles. This strategy, widely used in the United States, allows students to read fictional texts and discuss in depth all the components of a literary piece. Consequently, this technique also triggers students' oral skills while in the classroom. Such a method is ideal for English Language Learners from an intermediate to an advance and near proficient levels in any educational context. Thus, the authors also share insights from their own classroom experience while using the aforementioned techniques.[1,2]

II.DISCUSSION

Literary circles are the youth equivalent of adult book clubs, but with greater structure, expectations and rigor. The aim is to encourage thoughtful discussion and a love of reading among young people. The purpose of literary circles is "to enable students to practice and develop the skills and strategies of being a good reader". Literary circles were first conducted in 1982 by Karen Smith, an elementary school teacher in Phoenix, Arizona. Handed a box containing a strange novel by his fellow teacher, Karen takes it and quickly forgets it. Later that year, some of her fifth graders showed interest in reading novels and formed loose groups and started talking about them. Smith was amazed at the degree of commitment to their book and the complexity of their arguments. They received no outside help or guidance from teachers (Daniels, 1994). Literary circles developed into reading, research and discussion groups based on different groups of students reading different novels. These differ from traditional English instruction, where all students in a classroom often read a single "core" novel, asking the teacher for answers, meaning and literary analysis of the text. These focus on discussion, student reaction, free choice, and collaboration, and 'provide a way for students to engage in critical thinking and reflection' (Schlick Noe, 2004). A well-run literary circle emphasizes student choice. It is done over a long period of time as part of a balanced literacy program. Includes many structured and unstructured opportunities for student response and interpretation. It incorporates evaluation and evaluation, including self-assessment and numerous dissemination projects. Studies on literary circles are primarily by Harvey Daniels (1994, 2002, 2004), Katherine L. Schlick Noh (1995, 1999, 2001, 2003), Bonnie Campbell Hill (1995, 2001, 2003), and Nancy J. Johnson (1995, 1999, 2001); they are believed to provide most of the research and teacher resources on this approach to student selection and reading. However, Cathy Short and Catherine Mitchell Pierce (1990), Jerome Hirste, Cathy Short and Carolyn Burke (1988), Catherine Samway (1991), Susie Keegan and Karen Schrek (1991)) have conducted classroom-based research. I will study. This approach to reading and learning draws on some of the best practices and theory of collaborative learning and teaching scaffolding theory. Responsive criticism, independent reading, and student-centered learning form a large part of the theoretical underpinnings of the literary world. Literary circles should not be confused with the book discussion clubs that are popular in some circles today. While both book clubs and literary circles focus on discussing books in small group settings, book clubs have a more loosely structured agenda for discussion, usually involving topics such as thematic and symbolic analysis. It has nothing to do with literary analysis. Furthermore, literary circles are also the realm of the classroom at the primary and secondary education level, where various types of assessment (including self-assessments, observations, conferences) and evaluations (portfolios, projects, student deliverables) by both teachers and teachers included. student. Can be used by all grades and ability levels. Moreover, recent research has shown that peer collaboration has a positive effect on students' language arts learning and performance (Fall et al., 2000), enhances student learning, and also improves reading comprehension and content knowledge. (Klinger, Vaugn and Schumm, 1998), cited in Daniels, 2002).[3,4]

The characteristics of literary circles are (Daniels, 1994). Children choose their own reading material. Small temporary groups are formed based on book selection. Different groups read different books Groups meet on a regular and predictable schedule. Students use written or drawn notes to guide both reading and discussion. Discussion topics come from the students Group meetings are intended for open, natural conversation. A lot of the time the conversation will veer off on student topics and books, but it should eventually return to the novel. Teachers, along with students, act as facilitators, observers, listeners, and often as fellow readers. A teacher is not an instructor. Students are given roles and tasks to complete for each group meeting. Teachers need to model how students should progress in their roles and work. Assessment is by teacher observation and student self-assessment and should include an extension project. Playfulness and fun spread in the room. New groups are formed around new reading choices. Teachers can give discussion prompts to direct students' responses, such as "How does the setting affect the character?" "What are the alternative solutions to character conflicts in the text?"

III.RESULTS

Students begin their literary circle by attending a mini-lesson on how to participate in discussion groups. First, you may be given a role sheet to help you take reading notes and prepare for the discussion. Sticky notes (such as post-its) are often distributed by teachers to help students record their thoughts on text elements as they make the different pages of the book easily accessible. Clipboards help children use role sheets as groups use the floor space

for discussions. As group discussions evolve and improve, ideally, ultimately, role sheets should only be used to redirect the discussion when students get derailed. In fact, Daniels states that "the purpose of role sheets is to make them obsolete" (Daniels, 1994, p. 75). This is what he means by saying role sheets help students focus on assignments and focus on discussions. As students become more comfortable in groups and learn the level of discourse and reaction expected, ideally role sheets will not be needed at all. "In many classrooms, role sheets are abandoned as soon as groups are formed." Lively, text-driven, multifaceted discussion takes place" (Daniels, 1994, p. 75). Schlick Noh and Johnson point out that role sheets take focus and energy away from group discussions. "Students can learn collaborative and personal accountability strategies to make discussions work without the constraints of role sheets" (Shrik Noh and Johnson, 1999). However, most novice teachers may want to learn some of the structure of the literary circle and assign roles to students to help manage the classroom.[5,6]

Below is a list of roles that give each group member a thought task. Students share tasks in each group. Students rotate roles each time the group is reconvened for each session. This gives each student an opportunity to participate in their own role by the end of the literary circle "unit". Again, it would be ideal to eventually abolish roles, but many teachers choose to continue using them to support their group's task behaviors. One thing to keep in mind. Readers who are deeply immersed in a book and eager to talk about it with others may not need a role structure. Many teachers found the role to be restrictive for some students and could discourage them from participating in literary circles. Harvey Daniels has always intended it to serve as a temporary scaffold to support students in learning to talk about books in small groups.

= Discussion facilitator =

This role includes developing a list of possible questions for the group to discuss about the section of the novel that will be discussed at that meeting. Questions should be designed to encourage lively conversation and insight about the book. They should be open questions. The person in charge of this task encourages discussion by asking the group questions such as: Overall, the job is to keep the group talking and working through the assignments. Some questions students may ask are: "What was in your head when you read this sentence?" or "How did the main character change as a result of this incident?"

= Commentator =

This role involves finding some key pieces of text that are thought-provoking, funny, interesting, inspiring, or powerful. Citations are copied with appropriately cited page numbers. Students with this assignment can read the passages aloud by themselves or ask other members of the group to read them. Commentary and discussion are generated from these sentences. And also draw a part of the scene that identifies where the person was.

= Illustrator =

As the term suggests, this work involves drawing, sketching, or painting pictures, portraits, or scenes that relate to appropriate sections of the novel. Collages from magazines or images from the Internet can also be used. Students with this role will share artwork with the group and explain the text related to that art. Students who don't like to write often do well in this role. Pictures usually create interesting group conversations.

= Connector or reflector =

This role involves finding some key passages in the novel and connecting these passages to real life. Connections can be related to school, friends and family, home, community, movies, celebrities, media, etc. Students should be free to connect incidents and characters with other books they read. Of all the roles, this one often focuses on the most personal.

= Summarizer =

This role includes creating a brief summary of the readings assigned to the meeting of the day. The summary should include key ideas or events to remember, key characters, symbols, or other important highlights of the text. Good summaries are important in literary circles because they help peers get the big picture (DaLie, 2001). Also include important events and details.[7,8]

= Vocabulary enricher =

Also known as Word Master or Word Wizard, this role is to record the important words of the day's reading. Unusual words, unknown words, or words that stand out in some way are usually selected by students. Page numbers and definitions are also recorded. Students often do not find this role particularly exciting. However, it may be a suitable role for students who are still developing confidence in their English classes and text analysis.

= Travel tracer =

This role includes recording significant changes in action or location in the novel for the reading section. Tracking changes in place, time, and characters helps students track important changes within the novel. Art students are also attracted to this role, as artwork can also be incorporated into this role. The student's role is to describe each setting in detail using words and maps that describe the action.

= Investigator =

This role includes research work that requires finding background information on any topic related to the book. Historical, geographical, cultural, musical, or other information that helps readers engage with the novel is often researched and shared with the group. The research is informal in nature, providing small pieces of information for others to better understand the novel.

= Figurative language finder =

This role includes identifying various types of figurative language, including but not limited to similes, metaphors, personifications, exaggerations, and idioms. This can lead to a discussion about the author's technique, i.e. why the author chose to use that particular word or phrase, and whether they are effective. Such contextual identification can be more relevant and memorable than individual instruction of these types of tools by a teacher.

IV.CONCLUSION

Most teachers evaluate and evaluate what students do in literary circles. This may include one or more of the following ratings and ratings: self assessment Students should participate in monitoring and recording their response and engagement with their book and level of group participation as they attend each session. Formal checklists are often used for students to track their progress. Peer evaluation Students can also rate other members of the group during book talks. Similar to self-assessments, checklists and other rubrics can be structured. observation Teachers' continuous observation and active participation in group discussions are critical in assessing student progress both individually and collectively. Daniels (1994) argued that most assessments are formative and that students should be provided with timely feedback in order to learn more effectively. Observation can satisfy such formative criteria. conference Face-to-face conversations between students and teachers help "access, track and monitor student progress" (Daniels, 1994, p. 160). portfolio Collected and assembled in a meaningful way, the collection of student work provides an opportunity for reflection, discussion, response to the book, and display of the student's best work. Portfolios can take many forms, ranging from writing, art, video/audiotapes, study records, student journals, personal responses, etc. (Daniels, 1994). Expansion project Extension projects can take the form of numerous creative and artistic student products, from book jackets to visual media and printed materials. The project provides readers with "additional ways to revisit what they have read, continue the conversation (and discovery), and create more meaning" (Schlick Noe & Johnson, 1999). Sharing these projects with the whole group or class usually leads to more conversations about the book. student's work Response notes, role sheets, and other process materials compiled by students during literary circle meetings can also be assessed, providing a "rich source of insight" for teachers to assess progress and development (Daniels, 1994, p. 164). student progress. Wikis and blogs Students can blog on websites created by teachers. This blog not only facilitates conversation, it implements technology. The blog also provides teachers with a means to score and assess student comprehension. Blogs allow students to share ideas, read class notes, and give feedback to the class.[9,10]

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