

CREATING THE JOY OF READING LITERATURE TO BUILD STUDENTS' CHARACTER ON READING HOBBY

M. Sayid Wijaya

Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Raden Intan Lampung
sayidwijaya@gmail.com

Abstract: Learning to read means learning to open the window of the world. Students with higher frequency of reading will result better comprehension for that they store information more than students with lower frequency of reading. However, to construct students' awareness to read is a big deal. Most of them said that reading is boring. In this case, developing the joy of reading, especially reading literature works, is a crucial aspect to stimulate students' reading hobby as one the character values. To develop the joy of reading literature, initially, the teacher needs to design the appropriate classroom activities. After designing the activities, he needs to select suitable materials. Then, the selected activities and materials are applied in the classroom. Additionally, the teacher also designs reading activities for students out of the classroom. The result of the process of designing classroom activities, selecting materials, and its application to the classroom enhances students' interest in reading literature. Thus, those designs and processes are crucial in stimulating students' reading hobby. When students enjoy reading literature, their awareness to read is built up. In result, this will stimulate their reading awareness. The more they read, the more knowledge is stored in their memories.

Key words: reading literature, students' character, reading hobby

INTRODUCTION

Developing the joy of reading literature is designed for the teaching of reading accordance with what has been instructed in the classroom especially for the secondary school. Dorn and Soffos (2005: 66) stated that helping children develop the habit of reading is probably a teacher's most important goal, because reading is a tool for lifelong learning. It is teachers' responsibility to see that all the students become active, strategic readers and know what they need to do to be successful and enjoy the process (Balchowicz& Ogle, 2008: 166). While in

today's learning instruction, building students' character is a crucial issues to be implemented. One of the characters is reading hobby which is hard to be embedded into students' habit. In this case, the paper proposes the activities inside and outside the classroom teaching and learning activities to build students' character on reading hobby by developing the joy of reading literature. Here, the writer would like to create the joy of reading literature to build students' character on reading hobby by proposing the procedure and activities in learning instruction process and out of learning instruction process.

A. THEORETICAL BASIS

Learning to read is a perceiving print and processing that perception in such a way as to lead to comprehension. One will also find agreement that the print to be read is related to language and that the meaning to be comprehended is related to language (Finn, 1985:2). Reading is a particular instance of using language; learning to read is a particular instance of learning in general (Finn, 1985:2)

Reading is often referred to as a complex cognitive process (Pearson & Johnson, 1972:8). When we recognize the complexity of reading, its multiple purposes, and its many properties, it becomes clear that the cognitive processes that operate when we read must also be complex (Grabe, 2009:21). It means that reading is not just merely extracting information containing in a text, but it involves a complex properties which work when reading is occurring.

When students view reading as visualizing or making text-to-life connections, for example, this narrow perspective can impair deep comprehension. A good reader will automatically visualize and make connections but never in isolation from other comprehension strategies (Dorn and Soffos, 2005:2). Irwin (1991, as cited in Klingner *et.al.* 2007:8) describes five basic comprehension process that work together simultaneously and complement one another: microprocesses, integrative processes, macroprocesses, elaborative processes and metacognitive processes. In this case, reading comprehension is much more than readers' responses to text which includes a multicomponent and very complex process involving many interactions between readers and their prior knowledge.

Dorn & Soffos (2005:14) clarified comprehension as a complex process regulated by cognitive, emotional, perceptual, and social experiences. When individuals read, they apply a range of comprehending strategies to monitor and sustain their meaning. Comprehending involves interpreting and synthesizing ideas in ways that influence the reader's mind. In other words comprehension is grounded in a reader's ability to understand relationships, specifically how the parts come together to represent deeper meanings (Dorn & Soffos, 2005:22).

Concerning reading comprehension, good readers are taught to use a wide array of strategies to make sense of what they are reading. They are explicitly taught to make connections as they read by using their prior knowledge and visualizing, inferring and synthesizing skills. Good readers ask questions before they read, as they read, and after they read (Smith, 2007:66). Further Pearson and Johnson (1972:14) pointed out that it is almost tautological to say that the more reading ability one possesses, the better one will comprehend. If we talk about decoding ability the generalization becomes more sensible. It is difficult to comprehend if you cannot read the words on the page.

Difficulty faced by the readers in comprehending the text will make them slow readers. Those students will be trapped in the vicious circle shown in the Figure 1. (Nuttall, 1982:167).

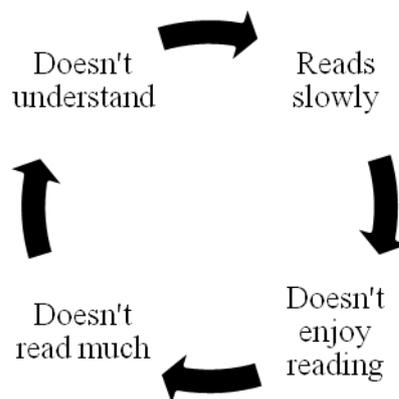


Figure 1. The vicious circle of the weak reader

Figure 1. illustrates that when students fail to understand the text, it will take them slow in reading the text. In this case they are seldom able to develop much interest in what he reads, let alone enjoyment. Since they get no pleasure from it,

they read as little as possible. Deprived of practice, he continues to find it difficult to understand what they read, so their reading rate does not increase. They remain slow reader: and so on (Nuttall, 1982:167). In this case, we need to help them to get out from that vicious circle.

To help them to get out from that vicious circle, creating supporting activities become a crucial turning back point in which students are engaged in a pleasure act of reading. In this case, determining what type of reading will raise students' interest in reading. Several literature reviews confirm that students' reading comprehension strategies are best learned, and most readily transferable, if they are acquired in a topic where the students possess substantial amounts of conceptual understanding. Being in a familiar content area fosters reading comprehension development (Guthrie, Schafer, Von Seeker, & Alban, 2000 in Guthrie *et.al.*, 2004:145). In this case, without extensive assistance from teachers, students in the bottom half of the achievement distribution in many schools may never gain these competencies and self-confidence (Guthrie *et.al.*, 2004:3). Therefore, meaning, learning, and pleasure are the ultimate goals of learning to read (Klinger *et.al.*, 2007:2).

In conjunction with the teaching of English as a foreign language, most teachers of English language find it difficult to teach reading. They have to determine whether the materials are suitable, the allocated time is enough, the students are interested in learning process, or the techniques used work well in the class. Further, reading instruction has been dominated too much in the past by teachers asking questions of students after they read stories. Recently, there have been several experiments having students in small groups learn to discuss stories, some with teachers as facilitators and some with students conducting their own discussions (Balchowicz& Ogle, 2008: 157). Cremin (2009: 44) stated that through literature we can experience other ways of looking at the world and savour the heightened use of language. Through reading poetry children can take pleasure in the patterns and rhythms and the evocative power of memorable language.

It is imperative to practice language within a context, and in the case of children, fairy tales and kid's stories in general are ideal. Stories improve general

linguistic ability because children begin to paraphrase and summarize. In addition, they actually get some cultural awareness through this gentle introduction to world literature (Maxom, 2009:285). In other words, providing students with their favorite stories will improve their linguistic ability.

In re-reading their favourites, students gain practice in decoding words and making deeper meanings from them. Narrative enables us all to shape and give meaning to experience, and can inspire and excite, giving children a powerful incentive to read and offering deep satisfaction. In line with this, Lazar (1993 in Hedgcock, 2009: 251) stated that literature can stimulate the imagination of our students ... and increase their emotional awareness. Such benefit can be maximized if the reading of literature is paired with opportunities for students to reflect on their reading through journaling, discussion, and formal literary analysis (Hirvela, 2004 in Hedgcock, 2009:252).

Further, in the classroom context, teachers must assist children in their choices of literature, seeking always to find what is meaningful for them whilst aiming also to give them rich variety (Bearne, 1995: 42). So, as teachers, we must extend what comes naturally to us – teaching with stories and pieces of literature that exemplify many forms of reading, so that students develop competence with multiple literacies (Balchowicz& Ogle, 2009:13).

When students begin to enjoy reading literature, they need to be prompted to practice reading pieces of literature so that activity becomes their habit. Dorn & Soffos (2006:66) pointed out that habits are developed through repeated practice over time and they are automatic reactions of the brain to engage in particular behaviors.

B. DESIGNING CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

One way to get children to want to learn to read is by incorporating reading instruction into activities children are already interested in (Finn, 1985:263). Further, creating an environment conducive to reading is a necessary step in developing motivated learners who read for pleasure and purpose (Dorn &Soffos, 2005: 65). More experienced teachers need to pick up new activities and vary old ones to keep themselves and their students motivated (Woodward, 2001:162).

Guided reading is direct teaching activity conducted by the teacher with the entire class or with a small group of children. It is also a type of direct instruction featured in literature groups, as students respond to questions designed to help them explore a book they are reading together. Both activities involve a more thorough examination of literature and encourage students to give deliberate thought to what they read. During these discussions, students share ideas and experiences that increase their understanding of what has been read or listened to (Popp, 2005: 107). Guided reading can be performed two or three times a week on instructionally appropriate materials (Fountas & Pinnel, 2001, Ogle, 2002 in Blachowicz & Ogle, 2008:51).

Guided reading generally involves working with students as they read a text, modeling good strategies, involving them in deep critical thinking, doing cross-textual work, and the like. Instructional strategies commonly used are directed reading-thinking activity (DR-TA) or reciprocal teaching (Blachowicz & Ogle, 2008:52).

C. SELECTING MATERIALS

In selecting material, the teacher are ought to consider interesting materials or teaching aids which prompt students' excitement. Good readers have preferences. The most obvious is that different readers like to read different things (Blachoiwcz & Ogle, 2008:6).

In fact, stories and poems in books still have a potent role to play in teaching children to read; nothing else offers such a rich experience of language, such an infectious demonstration of its power (Cermin, 2009: 44). Besides stories and poems, the teacher also can provide picture books. This is because picture books offer a unique opportunity to connect with the author's imaginary world (Wyse and Jones, 2008: 54).

Besides selecting material for literature in the classroom context, the teacher also needs to lead students selecting their own literature books. In this case, the teacher ought to provide students with guidelines in selecting interesting books, especially for reading literature out of classroom. Here are the example guidelines for selecting books taken from Dorn and Soffos (2005:72-73):

- Look at the pictures
- Favorite authors
- Favorite characters
- Series we like
- Recommendation from others
- Books we have heard or read about
- Interesting title
- Read the back
- Read the first page
- Read the book jacket
- Genres we like

Figure 2. Guidelines for Selecting Books

If the following guidelines are used to assist students select books out of the classroom. The teacher also should consider providing students literature books in the classroom. In providing students literature books, the following criteria (Nuttall, 1982:171-172) will help the teacher in selecting interesting and appropriate literature books for students.

The first criterion is appealing. The books must appeal to the intended readers, supplying what they really want (not just what they say they want). The appeal is greater if the book is attractive in appearance, well printed and with good colored illustration – more illustrations and bigger print for more elementary students (Nuttall, 1982:171).

The second criterion is that the books should be easy. It means that the language must be easier than that found in the current foreign language course book. We cannot expect students to read from choice, or to read fluently if the language is a struggle. Reading improvement comes from reading a lot of easy material (Nuttall 1982:171-172).

The third criterion proposed by Nuttall (1982:172) is short which means that the length of the book must not be intimidating. Elementary students, for instance, need short books that they can finish quickly without a sense of strain and without getting bored.

The last criterion is varied. In this case there must be a wide choice suiting the various needs of the readers in terms of content, language and intellectual maturity (Nuttall, 1982: 172).

D. CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Various approaches are available for teaching literature, one of which workshop approach. A workshop approach allows for differentiated instruction, providing a supportive context that allows teachers to meet the literacy needs of all students. The ultimate goal of a workshop approach is to enable learners to acquire strategies for self-regulating their learning (Dorn & Soffos, 2005: 66). Here are the components of workshop framework which can be applied in the classroom instruction:

1. Mini Lesson

A mini lesson is an explicit teaching demonstration that focuses on a critical component of the reading process such as comprehension strategy. It is generally 10-15 minutes long and includes an opportunity for students to engage in guided practice. Each workshop block begins with a whole-group mini-lesson; later in small-group instruction class works on independent or peer projects.

2. Small-group Instruction

In this activity, teacher selects a common text for a group of students with similar needs. Each student reads the entire text; the teacher circulates among the group, prompting the individual students to apply various comprehending strategies. During the group discussion, the teacher is a participant-observer allowing the students to assume the major responsibility for talking about the book (Dorn, French, and Jones, 1998 in Dorn and Soffos, 2005: 67).

3. Independent practice or working with peers

Independent activities can include teacher-assigned tasks, such as recording reflections in a reading log, creating a story map, analyzing characters, writing an author, etc. Peer projects can also be undertaken; these include such activities as buddy reading, paired reading, literature extensions, etc.

4. One-to-one or small-group conferences

The conferences can be either one-to-one or small-group, made up of two to four students with similar needs. Conference takes place while the rest of the class works on independent or peer project. A typical reading conference lasts approximately three minutes.

5. Share time

During the share time, generally around ten minutes long, the students meet with the teacher in a large circle for a whole group discussion. Share time provides a social context for students to share their work with the teacher and their peer.

E. DESIGNING OUT OF CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

These activities are assigned to the students within certain period out of the classroom and the result will be reported in the classroom. Balchowicz & Ogle (2009: 157) suggested below activities to be assigned to the students by considering the condition of the students and the comfort of the teacher.

1. Group Books Shared Inquiry

The basis of this model is ongoing discussion group with two volunteer leaders. The group selects the book to be read each month (or periodically), and the leaders develop a series of questions that will guide the discussion. These questions follow a particular format. Two or three rich interpretative questions for which there is no clear answer are the

keys. Once the group leaders determine what they think will provoke the best discussion, they then develop a set of follow-up questions for each of the two or three more general questions. Each member agrees to read the book to be talked about prior to coming to the group. During the actual discussion time, leaders call on participants to respond to the guiding questions. All answers need to be grounded in the text itself, not in other readings, deeper knowledge of the author or situation, or the speakers' own experience (Balchowicz& Ogle, 2009: 157).

2. Book Clubs

As it was cited by Balchowicz& Ogle (2009: 160), Raphael and McMahon have formed 'book clubs' that involves students making reading choices from a number of selections on a general theme. The teacher selects three or four books representing a variety of interest and reading levels within the theme units that the class exploring over some weeks of time. The students preview the books and then write down their top choices. The teacher then divides the class into "clubs" based on the books the children selected. Periodically, the children come together in their book club groups to discuss their novels.

3. Grand Conversations

In grand conversations there are no real leaders, just a group of peers talking. Therefore, some teachers have chosen to model this more unstructured form of conversation about a txt. Some have had real success putting students right into peer-led groups with the purpose of talking about a shared reading experience. With students in the leadership role they can more easily explore their own feelings interpretations, and questions. The teacher usually is part of the group and servers as a facilitator to keep the group focused. However, we have found that for these "talking groups" to be successful in most classrooms there need to be some ground rules and some guidance in the kinds of questions that are asked. For children who have never talked with a group about their

reading and responses, scaffolding can be very useful (Balchowicz & Ogle, 2009: 159).

4. Literature Circle

Literature circle is developed by Daniels and Bizar (1999). Each child in a literature circle is assigned one role for each discussion period. Each child uses a guiding worksheet to prepare for this role. Students take different roles for different discussion days, so all learn to look for vocabulary, all learn to develop questions and serve as Discussion Director, and so forth. In this form of discussion, students all read the same book and share their responses to it. Here is an example of a guiding worksheet in a literature circle (Balchowicz & Ogle, 2009:163):

Passage Master

Name _____

Group _____

Book _____

Assignment p. ____ - p. ____

You are the **Passage Master**. Your job is to pick parts of the story that you want to read aloud to your group. These can be:

- a good part
- a funny part
- a scary part
- an interesting part
- some good writing
- a good description

Be sure to mark the parts you want to share with a Post-It note or bookmark. Or you can write on this sheet the parts you want to share.

Parts to read out loud:

Page	Paragraph	Why I liked it
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Figure 1. Passage Master

F. REFLECTION

The steps in creating the joy of reading including designing classroom activities, selecting materials, classroom instruction, and designing out of the

classroom activities, lead the teachers to prepare the basis in enhancing students reading habit. In designing classroom activities, the teacher can select guide reading to build students' cooperation while in selecting materials, the teacher can select the story or poem which contents certain values such as moral values, national values and the kinds to build students' sense of social care and nationalism. In classroom instruction, reading workshop facilitates the students with several tasks. In designing out of classroom activities, the teacher can select the appropriate activities to the students' need and condition. Crucially this step lead the students to the reading habit by giving chance to the students to choose the interesting books to be read regularly out of learning instruction process.

G. CONCLUDING REMARK

In building students' character on reading hobby, the design of the teaching reading literature must be well-prepared. The procedure which has been explained previously will lead students to the joy of reading literature. All the steps will guide the teacher to be selective in providing appropriate activities, especially out of classroom activities, which will build students' character on reading hobby.

H. REFERENCES

- Balchowicz, Camillie and Donna Ogle. 2008. *Reading Comprehension, Strategies for Independent Learners*. New York and London, The Guildford Press
- Cremin, Teresa. 2005. *Teaching English Creatively*. London & New York, Routledge
- Dorn, Linda J. and Carla Soffos. 2005. *Teaching for Deep Comprehension: A Reading Workshop Approach*. Maine, Stenhouse Publisher
- Finn, P.J. 1985. *Helping Children Learn to Read*. New York:Random House
- Guthrie, J.T. Wigfield, A., & Perencevich, K.C. 2004. *Motivating Reading Comprehension: Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associate Inc. Publisher
- Hedgcock, John S. and Dava R. Ferris. *Teaching Readers of English Students, Texts, and Contexts*. London and New York, Routledge

- Klingner, K.J. Vaughn, S. and Boardman, A. 2007. *Teaching Reading Comprehension to Students with Learning Difficulties*. New York: The Guilford Press
- Maxom, Michelle. 2009. *Teaching English as a Foreign Language for Dummies*. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- Popp, Marcia S. 2005. *Teaching Language and Literature in Elementary Classrooms*. Hillsdale: LEA Publishers.
- Smith, J. 2007. *Reading is All Around Us: Using Environmental Print to Teach Beginning Literacy Skills*. Huntington Beach: Shell Education
- Wyse, Dominic and Russell Jones. 2008. *Teaching English, Language and Literacy*. London and New York, Routledge