

## **TODAY A READER TOMORROW A LEADER: FOSTERING THE STUDENTS' NOTION OF READING FOR ENJOYMENT IN THE CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE CLASSROOM**

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### **Abstract**

Teaching is performance, which puts literature into an area of sharing, thinking, dreaming and involving thoughts and passion. However, studying literature has become a difficult task that so many students face today. Indeed, teaching literature to language students constitutes an enormous challenge nowadays. In this case, the literature teacher is supposed to discover the student's previous literary experiences, and to be thoroughly familiar with the problems involved in the development of literary appreciation in foreign language learning. Therefore, students need to be helped to understand the importance of studying literature. For many students, literature can help them to develop their language skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing) ,for both; students and teachers, literature can be regarded an important element that can develop and open their minds to different cultural horizons. If the reader (student) is convinced that the study of literature offers pleasure where the purpose of reading is enjoyment, the teaching of literature will be rewarding for both teacher and students.

The present paper outlines my short experience in teaching literature at the Department of English at Hassiba Ben Bouali University of Chlef- ALGERIA- . It aims at encouraging students to think creatively and independently to appreciate not only the stimulation but also the enjoyment derived from the study of literature. It is a venture that has enabled both the students and myself to benefit from its virtues.

**Keywords:** Enjoyment – Language - Literature - Students -Teacher.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The vitality of the classroom comes from an energy that is created between teachers and students, it is an energy that both teacher and student share and let them feel connected to each other. Hence teaching is performance, which puts literature into area of sharing, thinking dreaming, discussing and involving minds, thoughts and passion, thus, literature teachers need to adopt special affective methods for teaching literature classes ,these methods cannot be found elsewhere but in fact they can be created within the teachers themselves. Teaching literature has become a great challenge nowadays. The big challenge for teachers is not simply getting students to read, it's getting them to enjoy it too. It's one thing for students to trudge through set texts in a lesson, but will they open another book when they get home at the end of the day?

However, the enjoyment of literature, as well as that of any other human endeavor, requires readiness.

## **2. STUDENTS' CULTURE OF READING**

The culture of reading among the students is somehow missing. Students see reading as boring and difficult and do not feed their interest on doing any more reading in the future. Reasons vary but the common one is that students prefer spending much more time chatting and surfing on the net than touching or reading books. Krashen (2004:10) found in his research that very few of non-readers claimed that difficulty in reading was responsible for their lack of interest. From their responses, it appears that they simply didn't have interesting things to read. In the same link, Brooks (1968), described the culture of reading as an integrated pattern of behavior, practices, beliefs and knowledge. These constitute the operating rules by which people organize themselves and the aim of dealing with the culture of reading is to describe the integrated pattern of reading behavior, practices, beliefs and knowledge and to understand how can the teacher and the students actively create and maintain this pattern. From another view, Smith (2012) believed that the culture of reading is not just for school, it is for life. Yet, reading, in all its variety, is vital for a better becoming informed; have a better understanding of ourselves and others; and to our development as thoughtful, constructive contributors to a democratic and cohesive society. However, students need to be equipped with tools that led them to develop the pleasure of interacting with reading.

## **3. GOOD TEXT SELECTION AS A WAY OF CATCHING STUDENTS' LOVE OF READING**

Hence reading can be regarded as an endeavor that provides enjoyment. Therefore, by catching students' love of reading and connecting the story to their everyday lives, students become more active, engaged, and reflective. David Daiches (2005) stated that; **when** a reader is able to identify with a character and his conflict or problem in a story and see life through the eyes of this character, that reader has begun to share an author's insight and has thus begun to read with appreciation. In this case learners will respond both emotionally and intellectually. In other words, encouraging students to select and read books is something the teacher can do to foster an enjoyable reading atmosphere. Therefore, it might be grateful if the teacher tries to help the learners to choose in areas of interest books that meet their needs and take them beyond their limited experience of life to show them the lives of other people at other times; this may stimulate them intellectually and emotionally, and deepen their understanding of different civilizations, societies, and their own individual lives.

### **3.1 The Importance of Reading for Pleasure**

Reading for pleasure is reading when the purpose is for enjoyment. A lifetime reader is predicated on developing a love of reading Allington (2001). Although reading for pleasure has not been a research priority, studies are accumulating that emphasize the importance of reading for pleasure for both educational as well as personal development. These studies show that promoting reading can have a major impact on children/young people and adults and their future. An enjoyment and appreciation of literature will give students the ability to develop an interest in books and reading as they move away from their studies and into their adult lives. They will have the confidence to approach and tackle new forms of books and writing. Therefore, when studying literature, students can learn not only language aspects but also that language can be used for aesthetic purposes. Finally, the study of Literature can provide students with a fresh and creative angle that could be beneficial for their studies in particular and their lives in general.

## **4. LITERATURE DISCUSSION GROUPS AS A WAY OF LEADING AN ENJOYABLE LITERATURE CLASSROOM**

Literature is an important component of language arts, it can enrich our lives in all kinds of ways, therefore, in this area one can say that literature benefits a person in many ways because it creates on him a strong power that encourages his knowledge. It provides pleasure to listeners and readers, it is a relaxing escape from daily problems, and it fills leisure moments. In this content, (Harvey 2002) said: "*People who like to read like to talk about books*" in the same view. (Collie and Slater 1987) believed that the authors hoped that by having students read and talk about literature, teachers would realize the cognitive and affective benefits and leave in be more likely to provide their students with similar experiences, so after the reading and the discussion of a book, students' reflections will be shared to gain a better understanding of how literature discussion groups can be used to benefit prospective teachers.

## **5. CONNECTING LITERATURE TO STUDENTS REAL LIFE AS A WAY OF ENHANCING THEIR READING SKILL**

As a written voice, literature has a direct influence on real life, this may be as simple as someone taking a character in a story as a role model; yet literature is the communication of the writer's experience of life. Students need to understand the different literary genres and in most of time it is important to relate what they've read in the text to real life, to learn to make connections between what they have read and reality, discuss the events of the story, and relate them to their own experiences . By doing this task, learners gave the impression of playing parts in the story. These procedures help the students to understand the different objectives of teaching a specific literary genre and also to feel comfortable, motivated and their literature learning environment fostered their confidence towards themselves and towards their teacher who can notice his / her success through his students' eyes as being surprising elements in any teacher's career.

## **6. TEACHER'S INVOLVEMENT IN ENCOURAGING STUDENTS TO READ FOR PLEASURE**

Enjoyment is like beauty, therefore it's not easy to define the pleasure that we find in reading, as teachers we expect and insist that pleasure occurs among our students while reading, they react towards reading according to their experiences and personalities, their interpretations differ as their tastes do. Most of all, their pleasures may differ from ours as from their classmates.

However, teachers play an important role in fostering reading for personal development and for pleasure, after all literature is produced from language and represents one of the most recurrent uses of that language. In this case, teachers have to be enthusiastic to motivate their students to read and enjoy reading. The role of the teacher is greater than the program or the methods used in the classroom. The literature teacher is supposed to create readers in the class by teaching students how to read, by being a reading role model and by creating a classroom reading community where reading for pleasure is encouraged and supported. Thus, if the reader (student) is convinced that the study of literature gives pleasure, the teaching of literature will be rewarding for both teacher and students. As a literature teacher, I may say that one of the most effective mechanisms of promoting the notion of enjoyment in reading in literature classes is through the establishment of Literature Discussion Groups, Relating Literature to Students Real Life Experiences, through which students can interact and share their experiences with each other in an active and productive literature Classroom community.

## **7. SOME PERSONAL INITIATIVES FOR AN ENJOYABLE LITERATURE CLASSROOM**

One of the big challenges I usually face in my literature classes is not only to get my students read but also enjoy what they are reading. As a teacher, I was obsessed with cultivating a love of reading in my students. I love reading, loved it as a child too. I'm equally compelled to ensure that with my students. Here are some initiatives I used and I'm still using with my students to raise their love of reading:

### **7.1 Votes for Book Selection**

At the beginning of the semester, I provide my students with four summaries of novels of the same era such as the Modernist Era (One page summary for each novel). The initiative will give the student the opportunity to choose and vote for the book that suit and motivate them to read it. Students become passionate about reading when they make choices about their own learning and their love of literature can grow through positive contact with books. Hence, with the love of literature, beauty and splendor are going to be enjoyed by the student as a passive reader .

### **7.2 Constructing Social Issues from Literature Course**

In one of my literature classes, my students and I explore social issues through a literary lens. Literature is perfect for this because good writers tend to avoid dogmatic positions. They show rather than tell, which help students get a nuanced view of a complicated subject. When tackling social issues, we can deal with stories exploring religion, gender, and race discrimination; spousal abuse; and euthanasia, among others. The trick is to make the environment safe for expressing honest opinions. Therefore, I lay down some ground rules that students have to:

- Respect each other's point of view. There can't be any eye-rolling or snide comments if they don't agree with a particular viewpoint.
- Avoid interrupting each other.
- Try to keep an open mind.

I'm delighted to say that I felt that my students rise magnificently to the occasion. There are often vigorous cross-cultural discussions in which different points of view are expressed and minds are sometimes changed. Occasionally, students express misgivings about a sensitive topic. When that happens, I remind them that they've chosen the novel.

### 7.3 Reading –Aloud the Novel

One of the amazed strategies that I found it useful with my students is to ask them to read aloud extracts from the novel; the aim of this technique was to make them associate reading with pleasure so that their interest with literature grows. The Read- Aloud Strategy could have a positive impact on the students by:

- Providing them by valuable information about the society and the culture mentioned in the novel.
- Enriching their vocabulary
- Improving their listening and speaking skills
- Stimulating their imagination
- Entertaining them

When students read aloud they will be carried into the world of adventure, fantasy that makes the content touches their lives deeply and awakens their sense of compassion empathy and sensitivity.

### 7.4 Familiarize the Students with the Author

Letting the students meet the author can create an enjoyable literature reading atmosphere, my students and i once dealt with one of the post-colonial African novels in African literature class, entitled: "*the famished road*" written by the Nigerian author *ben okri (1959)* , first when I start talking about the author students get bored and most of them were yawning, the next session was like the previous ,i wondered about the way of making them motivated and engaged in reading his novel , so I tried to download his speeches , conferences and words about his novel and I used the data show to let them see, listen and meet the author so that they can be familiarized with the author and then reading and enjoying his novel

I came up with these initiatives to teach literature with enthusiasm, I don't want my students just read books but also feel comfortable in their literature classes and enjoy speaking and listening collectively and knowledgeably about the topics that the book brings to the surface.

## 8. CONCLUSION

An enjoyment and appreciation of literature will give students the ability to develop an interest in books and reading as they move away from their studies and into their adult lives. They will have the confidence to approach and tackle new forms of books and writing, since they were exposed to a range of literature during their school days. Our hope is to inspire our students to overcome those obstacles and challenges with perseverance and integrity. Besides, the literature teacher has to challenge and finds a way of motivating students to enjoy reading and involved in the literary text they are dealing with so that they can appreciate it.

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