

# Teaching Literature Within Curriculum

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## ABSTRACT

*Literature basically belongs to the nature of teaching. Henceforth, teaching literature has come up to the field of education. Thanks to the work of literature that has colored the educational curriculum so far. Teaching literature can be said as a reflection of learning the world through the literary work. It is seen that teaching literature aims to make students humanized. This also develops the students' awareness of how literature can function as discourse—, whose text— is also an access to the knowledge of world both in fiction and in reality. This also belongs to the context of teaching the work of art reflected in text. Here, students can share the benefits or the use of literary work—so called—utile, as well as the pleasure—so called—dulce—so that students share or take a good advantage of knowing and being human who sometimes lives in the complicated world. Nonetheless, in teaching literature, teacher and students find it difficult to work on the text served in the curriculum. As a matter of fact, they (teacher and students) also share the complexity of how to appreciate and comprehend the work of literature if the implementation of its national curriculum is still debatable.*

**Keywords:** *humanities, dulce and utile, social sciences, and discourse*

## INTRODUCTION

Literature is a reflection of human civilization. The human civilization is considered to be civilized or cultured, can be seen from its appreciation and reward towards the work of literature Pradopo *et al* (2001: x). Within the context of teaching, the word *literature*, in its most important sense, means more than printed words. Literature is one of the fine arts. When one speaks of a piece of writing as literature, one is praising it, and also recognizing its importance. This can be concluded that literature belongs to the field of teaching by its nature. As in its broadest sense, that it is everything has ever been written. Hence, once students— young learners—are first taught with letters, so forth words, sentence, paragraph, and discourse, this process in its nature, is teaching. Students can learn to read as it is the first process of knowing everything that is printed. As all what it is told, written, and shared is in word.

The presence of teaching literature cannot be separated as it is one kind of process to teach students to be humanized and civilized. As stated by Djojoseuroto (2006: 77) that it has to do with teaching human as a cultured, thoughtful and divine social beings. One often reads for information and knowledge. One finds pleasure in learning about life in Swiss Alps or on the Mississippi River. One can also find possible solutions to our problems when one meets people in books whose problems are like his own. Through literature, one sometimes understands situations that one could not otherwise understand in real life.

In line with the human beings reflected in literature, this also becomes a part of teaching literature in curriculum. Nasution (2005: 1) states that the future of one's country is in the hands of the youth. The quality of this nation depends on the education taught to children in this present day, especially through our formal education at school. So what is the point

of teaching literature in curriculum? Let us consider this statement below.

*pada hakikatnya semua ilmu pengetahuan itu dapat dikelompokkan dalam tiga kategori, yaitu humanities, seperti bahasa, sastra, dan agama; exact sciences seperti matematika, fisika, dan kimia; dan social sciences seperti sosiologi, hukum, dan ilmu politik... Pada hakikatnya, berasal dari satu induk semua ilmu pengetahuan, yaitu filsafat; yakni, selalu berusaha untuk mengetahui kebenaran. sastra masuk pada kategori humanities, yaitu ilmu-ilmu yang sesuai namanya, berusaha memanusiakan manusia (humanising human beings) (Naturally all knowledge or sciences can be categorized within three, that is humanities: language, literature or letters, and religion; exact sciences: mathematics, physics, and chemistry; social sciences: sociology, law, and politics...that comes from its basic roots—philosophy—that is to find the truth...literature belongs to humanities as based on its name that is to humanize human beings) (Darma, 2004:35)*

It can be concluded that teaching literature within curriculum is line with building the national characterization and its civilization through the work of literature.

In modern curriculum based on the government's bill of Standardized National Education in PP No.19/2005 pasal 6 ayat (1) that teaching literature belongs to the teaching of the fine arts aesthetics.

*Mata pelajaran ini dimaksudkan untuk meningkatkan sensitivitas, kemampuan mengekspresikan dan mengapresiasi keindahan dan harmoni. Kemampuan mengapresiasi dan mengekspresikan keindahan serta*

*harmoni mencakup apresiasi dan ekspresi, dalam kehidupan individual sehingga mampu menikmati dan mensyukuri hidup maupun dalam kehidupan kemasyarakatan sehingga mampu menciptakan kebersamaan yang harmonis.*  
*(This course is intended to improve one's sensitivity to express and appreciate the beauty and harmony. The ability of appreciating the beauty and harmony covers appreciation and expression, in the personal life hence one is able to enjoy and thankful to life and society, as a result of creating harmonious togetherness)*

In expressing and appreciating literature, this also becomes a part of teaching language and texts as these are the medium of literature. This also means that teaching literature aims to study literary texts such as poetry, drama, fiction, and non-fiction that have esthetical value and systematic.

World Encyclopedia in Literature (1966: 461–475) one reads for a variety of reasons. These reasons change with one's age, our interests, and the literature one reads. Our basic reason for reading is probably pleasure. One reads literature because one can enjoy it. Reading for pleasure may take various forms. We may read just to pass the time. Or, we may want to escape the four walls that usually surround us. Reading may help us to experience the worlds of other people.

DISCUSSION

As applied in curriculum, teaching literature aims to develop one's skill in language as well as one's positive sense and attitude towards language and its culture—particularly language and culture of Indonesia. Atmadi dan Setyaningsih (2000: 122) formulates five purposes teaching literature in curriculum as follows:

- 1) National building characterization,
- 2) Enhancement of knowledge and language skill in order to preserve national and cultural heritage,
- 3) Enhancement of knowledge and language skill in order to achieve and develop science, technology and art,
- 4) Enhance and disseminate the proper use of Bahasa Indonesia in every aspect of life, and
- 5) As a medium development of intellectual activity.

Based on five purposes above, it can be concluded that teaching literature is a part of teaching language which has a basic function to enhance science and language skill. Furthermore, teaching literature can also have function as a means of appreciating the works of literature, especially the country's literary works. By appreciating the literary works, students are expected to appreciate, respect, and understand as well as take advantage from learning the work of literature.

In line with the above aims, (Widdowson, 1975:116) ...the approach that has been outlined is meant to serve

an essentially pedagogic purpose: to develop in learners awareness of how literature functions as discourse and so to give them some access to the means of interpretation. This can be captured that the purpose of teaching literature within curriculum is aimed to develop one's understanding in literary pedagogical environment or atmosphere.

It is clear that the work of literature is relevant to the pedagogical realm Djojuroto (2006: 83). Therefore, it is often misunderstood that literature considered unimportant than science and technology. As its nature, literature belongs to social science, culture and of course humanity as it can help students to enrich and sharpen their knowledge towards social awareness as well as their religiosity. According to Suminto A. Sayuti (1990:56) that there is a positive correlation between literature and other fields of science—if the teaching process is conducted creatively along with the selective teaching material, and of course it can be in creative work of literature, especially poem or poetry that can elicit students' creativity—as it is shown at this figure below by Djojuroto (2006: 86). This can also lead to students' critical thinking as a result of their ability to appreciate the literary work based on their background knowledge. Teachers can work on integrated teaching along with other field of science and use the literary work as a means to increase students' skill in language, and it can also help students liberate their thinking as a nature of creating humanity or humanizing students.



Figure 1.1 (Djojuroto, 2006: 86)

This process of integrated teaching of literature can result in building students' reading habit as it comes from their passion in enjoying literature. Reading the work of literature, one can gain feedback about humanity and culture along with its society as it can also raise student's social empathy and awareness. When one's empathy and awareness rise, one can be automatically touched to make a change in every aspect of humanity so that literature is also a part of its changes in society. Hence, this can be concluded that literature can create

a good sense and sensibility. It can also motivate people; especially students to think do a lot or stimulate students to discover, invent everything for the sake of knowledge, culture and humanity. Literature can encourage students' morality as a part of social divine creature, both socially and individually. Literature (Djojuroto, 2006: 88). It can also function to help create an excellent civilization where its work of literature is more appreciated by its people.

Nonetheless, what is found in a—or even—most formal educational institutions nowadays, the teaching literature is coming to an endless problematic situation. It seems that teaching literature is a practice that both teacher and students find it complicated for years. These complaints can be caused by the lack of teacher and students' appreciation to the work of literature and this can lead to the problem of the curriculum of teaching literature in the formal educational institution. For example, the basic knowledge in literature of the teacher is limited. First of all, this can be caused by the material which was given during one's study is also insufficient. As what was taught is more theoretical concept rather than practical concept. Then, all the supporting books or handouts, especially for junior high school and senior high schools are considered limited. This can result the practice of the implementation of teaching literature cannot be in line with the language teaching; this can also be the lack of students' interest as well as their motivation to read and study literary work—or rather still out of reach to meet the teaching expectation. Other factors such as: the availability of time, school library management and teacher's motivation are those that follow after.

Moving from several complains above, there are some aspects needed to be reconsidered in teaching literature within the school curriculum. It has been applied that teaching literature is integrated with the language class as in the subject of Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia. This can be meant that the time allotment of this subject has been integrated and there is no any single subject of literature separated from the language class—except for the language class. Literature has become a single subject with its own time allotment. However, the numbers of students in language class do not come along with the number of students of science and social class.

Curriculum does not really require a specific sort of method in teaching literature (Nurhayati dan Yuli Karsiah, 2000). Basically, curriculum allows the teachers to apply and practice any kind of method or way in teaching literature.

This can also be meant that curriculum sets the teachers free to improvise their competence to teach students literature as long as its standard competence in literature can be achieved. For this reason, the orientation of teaching literary theories should be reduced and students must be introduced or rather familiarized to the work of literature so that they can find the personal enjoyment by reading literature or literary text as well as appreciating it. Some methods or approaches such as: respond-analysis, reader-responds or evaluating the literary work can be applied in teaching literature in class. As a result, teachers need to enrich their reading and maximize other teaching media that can be used to accomplish its standard competence.

#### CLOSING

It seems that there is a lot of things to be done to work on literature become integrated in teaching language based on curriculum. Various department of teacher's training and education—as a formal institution—can offer its students teaching to improve as well as upgrade their knowledge by experiencing or involving literature in the process of learning. This can be observed from the review of credit semester, its subject programmed within one or more than one semester, syllabus, and the students' comprehension in understanding the work of literature. The paradigm of underestimating that literature has no significance and it is easy to be learned, must be put aside or even left behind so that teacher's tendency to accept the final outcome to achieve the required goal without considering the process of learning must be discarded.

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