

Developing students' comprehension in understanding literary theories through intellectual diary

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Regarding to the development of literary theories until this current era, teachers have a huge challenge to develop students' comprehension in understanding all theories given to them, in order to enlarge their view and knowledge toward the domain of literature. In accordance, some issues appear during teaching and learning activity especially in students' reception. Commonly they will face difficulties in understanding teachers' explanation given in the class. Moreover, their reluctance to read related books makes this situation even worse. Related to this particular issue, "Intellectual Diary" assignment is considered to be able to solve the problem. Intellectual diary is sort of student's homework that is done by asking students to read a particular related-reference and write their result of reading using their own language and understanding. Through this, teacher can encourage their students to accustom habit of reading and writing dealing with the domain literature.

Keywords: Students' comprehension, Literary Theories, Intellectual Diary.

Introduction

In teaching and learning activities of literary class, along with significant development of literary theories until this post-modern era, teachers have a huge challenge to develop students' comprehension in understanding all theories given to them, in order to enlarge their view and knowledge toward the domain of literature. In this case, what all the teachers normally appear to have in common is passion of their subject. Usually, in order to arouse the passion to their students, teachers will try to convince them that what they are being taught is absolutely serious (Bhatt, 1995: 1). However, some issues sometimes appear during teaching and learning activity especially in students' reception toward the theories given to them. The varieties and complexity of literary theories that need to be mastered or understood by students are sometimes problem. Commonly students will face difficulties in understanding teachers' explanation given in the class. Moreover, their reluctance to read related books makes this situation even worse. Therefore, teacher need to have a solution enticement to help them in facing those problems during the teaching and learning activity. So that, students' comprehension progress in subjects of literary class can be optimized by the teachers.

To gain the problem solving, teachers can try to use new and interesting teaching strategy which can boost students' self-determination to understand every material given, because in the current higher school educational system, students are guided to be more independence in accomplishing every challenges in their process of education, though teachers' touch shall not be detached at all. Regarding to that issue, this paper is intended to offer and describe the use of intellectual diary to develop students' comprehension in literary classes. It is a sort of assignment which can be used as a strategy for increasing students' self-determination in understanding certain related theories that are discussed in literary class. Hopefully, the problems that are faced in literary class can be solved by applying this strategy.

What is "intellectual diary"?

Basically, there is no general definition of what is called *Intellectual Diary* in particular teaching study. The idea of offering intellectual diary is actually inspired by the writer own experiences when studying one of lectures in post-graduate program of Universitas Gadjah Mada. A lecturer introduced a weekly assignment so called intellectual diary to the students of her class. Intellectual diary is a sort of student's homework that is done by asking students to read a particular related-reference (book, journal, or article) and write their result of reading in a piece of paper before discussing that material in the class, so that the assignment done was used as students' starting point for involving themselves in class discussion. During teaching and learning activity in that particular class, it was found that this sort of assignment was able to improving the writer's understanding toward the theory being discussed. Accordingly, the writer tried to analyze how it could result such benefit toward the writer understanding upon theories given in the class. In this case, how intellectual diary works to develop the comprehension toward certain theory is currently found as follow:

- Intellectual diary assignment is used by teacher to guide students get in touch with particular reference and indirectly force the students to read the reference.
- Intellectual diary assignment is used by teacher to arouse students' cognition to understand any text (theory) discussed in the reference. That is done by asking students to sum up a book (or one chapter of a book), journal, article, etc, into very narrow space of writing. In this case, students' cognition to understand the essence of a theory is being trained, because they need to condense hundred thousand words into probably hundreds words.

Based on that analysis, it can be seen that teacher's intention of using intellectual diary is really purposeful. Here, intellectual diary is used to encourage students' willingness to read and write everything dealing with the theories of that particular class. At the end, it is realized that this kind of assignment can be a kind of strategy by teachers to improve their students' capability in understanding theories in particular classes, especially the class that needs its students to understand many kinds of theories such as literature class. Therefore, it is really possible to be implemented in literature class.

Students' comprehension in literature class

One of teachers' biggest obligations is to ensure that students really comprehend the theories and explanations they have got in teaching and learning activity. Basically, comprehension is a complex process that has been understood and explained in a number of ways. The RAND Reading Study Group (2002) stated that comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language or text book (Pardo, 2004). In this case, reading is quite significant to be attached because reading can become a way to get some knowledge about certain theory. So, at the very beginning teacher need to encourage students to read the theory from certain reference in order to give a basic knowledge to be comprehended later, although reading will not sufficient to achieve the parameter of comprehension in this particular discussion.

comprehension in Understanding literary theories given in the literature class. To solve the problems that have been discussed previously, the intellectual diary can be one of solution the teachers can use in their literature class. Here, intellectual diary can be able to solve the problem of students who are reluctant to touch their book and read the contents inside, because through this students will be more encouraged to read all related materials dealing with all theories taught in literature classes. Moreover, the problem related to students' difficulties in comprehending literary theories can be helped to be more developing and improving, since teachers have already had a strategy to monitor the development of their students in understanding theories given and students are trained to understand materials given to them by using their own self-determination to face challenges given from the intellectual diary assignment.

Conclusion and suggestion

The use of intellectual diary for developing students' comprehension in understanding literary theories is expected to ease both students and teachers activity in teaching and learning activity. By the goal of this strategy, teachers can increase students' capability in comprehending all literary theories discussed in literature class as a result of this strategy. Here, intellectual diary can be a solution to solve some problems faced by teachers of literature classes. Students who are reluctant to read their book will be more encouraged to read all related materials dealing with all theories taught in their literature classes. Afterwards, students who get difficulties in comprehending literary theories given can be helped to be more developing and improving by their teachers through strategy of giving intellectual diary assignment.

Tips for teachers

Intellectual diary is a sort of assignment in which you can make it as your strategy to develop your students' comprehension. You can improvise in using it and do not forget to synchronize it to your curriculum, standards, and class needs.

1. Provide specific guidelines, goals, and grading rubrics as necessary to focus students' efforts while following your subject.
2. Provide students with as much introductory coaching and support as they need. Students need to be comfortable while their self-determination is being drilled.

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Accordingly, based on Qodriani and Kardiansyah (2013) a wider definition for teachers might be that comprehension is a process in which students construct meaning by interacting with text (book theory) and explanation through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information they have got in the text, and explanation given by their teacher. In the literature class especially in the study of literary theory, it teaches students to understand theories (based on certain references) in the domain of literature as paradigms in literary science and literary criticism such as what is discussed in Hans Bertens' *"Literary Theory, the Basic"* (2008), genre such as in John G Cawelti's *"Adventure, Mystery, and Romance"* (1976), metode of research such as in Faruk's *"Metode Penelitian Sastra, Sebuah Penjelajahan Awal"* (2012), etc. Therefore, the indication of comprehension in this particular discussion will be found when knowing students can explain what they have got from book (or other related articles), respond it, and relate to what the teachers explain in the class, Therefore, the scope of comprehension here is related to a holistic capacity of students in mastering and understanding related theories of literature in its class.

Developing students' comprehension in understanding literary theories through intellectual diary

Students' comprehension in understanding literary theories in literature class refers to the ability of a student or some students to comprehend or master all the theories discussed in their learning process in literature class. One of the ways to measure students' comprehension is by paying attention toward their elaboration in explaining theories they have got during teaching and learning process such as from text book and teacher's explanation. In this case, intellectual diary is considered to be able to accommodate such intention. Through this, teachers can easily know how their students try to elaborate what they have got from their reading. In addition, intellectual diary can become a media for teachers of literature to teach their students start to learn writing on literary discussion based on their understanding, because basically the nature of intellectual diary itself will train students to write based on their own language and understanding. So at the end, along with students' habit in adapting this way of writing, it can also lead them to learn avoiding plagiarism.

Besides, as a teacher the writer tries to add certain strategy to optimize the use of intellectual diary that is beneficial for both teacher and also students as follow:

- The intellectual diaries that are written by the students can be randomly exchanged to all students in the class to be checked. It is intended to train the students' cognition to recognize errors or at least some point that they disagree with from the intellectual diary of their friend.
- Students can do peer correction among their friends in the class. It is also intended to train the students' cognition to recognize errors or at least some point that they disagree with from the intellectual diary of their friend, but in this case students can be easier to establish sharing ideas between two persons.
- Meanwhile for teacher, intellectual diary can also be used for measuring how far the students can understand certain theory or discussion, so that the teacher can know if there is something to be fixed or improved.

Accordingly, the use of intellectual diary will be helpful in developing students'