

## STUDENTS' LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN THE BOOK REPORT CLASS OF ELESP

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### Abstract

Reading is involved in subjects at school these days, for reading helps students gain more knowledge. In the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) of Sanata Dharma University, the second-semester students have the chance to experience several reading courses. One of them is Book Report which helps students strengthen their reading and writing, which could affect their literacy development. Two research questions are formulated: (1) What are the learning activities conducted in Book Report class? (2) What are the ways that the learning activities develop students' literacy? This study employed qualitative descriptive research using three instruments: interviews, documents, and field notes. Three learning activities were conducted, namely Extensive Reading, Daily Journals, and Literature Circle. Along with those three learning activities, five features aided the students' literacy development. The first four were; using different book formats and story genre preferences; reading many books enhances writing skills; writing daily journals to improve reading comprehension; presenting and discussing the reviews of literary and non-literary works, and the last one was implementing the literary and non-literary works in daily life. Progressively, the students in the Book Report class became aware that they improved their reading and writing skills when they participate in learning activities.

**Keywords:** book report, literacy development, reading, writing

### Introduction

Reading is involved in subjects at school these days, especially in Literature and English subjects. The English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) of Sanata Dharma University provides the students with several reading courses in different semesters. Book Report is a reading course offered for ELESP students in semester two. Book Report class is designed to introduce students to extensive reading as well as to expand their comprehension of literary elements. The reading activities that require the students to read literary and non-literary works from both assigned by the lecturers and from their own choosing become the main reason for the researchers to conduct this study.

As cited in Heeney (2015), reading and writing happen together and run in tandem. In the running in parallel, they intersect at the same time. It is the idea of

constant skills development -- they are twinned together as one reflects the other. Those literacy processes applied in Book Report's reading activity evoke the researchers' curiosity to conduct more profound study to apprehend students' learning objectives throughout the Book Report class that may affect their literacy development. In conducting this study, there are two research questions formulated:

1. What are the learning activities conducted in Book Report class?
2. What are the ways that the learning activities develop students' literacy?

### *Literacy*

OECD (2010, p. 37) as cited in Kennedy et al, (2019) argued that literacy is the ability to comprehend, apply, and reflect upon written texts in order to accomplish one's goals, increase one's knowledge and potential, and participate in society. Breadmore et al, (2019, p. 8) stated that literacy encompasses word-level skills, such as word reading and spelling, and text-level skills, such as reading comprehension and writing composition, that are necessary for daily living.

### *Book Report*

Book Report is one of the reading courses provided for ELESP students and is designed to introduce students to extensive reading as well as to expand their comprehension of literary elements, increase their interest and enjoyment of reading literary and non-literary works, and allow students to communicate their thoughts and feelings about the articles or short stories they are reading. Students are required to read articles or short stories from a variety of genres throughout the course. Students will also have a chance to discuss the elements, their feelings, and their ideas with their peers after reading each article or short story. Book Report is a required subject that is offered in semester two.

### *Metacognitive Concepts*

Metacognition is geared towards achieving a goal or a set of outcomes and is intentional, conscious, foresighted, and purposeful. Flavell (1976), in his article, noticed that metacognition had both monitoring and regulatory. Flavell (1976) suggested a formal metacognitive monitoring model that included four types of phenomena and their interactions:

#### a) Metacognitive Knowledge

Flavell (1979) explained metacognitive knowledge as one's understanding of or beliefs about the elements that influence cognitive activity. More than fundamental differences in processes, the gap between cognitive and metacognitive knowledge may be in how the information is employed. Based on the relationship between his interests, abilities, and goals, metacognitive information can drive an individual to engage in or abandon a particular cognitive effort. Cognitive activity is frequently preceded by metacognitive activity, which is then followed by cognitive activity, and they are inextricably linked and mutually reliant.

#### b) Metacognitive Experiences

Schneider (2015) stated that metacognitive experiences refer to one's awareness and feelings elicited in a problem-solving situation. In this second class, Flavell (1979) included the subjective internal responses of an individual to his

metacognitive knowledge, goals, or strategies. These occurrences can provide internal feedback on current progress, future expectations of development or completion, degree of comprehension, connecting new information, and a variety of other events as monitoring phenomena. Further information, memories, or previous experience may be retrieved as resources in solving a current moment cognitive challenge. The emotive responses to tasks are also included in the metacognitive experience.

c) Tasks and Goals

Flavell (1979) stated that the successful execution of a goal relies largely on both metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive experience. In this class, comprehending, memorizing data, generating something, such as a written document or a matching problem, or simply enhancing one's understanding of something are examples of goals and tasks. A case in point, tasks and goals can be interpreted as the learning objectives that someone wants to achieve when pondering their own thoughts.

d) Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies are well-organized techniques for managing one's cognitive activities and ensuring that the cognitive goals are attained. An article entitled "Inclusive School Network," which was published in September 2015, mentioned that there are four metacognitive strategies that can be applied in the classroom. The first strategy is Think Aloud that may help students to monitor and reflect on what they are learning. This strategy is substantial for reading comprehension and problem solving. Checklists, Rubrics, and Organizers are the second strategies that reinforce students in making decisions because they act as tools for planning and self-assessment. The third strategy is Explicit Teacher Modeling. Through a clear example or model of a skill or subject, explicit teacher modeling can help students comprehend what is expected of them. When a teacher demonstrates an easy-to-follow technique for addressing an issue, students have a plan to remember when they need to solve a problem independently. The last strategy is reading comprehension, which involves students' participations with texts and accurately understanding the layers of meaning. Students must develop strong reading comprehension skills since statistics demonstrate that those with poor reading comprehension abilities struggle in academic, professional, and personal endeavors.

1. Self-Regulation Theory

Zimmerman (2000, p. 14) described self-regulation as self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to pursue personal academic goals. In a different publication, Zimmerman (1986) stated that even though researchers' theoretical approaches typically differ in their definitions of self-regulated learning, including specific processes, a common understanding of these students as metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally engaged participants in their learning has developed. Schunk and Zimmerman (1997) argued that there are four levels of self-regulated individual development:

a) Observation

At this first level, according to Bandura (1986), observation is a social cognitive theory that by witnessing others' behavior, we can learn to accomplish things we would not have been able to do otherwise.

b) Emulative

At this emulative level, students start to try their behavior independently, using motorist as models or imitating precisely that specific behavior observed. At this level, Zimmerman (1997) gave students assignments that require them to work in groups or pairs.

c) Self-Control

DiBenedetto (2013) in her journal, stated that at this self-control level, the students would start to act independently based on what has been observed. At this level, Zimmerman allows the students to read and review several times in both written and spoken form, in which case they will also receive feedback that can help them improve their literacy development.

d) Self-Regulation

For this final level which is self-regulation, DiBenedetto (2013) argued that this level happens when students are able to adapt and adjust their behavior independently. Students are considered to have reached this self-regulation when they understand how they have to adapt according to the context and situation, as well as how impactful these skills are for them once they can really self-regulate themselves.

## **Method**

This study employed qualitative descriptive research to identify students' literacy development in the Book Report class of ELESP. The researcher used interviews, documents, and field notes as the research instruments to collect the data. The participants of this study were students in the second semester of the Book Report A class in the 2021/2022 academic year. The total number of students in the Book Report A class is 34. Five students were selected to be the interviewees using purposive sampling by considering those who had high attendance in class with a minimum of six points over three meetings. The interview was aimed to perceive students' behaviors and emotions towards the activities in the Book Report class that require them to use their reading and writing skills, as well as to gain more in-depth information about students' experience related to the activities conducted using open-ended questions. In addition, the purpose of the document was to gain the precise information from the learning activities that might support their literacy development. Furthermore, the field notes were intended to serve as evidence to support the data gathered. Those three instruments also used to answer the research questions.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### ***The learning activities conducted in book report class***

The researcher used Book Report class's syllabus as a way to answer the first research question. There were three learning activities conducted in Book Report

class, namely, extensive reading, daily journals, and literature circle. Further explanations are provided as follows;

### *Extensive Reading*

The main learning activity conducted in the Book Report class was extensive reading. The purpose of extensive reading was to help students develop their understanding of literary elements as well as to increase students' interest and enjoyment in reading both literary and non-literary works. Carrell and Carson (1997, p. 49), as cited in Renandya (2007), mentioned that extensive reading is defined as the quick reading of huge amounts of material or lengthier reads (e.g., entire novels) for broad knowledge, with the emphasis on the meaning of what is read rather than the language. In this activity, students were required to read articles or short stories, which can be fiction or non-fiction. Following the observation, the field notes showed that students were given 30 minutes to complete the extensive reading prior to the class discussion. Moreover, in doing the extensive reading, the students experienced two options: reading the articles or short stories that were assigned by the lecturer and having the freedom to choose their own articles or short stories to read.

### *Daily Journals*

The daily journals were an individual activity in which students were required to write a short summary after they had done their extensive reading. The purpose of writing the daily journals was to help the students with creating and analyzing both literary and non-literary works, as well as to improve their writing skills. In writing the daily journals, students need to write their name and the date they wrote the journal, and the book's identity, which includes book title and number of words, followed by the short summary. Other than that, they also have to share how they feel and their thoughts after reading the article or short story. Throughout the Book Report class, the students were assigned to write six journals for each different article or short story. According to the data from the field notes, there was no specific due date for submitting the daily journals, but students were occasionally required to prepare at least a short summary of their reading for later discussion in a literature circle activity.

### *Literature Circle*

One of the activities in the Book Report class was literature circle, in which students were expected to discuss and present the article or short story they had read in a small group consisting of four to five students. The data from the field notes showed that the discussion will most likely be organized in the main room of Zoom if they were to discuss the same story or the one that was assigned by the lecturer. Quite the opposite, the discussion happened in the breakout rooms of Zoom when the students discussed different stories of their own choosing. It happened because, in a small group of breakout rooms, it would be easier for students to share their thoughts, perspectives, or even the elements of different stories. There were four literature circles throughout this course. The lecturer would provide a different topic to discuss, such as the characterization, setting, plot, favorite part(s) of the story, and so on. Students were sometimes asked to create illustrations based on their favorite parts of the story, which they then had to present during the literature circle.

The literature circle aimed to train students in presenting their reviews or thoughts in good English, improve students' sensitivity to the text, help one another understand the text, and develop a sense of appreciation for others' thoughts.

### ***Ways to develop students' literacy through the learning activities in the book report class***

In this part, the researcher analyzed the data collections to answer the second research question that related to the way students develop their literacy through the learning activities in Book Report class. After interviewing the five students in the Book Report A class, it was determined that all three learning activities did, in fact, assist students enhance their literacy development in a variety of ways.

### ***Using different book formats and story genre preferences***

Leu et al, (2007), as cited in Wu & Peng (2016), stated that reading digital texts differs from reading printed texts and necessitates using more advanced reading skills. The interview results indicated that the use of electronic and print formats affects students' understanding of reading in doing the extensive reading. The interviewees conveyed that they prefer to read using print formats because they tend to be more focused and comfortable while reading.

Table 1. Electronic and print formats affecting students' understanding on reading

<b>Index</b>	<b>Utterances</b>
<b>P1</b>	"I prefer physical book; it is affecting on my understanding because my eyes are way more comfortable and focused on a physical book rather than the electronic one."
<b>P2</b>	"In terms of understanding, I prefer print version of books because I can write anything in the books in the format of paper."
<b>P3</b>	"I prefer to read in print format because when I read on my screen, it makes my eyes tired easily and it's hard to understand the content of the story."
<b>P4</b>	"I prefer to read in print format because I can focus more and take some notes or I can draw something in the book."
<b>P5</b>	"To be honest, I prefer to read in print rather than electronic format because, since I was a kid, I've liked to read a lot of novels and I don't like using my phone to read."

The data above showed that students prefer to read using print formats, and they agreed that it affected their reading time, as well as their understanding of the text. P2 and P4 mentioned that reading in print formats helped them engage more with the books because they could write or draw something. As stated by P2, writing something in the book can help him emphasize the line that he thinks is valuable. Other than that, P1 and P3 said that reading using an electronic format would most likely make the eyes tired and uncomfortable. According to Wu & Peng (2016), internal psychological mechanisms that impact reading comprehension are referred to as metacognitive strategies. Therefore, if the students tend to comprehend their reading even more by using the print formats, they have managed to attain their metacognitive knowledge. As regards of the story preferences, the interview results indicate that in doing the extensive reading activity, students demonstrated enthusiasm to read the assigned stories, but the fact is that students were more

engaged when they discussed the stories of their own choosing. In doing the extensive reading, students were experienced in reading both stories assigned by the lecturer and the stories of their own choosing. After the interview was done, some of the interviewees claimed that they would enjoy both options, but the majority stated that they would rather read something of their own choosing.

Table 2. The story preferences

Index	Utterances
P1	"I prefer to choose it on my own because sometimes if we don't like the book, we cannot understand it."
P2	"I enjoy both, but I prefer to choose my own text because sometimes the topic of the Extensive Reading is really boring."
P3	"I prefer to choose it by myself because some genres can be boring for me."
P4	"I like to read the ones from my own choosing because sometimes I don't understand the stories given by the lecturer. It's really difficult to read."
P5	"I like it more when the lecturer gives me the reading material because I find it hard to find good stories."

Flavell (1979) argued that the strategy of metacognitive knowledge involves analyzing goals and sub-goals and selecting cognitive processes to use in gaining the process used in their achievement. This actively means that students in the Book Report class understood what kind of reading suited them best and might help them perform better. From the utterances above, P1 and P4 stated that the types of books might influence their understanding of the books, and they said that they would understand the story even more, when they were reading the types of books they were into. P4, during the interview, said that it was hard for her to understand the stories given by the lecturer because sometimes it is difficult to find the plot of the story and there were some vocabularies that she did not know.

The data from the interview showed that the extensive reading activity made them want to read more, especially when they were required to choose their own reading. During the interview, P3 said, "Before this class, I don't read anything. I just read because of the lecturer, *terpaksa istilahnya*, but I enjoy the lesson." To support the fact, the interview showed that P1, P3, and P5 argued that it happened because they had to prepare the story to be read next. P3, during the interview, said, "I don't really like reading, but in this class, we need to read some stories and it made me think, 'what should I read next?'"

Furthermore, regarding the genre of the story, the interview data indicates that most of the students were more into fiction books. However, it was still possible for them to read other genres of non-fiction even though they might not enjoy the reading time.

#### *Reading many books enhances writing skills*

According to Suhardiana & Lestari (2020), literacy skills entail a set of skills for communicating and obtaining written information. It could be said that reading and writing go hand in hand. To support that fact, apart from reading, writing was included as one of the activities in the Book Report class. The results showed that writing daily journals could help the students sharpen their reading skills. People who read a lot of books would need to pay attention to the reading and start to pay

attention to the writing. People who love reading would unconsciously pay attention to the writing style: how the author describes the character, how the plot flows, metaphor in the writing, etc. Therefore, through the reading activity followed by writing the daily journals, the students in the Book Report class were aware of this situation.

Table 3. Using reading activity to improve writing skills

Index	Utterances
P1	"I haven't read a lot of books yet, but my friend who reads a lot, his writing is so good because he got so many references from many books."
P2	"Yes! There is a saying that, ' <i>apa yang kita baca adalah apa yang akan kita tulis</i> .' So, the books that I read influenced my writing."
P3	"Yeah, of course! Because in our journals we need to retell our story and it means that we need to improve our writing skills too."
P4	"I don't know the significance, but maybe yes."
P5	"In my opinion yes, because the lecturer asks us to write summary based on what we know, so it really increases our thinking skills."

Most of the students agreed that reading helps them enhance their writing skills. P1 argued that he had not read a lot of books yet to claim that his writing skills were improving. Nevertheless, P1 recognized that his friend managed to write well, knowing the fact that he reads a lot. The other interviewee, P2, mentioned that "Every writer has their own style." During the interview, he shared his experience of reading his favorite novel, in which the writer wrote the story in a long, detailed sentence, and he admitted that particular novel influenced his writing style: "I usually write in short sentences, and then after I read this book, I have a new habit of writing in longer and more detailed sentences. It is a fact."

#### *Writing daily journals to improve reading comprehension*

Writing is a great opportunity for students to contemplate their learning and exhibit comprehension of what they have read (Ferlazzo, 2020). Graham & Herbert (2010, p. 5), as cited in Ferlazzo (2020), argued that writing might help students improve their reading comprehension by asking them to write about what they have read. Students in the Book Report class agreed that writing the daily journals enabled them comprehend the story even more.

Table 4. Daily journals improve reading comprehension

Index	Utterances
P1	"Yeah, because after we read the story, we need to summarize it, so it helps us comprehend the story more."
P2	"Of course! I think that when we write something, it will help us remember what we just read. So, writing a journal helps me remember anything about the book I just read."
P3	"Yes. If we read a story that we like, it can make us write it easily, retell it easily even though it's already two or three months. At least we remember the summary or the character of the story."
P4	"Yes, I believe it. Because the more we write, the more we search for new vocabulary."
P5	"Yes, it helps more because we are required to write the summary, so it means we have to understand the story better."



Lau and Chan (2003), as cited in Wu & Peng (2016), mentioned that in order to reach their goal, good readers employ metacognitive strategies to keep track of and analyze their reading processes, as well as manage their reading approaches. In this point, writing acted as a tool that students in Book Report class used to help them analyze the reading process. The data on table 4.5 showed that students in the Book Report class tend to comprehend the story they have read better after writing the journals. During the interview, P2 shared his personal experience that he would usually forget about the story he had read two months later before writing the journals. Nonetheless, writing the journals helped him remember the characters, the summary, and the feelings after reading the book over a long period. Other than that, he added that taking some notes and writing the daily journals also helped him be a good reader.

*Presenting and discussing the reviews of literary and non-literary works*

The interview indicated that the reading preference used in extensive reading would affect students' performance in literature circle. Following the analysis of the interview data, the majority of the students stated that they were able to perform better in discussing and presenting the story of their choice. Some even said they could discuss and present the story both as provided by the lecturer and of their own choosing.

Table 5. Students' performance in literature circle

Index	Utterances
P1	"I better to perform my own story because I know it well. I have more enthusiasm because I like the story."
P2	"I think I can perform it both better. But I think the discussion in the literature circle will be more interesting in the text that I choose by myself."
P3	"I choose one of my journals and I can tell it to my friends better than other stories, I guess, because I like the story."
P4	"I think it's better on my own choosing because when I speak with the group, they have the same feeling with me."
P5	"From the book that we chose ourselves, in the first literature circle, my friends shared about the story that I know or have read before, so it's kind of easy for me when they shared and I add a little bit."

The literature circle activity was sometimes conducted in the main room of Zoom and the breakout room. From the data above, P5 stated that it was easy to do the literature circle about the story of her own choosing. Nevertheless, during the interview, she added that she preferred to discuss the story assigned by the lecturer in the main room of Zoom, but in terms of discussing the story of her own choosing, she preferred to have it in the breakout room. It happened because they could share their thoughts and perspectives way more freely.

In the matter of students' enthusiasm, it could be said that the students in the Book Report class were more enthusiastic in discussing the story of their own choosing. As the evidence, P1, P2, and P4 argued that the literature circle was more interactive when they discussed their own stories because they understood the story better. P2 explained that the group discussion was alive when they discussed their own chosen stories because sometimes some of them read the same books, and

sometimes that particular book was being filmed, which gave them more topics to discuss.

#### *Implementing the literary or non-literary works in daily life*

The interview data showed that once students completed the reading, a literature circle might stimulate their creativity even more. This occurred as the literature circle allowed students to share their ideas or perspectives, which might help them enhance their imaginations about the reading they had done.

Table 6. Students' implementation after reading

Index	Utterances
P1	"Of course, because I read 'Slice of Life' and it's about information from other points of view of someone else that may give us advice and quotes that improve ourselves."
P2	"Reading a book is kind of change my life. I want to become a novelist and I read a lot of books because of that."
P3	"I guess for some genres it can be more useful in our lives but some cannot. For example, thriller, I think it's not related to our lives."
P4	"Yeah, I think, because like I said before, I choose books according to my mood swing or condition. Like last week, I chose 'P.S. I Still Love You' because I had broken up with my boyfriend."
P5	"Yes, because I have read a lot of books and in some subject in school, like Bahasa Indonesia, we are expected to give the moral value. So, I get used to finding the moral story and connecting it with my life."

In the first level of four levels of self-regulation produced by Schunk and Zimmerman (1997), which was an observation, Zimmerman often asked his students to read and relate the reading to their lives. This practice would help students become critical thinkers and comprehend their knowledge better, which would be beneficial in their daily lives. Based on the data above, P2 stated that he wanted to be a novelist. During the interview, P2 shared his personal experience that he wanted to be a priest one day, but he was then inspired to be a novelist after reading a novel entitled "The Lord of the Rings." P2 added that reading books taught him so many things. On the other hand, P4 reads books to express her emotions. So, it was quite often for her to find something relatable to her from the books.

The data in table 4.7 showed that P5 often found the moral value in the story and tried to connect it with her. To support her argument, the data collected from students' daily journals indicated that students not only write about the summary and how they feel after reading the story but also about the moral value they find in the story. The students tend to share the moral value in long sentences, and some of them also give small examples or share their personal experiences related to the moral value they find.

#### **Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to see if the students in the Book Report class of ELESF developed their literacy as a result of the activities they participated in, which involved reading and writing skills. Based on the research goal, the researcher developed two research questions: "What are the learning activities

conducted in Book Report class?” and “What are the ways that the learning activities develop students’ literacy?”

There were three learning activities conducted in the Book Report class: extensive reading, daily journals, and literature circle. The main learning activity was extensive reading, in which the students were required to read literary or non-literary works from both those assigned by the lecturer and those of their own choosing. After the students did the extensive reading, the second learning activity was daily journals. Students were assigned to write six journals and were required to write a short summary and share their feelings after reading the literary or non-literary works. As for the last learning activity, which was literature circle, students were required to discuss the literary or non-literary works they had read. The literature circle convened four times throughout the semester, each with a different topic to discuss.

There were five ways of those three learning activities in the Book Report class aided students’ literacy development. First, using different book formats and story genre preferences that might influence students’ understanding in reading. Second, reading many books enhances writing skills. Third, writing daily journals to improve reading comprehension. Fourth, presenting and discussing the reviews of literary and non-literary works, and the last one was implementing the literary and non-literary works in daily life. Along with those features, the results showed that students in the Book Report class recognized that their literacy were developed throughout this course. They were all aware that they managed to perform their reading and writing skills better when doing the learning activities.

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