

STUDENTS' READING ENGAGEMENT IN LITERATURE CIRCLES

A Study of Literature Circles in Teaching Reading

at a Junior High School in Bandung

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the students' reading engagement in literature circles (e.g. Daniels, 1994; 2002; 2004). It was aimed to explore the way students engage with the text using literature circles, and to find out the obstacles in reading using literature. This study was a case study that was conducted in one junior high school in Bandung involving twelve eighth-graders as the focus group students. Classroom observations were done in eleven meetings which were divided into three phases; initial phase, discussion phase, and concluding phase and were then analyzed using literature circles theories as developed by Daniels (2002), Morris and Perlenfein (2003), Moen (2004) and reading engagement theories from Guthrie and Wigfield (2004). Questionnaire, students' interview, and document analysis were also used to obtain the data. Questionnaire and interview were conducted after the teaching program. The result showed that the students engaged with reading through five aspects, including (1) their active participation in reading using literature circles, (2) cognitive strategy that they used during reading, (3) conceptual knowledge that they obtained, (4) social interaction that they made in the discussion, and (5) reading outcomes that they received. This study also found that there were obstacles as perceived by the students and the ones as observed by the teacher. The students were aware that there were having problems with the language, their reading habit, school facility, efforts, the roles in literature circles, vocabulary, and group working. On the other hand, the non-participant researcher found that students had obstacles with the language, their efforts, the time allotment, roles in literature circles, the vocabulary, the classroom management, and the group working. There were similarities between the obstacles as perceived by the students and those as observed by the non-participant observer in terms of language, vocabulary, efforts, roles in literature circles, and group working. Based on the findings, it is recommended that literature circles be used to get the students engaged in their reading.

Key words: Literature circles, reading engagement