

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter unpacks the conclusions of the study which are resulted from all data in the previous chapters. It also discusses the limitations and of the study as well as the recommendations for further research.

#### **5.1 Conclusions**

This study has focused on exploring a teacher's implementation of balanced literacy approach in teaching young learners, challenges during the implementation, and impacts for helping students maintain positive reading habit. Based on the overview of the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the teacher's implementation of balanced literacy approach in the private school has shown reading as a part of co-curricular and intra-curricular literacy program. In general, the intra-curricular literacy program includes reading as a part of specific subject, in particular English subject such as spelling lesson and reading comprehension lesson. Meanwhile, co-curricular program covers supporting reading literacy activities which is not graded based on a particular subject but continuously promoted to encourage children's reading development in the classroom, for example, home reading log activity which promotes sustainable reading activity at home.

Regarding the first research question, the result found that the teacher was not aware of the definition of balanced literacy approach but his teaching practice appeared to be mostly coherence with the framework. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that there were four important parts of his teaching planning and process, namely (1) preparing lesson plan; (2) preparing materials and media; (3) preparing worksheet and assessment; and (3) preparing classroom management. According to his interview, the planning was done with the consideration of differentiated instruction for assisting low proficiency students and high achieving students at the same classroom situation. Furthermore, the teacher created and modified the method used to implement phonics and reading comprehension

based on the needs of the students in the classroom, but still regarded to the same philosophy. The aim of the teacher's instruction is to help every student excel to

their full potential, therefore the teaching was not strictly adhered one text book, but incorporating various sources of learning. As he was seen to demonstrate differentiated instruction to assist balanced literacy learning, evidences of classroom observation also found that the practice required special skills, patience, and variety of method to deal with wide range of complexity in the real practice.

Based on the implementation, the teacher executed the balanced literacy framework in sequences with several modifications: (1) incorporating interactive read aloud with teacher-centeredness; (2) incorporating student-centeredness with novel study and guided reading; (3) promoting independent reading practice in the classroom and home reading; (4) integrating focused minilesson with the teaching of grammar; and (5) combining phonics instruction through word study (spelling practice). The teacher played various roles in scaffolding student's understanding during the practices of those activities. The practice of interactive read aloud required high level of support from the teacher, therefore the class turned to be teacher-directed learning (Fountas & Pinnell, 2002). However, the level of support decreased into moderate level when the teacher invited students to work on guided reading practice and independent reading. As they continued to independent reading practice, the level of support decreased to lower level and demonstrated a student-centered learning. Furthermore, minilesson and word study were added as an additional support for student's development to become self-directed readers.

There were major portion of uniqueness on the teacher's practice, such as the implementation of novel study, guided reading practice, and focused minilesson. The term *novel study* was not widely used in the framework of balanced literacy but the actual practice demonstrated the element of guided reading, literature study (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001) and literature circle (Daniels, 2002). This is in line with previous study by Rowan (2016) which implemented literature circle to assist the practice of balanced literacy in teaching young learners, particularly kindergarten students. However, the role of minilesson in this study was swapped with the role of teaching grammar to assist teaching

reading and writing. Therefore, he called it *focused* minilesson for its relevant to teach grammar points during the activity of reading and writing.

Another uniqueness was shown in the way he defined *balance*. The balance between bottom-up process and top-down process could be derived from the worksheets he prepared and shown in the classroom activities. Although there is no single strategy which is appropriately applicable for all situations (Padmadewi, 2016), the element of bottom-up process and top-down process were presented through extensive reading which refers to fast reading which focus on enjoyment, meanwhile intensive indicates careful reading which focus on literary elements of the text (Daniels, 2002). The notion of balance was also seen in the combination of whole language aspect in reading comprehension lesson and phonics aspect in spelling lesson. Both of the ideas were given equal portions of time allotment, but evidences of the classroom observation indicated that the practice required situational consideration of characteristics of the students, the situations of the classroom and the difficulty levels of the materials. To sum up, the teacher's practices of teaching text within the text, about the text, and beyond the text have shown essential elements of balanced literacy approach as defined by Fountas and Pinnell's (2016) system of strategic action, meanwhile the activities shown in the practice exhibit reading workshop model (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001) through the integration of three aspects of reading literacy in the curriculum, the introduction, development, and establishment.

Regarding the second research question, data analysis revealed that the teacher faced several challenges in implementing the practice of balanced literacy. First, he tried to be careful to give a real exposure to English in the authentic way. Since majority of students were non-native speakers, real English exposure they experienced outside the classroom lesson might not be a continue experience. For this challenge, he developed home reading program and put a lot of displays around the school in order to help them communicate with English. The second challenge in implementing a reading program was children's family background, especially the parents' conservative point of view toward learning. Most of the students' parents grew up under the education system which overused the benefit of score and rank. In contrast, the private school literacy program concerned on

building characters of self-directed readers and preparing students become a lifelong reader (O'Connor, 2005). Therefore, they were taught in a system of collaborative learning order to be able to collaborate with peers, and to strike their best effort as self-motivated readers. For the third challenge, he considered helping low motivated learners needed knowledge, experience, patience, and skills. In this case, he executed differentiation to allow high achieving students excel in their abilities, at the same time provided guidance to students who were struggling in the class. Although this practice was not always as simple as it seems, the teacher was consistent in implicitly assist every child by providing several choices of activities. For this challenge, he did not view learning as to reach one standard but each student was allowed to create their own standards. As long as they worked hard in their best effort, he would appreciate them and encourage them to keep moving forward.

For the last research question about coping with maintaining student's positive reading habit, the study found that the students who taught reading literacy by using balanced literacy framework were not only capable in reading fluently, but also actively involving critical thinking in group or whole class discussion. According to the evidences of classroom observation, students consistently showed great interest in reading activity as they were actively reading at home or outside the classroom. Although the teacher's survey of reading reflection revealed there were minor negative responses from the students, the reading program established self-autonomous learning for sustainable reading habit (Padmadewi, 2016). Based on the data analysis, home reading log activity and consistent reward system played critical factors in helping teachers maintain positive reading habit. Since students were exposed with the habit of reading from very early stage (the first grade), the home reading log helped to scaffold their reading literacy development until they graduated. Students were trained to keep reading by choosing their own reading books, evaluating their reading log in the classroom, and obtaining rewards in the classroom. They were given rewards through *reading rocket system* in the form of individual points and group points. The objective of reward system was to persuade them as individuals and to train

them collaboratively repeat the behaviour. As they were motivated with consistent reward, they attain a habit of reading and continue to repeat the activity.

Through many kinds of innovative techniques, a sustainable reading program is carried out with the support of balanced literacy approach. In conclusion, the theoretical framework which combines phonics approach and whole language approach and the teacher's consistency contribute to make a concise reading program. By giving appropriate exposure of English, and reading guidance to exhibit reading habit, students could participate in establishing a literacy oriented environment.

## **1.2 Limitations**

It is acknowledged that there are a number of potential limitations need to be considered. First, there were a lot of balanced literacy models explained in the theoretical review, but the theoretical framework of specific design and step by step procedures for integrating balanced literacy approach in the actual classroom was limited. The study requires to analyse each principles and characteristics of balanced literacy approach appeared in the classroom observation. Due to its limited elaboration of the design, theoretical aspect of actual assessments, classroom setting, and classroom managements was not fully investigated. Despite the fact that each method used by the teacher was described with procedures of teaching, the current study was not specifically addressing the types of assessments used in each activity. Second, it might be obvious that inquiring into a concise reading program in a school might take a long process which also involves phonics instruction to be taken into account. This study has concerned on the aspect of whole language in the form of interactive read aloud, guided reading, independent reading, but unable to provide complete picture of phonics approach components in the word study section such as stages of teaching active phonics, and synthetic phonic (word building). Although the limitations might not hinder the data collection of the study, future researches may consider those factors.

### **5.3 Recommendations for Further Research**

Due to its limitations, this study proposed several recommendations for future researches in the same interest.

Considering the implementation of the theoretical framework, it might be interesting to conduct another case study or practitioner research which also involves local teachers in public schools. Not only focusing on describing the teacher's implementation, the research can focus on the students' development and involves all parties in an educational institution. The focus could be about the school's effort in promoting a concise balanced literacy program including home reading log, and intra-curricular reading activities in the classroom. Their implementation in educating character could be possibly supported by finding out all those people's perceptions on developing reading program for young learners. The data from those children development might help the government as well as the schools to find the best solutions to build effective programs which accommodate their viewpoints.

Another recommendation is the role of various types of data including quantitative data to support the qualitative data. Researchers can conduct a bigger study which involves more teachers in one area and compare the results to enrich the program. For young learners, similar study can be conducted in another level including emergent readers, early readers, transitional readers, self-extending readers, and advanced readers. Future projects can also concentrate on in-depth study of a student's case or its relation with the parent's roles. Without reducing the focus of study, the process of character building should be integrated in the practice to see how those programs affect their development. In conclusion, it can be valuable to provide diverse pictures of the framework.