

Building Students' Characters Using Hot Seat Teaching Reading Technique with Children Literature

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Abstract

In this study, the author defines the characteristics of an effective character development program for elementary school's students built around children's literature. Discussion focuses on how Hot Seat technique in teaching reading can be brought in helping to develop character traits in meaningful and substantial manners, in order to become responsible, respectful, contributing members of our democratic society.

Keywords: character development, Hot Seat technique, teaching reading, children literature

1. Introduction

According to the Laws of Republic Indonesia no. 20 of 2003, regarding UUSPN, article 1 and 3 state that education is a conscious and planned effort in order to build a conducive learning atmosphere and process. Therefore, the learners are able to develop actively his religious spirit, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble moral, and skills needed for him, society, nation, and state. Consequently, the character education is not only important, but also is absolutely needed by the nation in order to be a civilized nation. The Indonesian government, indeed, has put particular attention on character building. The policy on character education has implemented in the 2013 Curriculum of National Education that the main objective of character education is to increase the students' integrated achievement and implementation of character building. However, the current Indonesian national education still faces various problems.

The education achievement is still below the expected target. The teaching and learning process at school has not been able to shape the graduates as whole persons who reflect the character and the culture of the nation. The education process still emphasizes and focuses its outcome on the cognitive aspects.

In accord with The National Education Curriculum 2013, character education embedded with literary works in reading class can be considered as a perfect place for building students' characters. Moreover, teaching reading through literature is somewhat a powerful teaching tool. When literature is coupled with social studies content, it allows the teacher to cover multiple parts of the curriculum: social studies, literacy, and character education. The Hot Seating Strategy is a role-playing strategy that encourages students to build upon comprehension skills. It is popular to promote literature and it keeps the students pre-occupied with the story selections used most frequently in a drama or a classroom. The Hot Seating is an excellent way to introduce unique objects that represent a particular era. Therefore, this paper is aimed to discuss successively the benefits of HOT SEAT strategy in teaching children literature for building characters in the reading classes.

2. Children Literature and Character Building

Representing human struggles and feelings is an essential part of good story telling. Whether it is told in the books of young children or of adults, stories give the reader the vicarious experience of living through the trials and the thrills of characters in a book. With reflection, the reader can decide how he or she personally would have responded to the decisions the fictional character made. Each of those reflections and decisions gradually influences the thoughts and actions of the reader. Therefore, literature can be considered as a powerful teaching tool.

The characters of children and young people meet in the pages of a book can have a profound influence on them, almost as strong of an impact as that of real people they know and meet. A number of definitions and interpretations of character education are found in the literature; those are the core principles and values of generosity, kindness, honesty, tolerance, trust, integrity, loyalty, fairness, freedom, equality, and respect of and for diversity (Bohlin, Farmer, & Ryan, 2001; Brooks, 2001). Indeed, when character education concepts are taught within the context of literature, students realize traits such as respect, honesty, courage, and kindness are

real and interesting aspects of the world around them. In nutshells, children literature teaches children about essential traits needed to build good character (Bland, 2013; Otten, 2002).

3. The Definition of HOT SEAT Strategy

Many researches on Hot Seat strategy on its use in educational situations have been conducted dealing with its benefits and effectiveness in improving students language skills. Hot seat strategy is an activity which students are able to take on roles and use questions in an interview situation. It can help the students either to build a character or to develop a greater understanding of character in the text; it allows the students to understand characters' motives, background, feelings, personality and relationships to others and stimulate the students to actively participate in the activity (Billikova and Kissova, 2013; Wile, 2013; Ashton-Hay, 2005).

Hot seating technique can be employed to serve various benefits. Borich (2004), Moore (2005) and Trachtulcová (2007) state the essentials benefits of conducting Hot Seat strategy, those are; (1) it gives students self-confidence that gets them to trust their ideas and abilities, (2) it creates wide imagination that gives students creative choices and thus thinking of new ideas, (3) it encourages cooperation learning. This cooperative process includes discussing, negotiating rehearsing and performing. It gets students learn how to communicate the who, what, where, and the why to the audience, and (4) it helps students to understand more about human characters.

4. The procedure of Hot Seat Strategy

Hot Seat strategy can be used in enhancing students skills according to four stages: preparation, implementation, evaluation and follow-up (Afana, 1996; Najem, 2001; Al-Heela and Ghunaim, 2006; Al-Huwaidi, 2005) These stages can be summarized as follows:

1. Preparation: in this stage, there are great responsibilities on teachers where they are supposed to know well all the domains of the game, material, rules, time-allotment and relation with curriculum or what the game may achieve, so that Hot Seat strategy needs to prepare place rules.
2. Implementation: teachers introduce the game by connecting the subject of the lesson with the previous one in order to start the new lesson. Teachers have noticed the individual differences among the learners and maintained the aim of the game toward achieving the objectives of the lesson with some fun. They have to observe their learners while implementing the game in order to guide them.
3. Evaluation: teachers have discussed the results of using the game and showed the benefits of the game. Teachers have to fix and organize the results clearly.
- 4 Follow-Up: teachers follow-up learners to identify the acquired learning experience and provide them with some other games or activities to enrich their educational experience.

5. Building Characters using Hot Seat Strategy through Children Literature

As aforementioned above, children literature teaches children about essential traits needed to build good character. A number of definitions and interpretations of character education are found in the literature. The reader shares the experiences through the trials and the thrills of characters in the book. The human feelings and struggles represented in the literature give the reader the experiences, whereas, with reflection, the reader can decide how he or she personally would have responded to the decisions the fictional character made. Thus, each of those reflections and decisions gradually influences the thoughts and actions of the reader.

Meanwhile, Hot Seat strategy allows the students to develop a deeper understanding of character in the text; they profoundly look into the characters' motives, background, feelings, personality and relationships to other characters. As a result, they understand more about human characters.

Using Hot Seat for building students' characters through literature provides great benefits. From literature, the students are able to learn about human's characters and they are able to understand more about the characters through Hot Seat. The more the students understand about human characters, the more they are able to embrace the people with different characters. Thus, they are able to either minimize or avoid any misunderstanding and develop their characters.

6. Conclusion

The reading class is a perfect place to provide the students with examples of good character traits. In reading class, literature allows the students to learn about humans' characters. They also are able to reflect what has happened and how the fictional character's feels. For this reason, each of those reflections and decisions gradually influences the thoughts and actions of

the reader. Hot Seat strategy reinforces the students' understanding about human's characters. Furthermore, it gives the students the opportunity to create wide imagination that gives them creative choices and thus thinking of new ideas. It also builds their self-confidence by trusting their ideas and abilities. As a result, students realize traits such as respect, honesty, courage, and kindness are real and interesting aspects of the world around them.

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