UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE IN PROMOTING STUDENTS’ CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

YUSNITA BINTI MD YUNUS

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of TESL

Faculty of Education

May 2008
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my loving husband, Zubir bin Mohamad and my three wonderful children, Muhammad Khairul Na’im bin Zubir, Nur Alya Liyana binti Zubir and Nurul Ain Nabihah binti Zubir.
CANDIDATE’S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of University Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any academic institution or non-academic institution for any other degree or qualification.

In the event that my thesis be found to violate the conditions mentioned above, I voluntarily waive the right of conferment of my degree and agree to be subjected to the disciplinary rules and regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA.

Name of Candidate  
Yusnita binti Md Yunus

Candidate’s ID No.  
2004317114

Programme  
Master of Education (TESL)

Faculty  
Faculty of Education

Thesis Title  
The Teaching of Literature in Promoting Students’ Critical Thinking Skills

Signature of Candidate  
[Signature]

Date  
28 May 2008
ABSTRACT

Promoting critical thinking skill through the teaching of literature is to improve the thinking skills of the students in which the students learn what to think and how to think through the subject (Norman, 1990; Clement & Lochhead, 1989 cited in Schafersman, 1991). This study aims the existing scenarios in today’s classroom pertaining to the teaching of literature. Literature subject is seen as a difficult subject; therefore, the students are spoonfed. The focus of the study was to investigate whether the teaching of literature promotes critical thinking of the students. Thus the study determined the teachers’ feedback on the subject, methodologies, literary texts and critical thinking skill. The benefits of the teaching of literature can be in the three forms; personal and emotional gains, learning gains and language gains. Apart from reading for enjoyment, literature promotes critical thinking skills when involves exploration of the texts. 36 teachers of six selected schools were the sample of this study. They were given a set of questionnaire to give their feedback. Three classes involved in the observation and six teachers were interviewed. Based on the findings, it was found out teachers are the best agents in teaching the subject as well as promoting critical thinking skill through the subject to the students. It was also found out that most of the teachers agreed that the teaching of literature is important and that the components contribute to the holistic development of the students. However the success of the implementation depended on the students’ abilities. The study also determined that methodologies such as questioning, discussion and brainstorming techniques played important roles in ensuring the success of the subject in promoting critical thinking skills. The study demonstrated that the literature subject using the methods and techniques were capable in widening knowledge and broadening viewpoint of the students. It was also determined that the literary texts selected were relevant. It was also found that by using the literary texts selected and applying the best methods and techniques, critical thinking skills can be promoted in the teaching of literature.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I am eternally grateful to Allah, the Almighty, for His mercy, guidance and blessings in my life. Alhamdulillah.

I acknowledge with great respect my supervisor cum lecturer, Dr. Faizah Mohamad, Koordinator M.Ed TESL UiTM Dungun Terengganu. I wish to express my thanks to her because this thesis would not have been completed without her expert advice and unfailing patience. I am also most grateful for her faith in this study especially in the sometimes-difficult circumstances in which it was written.

Much thanks to the lecturers who have taught me all about the English Language. To Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fatimah Dinna Tan Sri Dr. Mohd Din, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jelani Sulaiman, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gurnam Kaur Sidhu, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zainab Mohd Noor, Dr. Faizah Abd. Majid, Dr. Chan Yuen Fook and Dr. Richard Iskandar Holmes whose classes I truly enjoyed. Your guidance and knowledge has truly inspired me.

I would like to express a special word of thanks to my course mates, friends and family who tirelessly listened to my ideas and offered encouragement when it was most needed.

A special thank also goes to my husband who supported me throughout the writing of this thesis – patiently assisting with words of assurance and the much-needed cup of coffee.