



UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**A STUDY ON CHILDREN LITERATURE PROGRAM; THE
TEACHER'S ROLE**

By

ABANG MOHD FARIZAN BIN ABANG YAKUP

Faculty of Information and Management

Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)

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Abstract

For decades, teacher has done a great job in giving guidance and shaping students. From the young age, maybe four or five month, children have started their first learning process at kindergarten. This process is a life-long learning process. The teacher's role towards the implementation of children literature program is a vital task. In Malaysia, the awareness towards the importance of children literature program still minor, especially in the rural area. It is important for educators of rural students to model the characteristics of an adult who possesses high values and morals in order to be effective. Seaton (2007), conducted research using observations and interactions with eight middle school girls in a 11 rural school. During these interactions and observations, Seaton discusses the girl's desire for students to care for their students, and the girls' desire for teachers to model good behavior so they would be encouraged to act the same. She concludes that there is a disconnect between teachers and their students. Seaton points on the usual characteristics of a rural high school: a smaller setting where everyone knows everybody and where teachers have smaller class sizes that help in creating deeper relationships

Keywords: rural area, children literature program, teacher

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

For decades, research has concluded that children's books not only provide great pleasure to readers, but they can also play a significant role in children's academic, social, and literacy success. In 1974, Sostarich reported that sixth-grade children who had been read to from an early age developed into better readers and valued reading more than did sixth graders who had not been read to, and they expected to continue reading throughout their lives. Others have determined that the more time children spend reading literature, the better their reading and writing abilities become (see, e.g., Cohen, 1968; Fox & Allen, 1983; Hepler & Hickman, 1982; Loban, 1963). Significant increases have been found in young children's comprehension and vocabulary skills (Cohen), phonological production (Irwin, 1960), complexity of sentence structure (Cazden, 1965), concept of story structure (Applebee, 1978) and of expository text structure (Pappas & Brown, 1987), and understanding of interactional patterns (Snow & Goldfield, 1983) as a result of their being read to from an early age, either at home or in school. Children who have access to literature and stories in their homes have been found to learn to read more quickly, read more fluently, and have better attitudes toward reading (Clark, 1976; Durkin, 1966; Thorndike, 1973; Wells, 1986).

Teachers who provide time for sustained silent reading, who share books and highlight book authors with children during the school day, positively influence those children's reading outside of school (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988). And the

2.1 Introduction

With growing use of children's literature in many classrooms, teachers have a greater responsibility in choosing which books they will use for literacy instruction.

There is a wide variety of children's literature from which to select. The book market is filled with children's literature, such as picture books, novels, poetry, and informational books, as well as books printed for the express purpose of teaching literacy. Additionally, current children's literature presents information on almost every subject. Some books are written to introduce a topic or concept (Murphy, 1997; Rudman, 1976). For example, books that feature alphabet letters, such as *From Acom to Zoo* (Kitamura, 1992), or that give examples, as in *My Five Senses* (Brandenberg, 1989), introduce topics that can be expanded upon in the classroom. Some books present numerous examples of a particular concept or theme (Anderson, 2002; Walsh, 2003), like the focus on the Islamic religion found in, *What Do We Know about Islam?* (Husain, 1996), *One Night: A Story from the Desert* (Kessler, 1995), or *Magrid Fasts for Ramadan* (Matthews, 1996). Some publishers supply books that feature popular characters from television or movies (Greenway, 2001; Shaloo, 1993). Children's literature is published in a broad selection of formats and covers a wide range of topics.