

A Pedagogical Innovation: An Example from Literature Class

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an innovative attempt to foster creativity in students and impart cognizance about literature. Whenever I assigned any task to my students, I encountered a shocking surprise that they came up with excellent material borrowed from net or any senior student. This made me ponder over this perplexing issue as they were reluctant to write on their own. I explored a new way to deal such situation and wrote a short story for this specific purpose and instructed them to write an analysis on their own making visible all the beauty that lies in the given short story. A class of thirty five students was divided into seven groups and was kept in mind that the passive and uncommunicative students might be helped out by brilliant peers. Discourse Analysis Approach is applied on the responses of the students and multiplicity of understanding can be brought to one point. Teachers should encourage students to write by their own and inhibit them to cram and memorize material provided by others. Teachers should welcome students' errors and it will cultivate confidence and help them to write with less mistakes. As stated by Boden (2001), creativity plays an important role in the way individuals learn. Skidmore (2000) analyzed two examples of classroom discourse between a teacher and a small group of students, which belong to the genre of „talk about texts“.

KEY WORDS: Fostering Creativity, Cultivating Confidence, Using New Methods in Teaching, Point of View

INTRODUCTION

RATIONALE BEHIND THE TASK

Teaching is, undoubtedly, a painstaking job and a meticulous teacher tries his best to find out the new ways by which better results can be obtained. I, being a teacher, ever pay heed to explore techniques and tasks for my students that may foster creativity and cultivate originality in them. Tough (1982) pointed out that satisfaction was student feelings and attitudes toward learning activities; a happy feeling or positive attitude indicated satisfaction, while an unhappy feeling or negative attitude revealed discontent.

In literature class I feel uneasy and get stuck when my students cram the notes obtained from various sources. So, to meet this challenge I attempted a new and novel way. I wrote a short story by myself and distributed its copies among my students. I kept it secret that I have authored this piece of literature and a fake name was used for this purpose so that they remain serious in this task. I was surprised when they submitted their tasks to me and I felt they were keenly interested and this activity provided me new pedagogical alternates. Jones (1996) also discussed how capabilities, self-efficacy, and personal objectives influenced one's performance and discovered that study achievement would be affected by some personal characteristics. According to Povey (1972) reading literature familiarizes students or learners with subtle vocabulary usage and new and complex syntax and through this contribute to the extension of language usage and linguistic knowledge.

Objectives

Lazar (1993) says that literature can be used as a tool for creating opportunities for discussion, controversy, and critical thinking. The following objectives were anticipated;

1. To involve students to write something by their own
2. To engage in activity that may develop students' comprehension of literature
3. To create harmony among the students and encourage group working
4. To identify the various themes in a short story whether explicit or implicit
5. To understand point of view
6. To know about the nature of characters whether round or flat
7. To pick out the narrator's tone whether omniscient or detached
8. To make students familiar with literary devices in the short story
9. To obtain students' genuine analysis i.e. without any help from any book or internet
10. To try new pedagogical approach and style

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Plot Overview

This story is about the cruel heartedness of parents, misguidance of teachers, lust for fame on the part of students and the senselessness of society. It is misbelieved that eminency is part and parcel of life which must be achieved by hook or by crook. The writer of the story focuses that how parents unduly force their children to gain high positions in exams. Resultantly permit their children (Students) to use each and every means to achieve their goal. In compendium, this short story presents a triangle that depicts least concerned attitude of parents for upbringing and grooming of their children, ultimate fanatic behavior of students and the moral grapple of teachers to give undue favor for any reason. McKay (1982) believes that in literary works settings, role relationships are predetermined and social context is taken into consideration, so it can be used for increasing the awareness of the students about language use.

In this global village, old values are being ignored and new values are emerging out. In this progressing world, parents have forgotten to pay heed to their children and their main goal has become to get more and more wealth, fame and reverence instead of moral upbringing of their children. Owing to this reason, communication gap is arising and children have ignored their basic ethical values and they just want to achieve their goals, at any cost.

The writer knows a lot about psychology and that's why she has depicted the psyche of callow students. He wants to present the true reality of life. He beseeches that it is the obligation of parents to give proper time to their children and aware them of all the vicissitudes of life. They have to put proper check and balance on them and not to pressurize them to get positions in the exams.

If parents show irresponsibility in this regard, children get astray from their objective. This story is also based about a disciple that how she becomes a victim of this cruel society. For her, attaining the position is everything. When the story opens she talks to her teacher in a very disgusting manner. The teacher tries to snub her but she is willful to snatch the position. She feels extremely crestfallen. The teacher tries to console her and promises her that he will try to give position to her but she does not realize that she will achieve this position by leaving everything. On the other hand, she also wants to meet her fiancée at a restaurant to avail her of the opportunity as her parents are at farm house. The next day, the result had to be declared and she was extremely in dole drum about what to do. At last, she calls to her teacher and spends time with him in family hotel. They spend the whole day and did all in artistic way. She was overjoyed that she lost something to get everything. Next day, she felt extremely happy-go-lucky because her name was at the top of list.

Critical Analysis by Group 1

This is a very fascinating short story that is adroitly presented a banal matter in cogent manner. In fact, if we technically analyze this story, it also reveals the idiomatic language, phrases and vocabulary in august way. He adages that it is the responsibility of parents to aware their children about all the murky ways of life as parents are much more experienced than their children. Parents must present themselves as unimpeachable personalities in front of their children because in this way they (children) follow them and ameliorate themselves in proper way. If they do not become like this, they had to eat a humble pie at the end. Parents should not to impose their aspirations on their children rather ponder over their children's abilities that in which field he or she feels charm and can prosper.

On the other hand, teachers are acknowledged as spiritual parents. They ought to give proper guidelines to the students and rectify every weakness among them. It is acrimonious that teachers misuse their authority. Because teachers are more discerners and have cognizant about the realities of life but here alarming situation is that teacher is also providing room to the students and is not paying attention to their future but is just fulfilling his lust.

Societies also ought to take an active part in this respect. In this materialistic world, people want to gain worldly fame, honor, respect, reverence, deference. In such a way, they break the trust of their parents and slaughter their honor.

The compendium of this story is that it gives us a chanting moral lesson. It gives awareness to parents to remain alert and vigilant about the activities of their children. Teachers must use their authority properly and not deprive any person from his or her right. If teachers get indulged in wrong activities, what will be the difference between an erudite person and an illiterate?

Critical Analysis by Group 2

This story is a bitter criticism on our education system. The story shows that, to get first position, is not attached with hard work and struggle rather it is attached with some other immoral deeds.

The story deals with a girl who wanted to get first position at any cost and for this she sacrifices her most valuable thing. The story is full of ironical and satirical statements.

Irony is there, when in the start of the story, she speaks to her teacher and words used for teacher are as *venerable teacher*. As we proceed our reading, we come to know that the teacher is not at all *venerable*. Another ironical statement is that, after the rash discussion of student *teacher tried to snub*.

The word *snub* is of much importance. It shows teacher's behavior toward student. He didn't want to snub her rather he was just showing. There is irony of situation that girl says to her teacher *I have every reason to be first*. The irony is that a student must have some other reasons than struggle to be at first place. *The gentle girl was burning midnight oil*. Is also an ironical line, she was not struggling in academics to get position rather she was making call to her mentor. Booking of a *family room* is another irony, they both are not family but they are taking family room in hotel.

Satire: This story is full of satire. The whole story is satire upon our educational system. Whole educational system is corrupt and there is collapse of morality and students are using illegal ways to achieve their goals and to fulfill their parent's dreams. We can observe satire when narrator sums up about conversation of teacher and student *this was the academic discussion between honor able mentor and decent disciple*. In reality discussion was not like of decent people.

In the words *Very good dear. Very good*. Student criticizes upon teacher. It is a stylistic quality of the writer that he uses adjectives to criticize e.g. when she uses the words like *shining student*, for immoral student. And there are many more satirical statements in this short narrative.

Themes

Like many other works of literature, there is multiplicity of themes. We can explore many themes in this story. Some of them are:

Injustice: Injustice is on the part of teachers that they are giving favor to a student on the bases of her attachment to them not on the bases of performance.

Carelessness: We can observe carelessness on the part of parents, that they left their daughter alone at home and she is breaking their confidence by calling her fiancé. It is also a point of view of some persons that to get first position in class was a sort of compulsion from parents which compelled her to do that sort of immoral deed, but I am not agree, my point is that it is a dream of almost every parent that their sons or daughter may get first position but it doesn't mean that they should choose illegal ways to fulfill their dreams. It was fault of girl and no one compelled her to do this.

Worldly fame: It is also very obvious theme that the girl is doing all illegal and immoral works for just worldly fame. As in text the writer describes *she lost something to get everything*. To her, marks were everything and respect was nothing.

Moral collapse: Collapse of morality and religious restriction is also an important theme of this short story.

Educational system: The story is about educational system's drawbacks that educational system is destroying. All norms and traditions related to teachers and students have been deteriorated.

Conflict: There is conflict in the mind of students that she wanted to become more famous in the society than any other student. She has shown jealousy for other students.

Style

Language: It is stylistic quality of modern writers as he uses simple and colloquial language and it is easily intelligible for every reader. The tone of the story is satirical for example the words for teacher *very good dear. Very good*.

Use of adjectives: There is super abundance of adjectives in this story. The writer has used these adjectives in order to criticize e.g.

"Shining student" "decent disciple" "honorable mentor" "venerable teacher" etc.

Interruption of narrator {point of view}: Some times narrator indulges in the short story and gives point of view e.g.

"She loved her future. She loved her career, and she loved her position indeed"

Narrator is discussing about student and her approach to get first position.

Simile: There is only one example of simile, when narrator when narrator describes girl *"Smiled as Belinda."*

Narrator: Narrator is omniscient as he knows all about the characters and knows inner feelings of them. So, at the end we can conclude that the writer is an excellent short story writer. By using beautiful adjectives, he decorates his writings. He discusses the issues of routine life and gets reader involved in the story as reader is participating in action.

Critical Analysis by Group 3

"The Princess" is a short story which has been written to explain education system. Being an omniscient narrator, he goes deep into the minds and hearts of her characters. This story is about the interaction between a student, who is lust full to get success, and a teacher, who is inhabit to use his students.

In start of story, a female student angrily says to her teacher that she has done well in her exams but another student is expected to get first position. Here, she uses an adjective “Bitch” for that very student which shows that she has an extreme kind of hate for her. The narrator, while giving ironic respect to the teacher, uses the word “Venerable”.

The irony can be observed when the teacher snubs his student,
“Mind your language, is this way to talk and get first position.”

Here, the teacher has uttered these words, shows irony because in teacher’s sense there is some other way to get first position. This also denotes how the teachers use their authority in negative way.

The writer has also used satiric tone, “Academic discussion” and “honorable mentor and decent disciple.” These are the words which have been satirically used. The narrator uses the word academic discussion but here is a discussion not at all academic. They are bargaining their matters with the policy of “give and take”.

“She loved her future, she loved her career and she loved her position.”

There is satire in these sentences in the sense that the student can do everything to get first position. It does not matter she loses, her virginity. The only thing that matters is first position.

The writer uses some adjectives for the teacher and student. For the teacher he uses;

- a) Reckless Person
- b) Venerable Teacher

For the student;

- a) Gentle Girl
- b) Cute Girl
- c) Princes
- d) Decent and Receptive

This story is multi-thematic carrying many themes in it. The very first theme that can be observed is “the collapse of morality” between students and teachers. Teachers are using their students (Female) in the bargain of marks and position and the beautiful female students use their teachers to fulfill their desires. So both the teachers and students are morally corrupt.

The other themes are “relation between students and teachers” and “strive for excellence” and “collapse of education” and “misuse of authority” on the part of teacher.

This short story gives the comparison between physical cleanliness and dirt in heart of the people. The teachers are exploiting the students to fulfill their lustful desires. In this story the teacher promises the student to give her first position but at the end he asks the student to give him something in respect and the female student agrees. There is a mistake on the part of student because she does not work hard in exams and to get good marks or position in exams, she is ready to do immoral things.

Secondly, there is blunder on the part of parents who trust their daughters blindly and do not ask what they are doing and why. They compel their children to get good marks or position in exams. So to fulfill the dreams of the parents, they cross their limit. But if the parents stress their children for position, it does not mean that they use wrong way.

Critical Analysis by Group 4

The writer has written about the evils of society like moral corruption, blackmailing, misuse of power, incapability of relationships, social injustice and disgusting education system. The story has many aspects. The main aspect of the story is moral corruptness that is prevailing in the society. A female student is indulged in moral corruptness with her teacher. She does wrong just to snatch first position. The other aspect of the story is the disgusting education system education system is not fair at all. You can get good grades through wrong way as the student does. Teachers are always looking for this kind of way to trap students. Blackmailing is also there in the story. Teacher is blackmailing his student to do wrong with him. And she is also ready to do everything just for her future. “They spent whole the day and did all in the artistic way.”

Death of relationship between a teacher and student is also there. Teacher is a spiritual father of the student, but what is he doing with his student? A shame act can be seen and also a reckless behavior. Teacher is asking his student. “When are we going to meet?” Strive for excellence is a good thing but strive through wrong is not acceptable. She says that she is not doing for herself but to “Fulfill her parents’ life with happiness and strive for excellence.” There are no any parents who want their happiness through this way. The student is claiming that she is doing for her parents but in fact she is not only deceiving her parents also but also herself as well. This is also disgusting on the part of the society as well. Society should never give any opportunity like this to get success through negative way. Restaurants are also responsible for these kinds of vulgar activities.

The writer has used the element of satire and irony throughout the story to show the bitterness of society. In following lines the writer is satirizing at teacher when she calls her teacher, “Very good dear, very good.” There is also satire when the student is going to meet her teacher “When she reached at time and it showed her punctual and meticulous behavior.” Irony has also been used to deplore what is happening in our society. The attitude of student to her teacher is ironical “She spoke fiercely and wistfully to her venerable teacher.” When

she calls teacher at midnight, the writer ironically says “This was academic discussion between honorable mentor and decent disciple.” The role of beauty is also important in the story. Grades are being awarded on the base of beauty not on the base of hard work. This is also a bitter satire on education system that there is no place for the ugly student to stand first.

The use of language is artistic and beautiful but tone remains ironical and satirical throughout the story. The teacher is called “venerable” and “honorable” and the student is called “decent” and “receptive”. There is another aspect of the story that we are Muslims, and what is happening in our Muslim society? All the negative works being done by us that has been prohibited by Islam. The student is not only deceiving her parents but also her religion by this disgusting act.

The story really gives a moral lesson. The parents must not force their children to get first position and they must make them comfortable with what they are? If they will force them they will involve in such type of wrong activities. This story is a clear warning to the society to stop these activities. And it is the responsibility of parents to take care of their children in a better way and not let them to do negative deeds

Critical Analysis by Group 5

The mentioned short-story “The Princess” is absolute depiction of our so-called modernistic society. The story is pungent satire on poor education system where teachers as well as students use unfair means in the name of “modernism” to achieve their aims. Though teaching/education is a noble profession but there are some abhorable people who are exploiting this very profession. The story calls its consideration such disgusting characters.

The story merits a lot of perspectives from government to system, teachers to students, parents and society. The story is a sort of denigration upon university system and expounds about a cute, beautiful and descent disciple who is in a specific relation with her worthy mentor. We are forecasted that there is same sort of legitimating between two of them. The story ironically sprouts when this decent disciple is speaking “fiercely and wistfully” to her “venerable teacher” to get very first position at any cost.

This exacerbates our feelings when we come to know that she is willing to snatch this top notch position whether her own personality might be damaged. The story manifests how this cute princess of her parents goes far from her respect in order to get top notch position.

If we probe into the scenario, many factors are involved and the story intervenes all these aspects. In my opinion, the first mistake is on part of our so-called Islamic government / system. There should be no modernistic education i.e. co-education, and then parents, the parents expect too much from their children refuting the only aspect that whether their children are able for it or not. Parents blindly trust upon children and do not keep an eye on them. Parents should tailor proper check and balance upon their children so that they may not involve into criminal activities. Parents rely too much and left them alone and do not pay attention at all as it is obvious in the story how the girl is making calls at midnight to her teacher, and how she is going to “avail the opportunity” for going to a restaurant with her finance while her parents are not at home.

Then the story demonstrates the part of teacher that how his “honorable mentor” is exploiting a young, beautiful girl, rather black mailing her.

Then the story demonizes the character of students also, that there are some responsibilities on the part of students also. It is stated how a young, angry beautiful girl is blind in revenge to attain his goal. “I have every reason to be first”. So she did what she should not do to “for the sake of her parents dreams” and because “She loved her future, she loved her career, and she loved her position indeed”.

1. The narrator in the story is omniscient as the narrator points out her inner feelings of revenge, anger, reckless personality.
2. The tone is satirical /ironic.
3. The language used is of course, brilliant there are idiomatic expression such as “beat about the bush “and “burning the midnight on”
4. There is plenty of adjectives which are mostly, ironically used.

Themes

The central ideas of story may be:

- Curses of modernism
- Collapse of morality
- Revenge
- Selfishness (on the part of student)
- Dishonesty (on the part of teacher)
- Exploitation
- Disloyalty
- Poor/so-called modernistic education system

As for as my point of view is concerned, there is no iota of doubt to say that the mentioned story in an excellent moral story to provide awareness especially to girls that they should be aware of their teacher, follows as well as from system. They should also keep into consideration their own personal moral values.

Critical Analysis by Group 6

The writer delineates the educational system in a splendid way. He sketches the derivative success which is achieved lacking genuine candor. The story is embellished through the tool of irony and satire. This line is an excellent example of satire:

“This was the academic discussion between honorable mature and decent disciple”

In this work, no regard is shown for the other girl, who is able to stand first in the exams. The girl is shown as indulge in frugality with her mentor, and uses mean language for the other girl. His remarks are “bitch, ugly face”. This show female has no regard for the other female. This masterpiece possesses abundance of themes, which are universal. This first theme is gainsaid from morality, it is collapsed over here. The girl shows no deference for her teacher. The teacher has no control on her. She does not prefer achieving excellent grades. She says good-bye to her prestige just for the sake of worldly eulogy.

Lack of aptitude is also shown over here. In our country meticulous pupils are not getting their status due to the dishonesty, corruption and favoritism of the teachers. These vices enervate the relation of students with their class mates. Due to these vices students suffer inferiority complex. Students follow their teachers in their pragmatic life students to behave like their teachers.

The relation of teachers and students is also portrayed artistically. The girl had no stamina to brook her teacher’s remarks. She shows censure to her teacher and berates him. Her attitude is portrayed bookish. Both are not sincere for the girl, the main contention is to achieve high marks and position. Nothing else, that’s why she makes aggressive tone in front of her teacher, as she says “You are such reckless person.”

On the other hand, teacher digresses from his real duty and indulge himself in dissemble. The teacher wants physical pleasure from girl and he exploits her by the willing of girl.

This story has the theme of blind trust and extra expectations of the parents from their children. The girl loses her honor just for the sake of fulfilling her parent’s burning desire to achieve success. They do not pay any heed to their daughter and as a result, she makes date with her fiancé and loses her reverence in the hands of her teacher.

Through it we come to know about the nature of male. Female should remain careful in their relations with male. They possess attraction for female and try to exploit them. The girl is exploited by her fiancé and teacher. The very important thing is that Islam does not allow the relation of male and female, whether they are teacher and student. Male teacher are forbidden in Islam for girls because Islam knows the nature of male. And their meeting gives birth to illicit affairs.

To conclude it can be stated that we should try our best to promote our educational department. All the Muslims must be careful in their activities and never forget the rules and regulations of Islam and don’t follow the system of English people. As they say, “Everything is fair in love and war”.

Important Quotations by Group 7

Another text analysis factor that occurs within a sentence is foregrounding that Huckin (1997) calls *topicalisation*. A sentence topic is represented by a grammatical subject of a sentence and it is the author’s decision what to put in the topic position in order to make readers see certain pieces of information as more important than others.

These below given quotations involve the real meaning of the story that is with just reading and understanding these part of speeches one can have an idea about the story itself.

“Man is more profound and deep than an unfathomable ocean”.

This is the very introductory sentence of this short story and is pregnant with thematic beauty. One can easily anticipate the plot of the story after reading the first line by the narrator and his point of view is prominent that indicates the complex nature of man. It also warns the readers to be careful in every walk of life. The first sentence gives access to the mind of the author. It is implied that the author gives a value judgment about the practice of the people.

“I would be first at any cost because everything is fair in love and war. And this is war right now. And I must be winner. I have every reason to be first. That ugly face is ignominy for me if she excels in grades”.

The Girl: This chunk of language reveals the greediness and unfair means to approach worldly targets. This is just a banal issue that has been so intensified and personalized as equal to war. The girl is of the view that she is prettier than the other girl so she must be given first position in examination. In other words, one can see a text as meant, according to Fairclough (1992), to be the product of discursive practices of: production, distribution and interpretation which are embedded in a broader field of social practices.

“You are such reckless person and have shaken my trust on you. I am so gloomy and couldn’t have my dinner just because of you.” The girl said.

The Girl: This sentence spoken by girl is meaningful and the adjective “reckless” has been used for the teacher just on the basis that he is reluctant to some extent on her first position. The girl is very sharp and tries to blackmail emotionally that she has not dined even. The reality is that she was with fiancé earlier and satiated her hunger.

She loved her future, she loved her career, and she loved her position indeed.

Narrator: This statement is very significant made by the narrator in terms of its satirical appeal for readers because this is nonsense and illogical to share bed for the sake of marks.

She dressed herself beautifully and her long black hair was floating in the air and she was more than a princess on that day. She reached in time and it showed her punctual and meticulous behavior. She was a prodigy indeed.

Narrator: The narrator is a detached one that is telling what he is seeing around him. It is also important to note his description of the events and satirical comments that make this story very interesting. Over all the narrator's use of understatements show the sensitivity of the issue.

“You just do what you have promised and I'll do the same. I know very well that no pain no gain”. She confirmed.

The Girl: This line spoken by the girl reveals the fact that she is very pragmatic and knows all about the world and there is no sign of remorse on her face rather she boldly confirms her sex as a fair play.

Conclusion

The above discussion exhibit that to get desired and fruitful results in a literature class it becomes inevitable for teachers to decide according to the students' needs. It is not necessary to repeat the stereotype methods rather try creative ways. Assign some tasks to students that are innovative in nature. From teachers' part this task invites application of a totally new method and this would foster creativity to the maximum level.

It is a malady in pedagogy that students just want to cram and memorize material provided by others. In this modern and scientific era to get material electronically is as easy as a child's play and teachers' efforts prove abortive yet it is a fact that dexterous and veteran teachers are ever prepared to meet this drastic situation. They don't follow stereotype methods rather use their brain to make students work artistically.

The ways to sort out innovations in pedagogy has always remained open and exploration of such methods ensures success in literature class. This research paper demonstrates innovation in pedagogy and claims the following techniques be followed to ensure better results;

1. A flexible teacher comes up with better results in literature class
2. Teachers' complements to students develop creativity in students
3. A better understanding of subject comes when students are personally involved in commenting a piece of literature
4. Students are full of thoughts and these thoughts need to be expressed
5. Multiple viewpoint creates a sense of respect for others in students' lives
6. A good teacher welcomes multiplicity of ideas and different viewpoint
7. Students' personal responses are a must and teachers' task is just to guide them
8. Students bring proof from the text provided for their views at hand

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Primary Source

1. Short Story "The Princess" written by Muhammad Ajmal