

USING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN EDUCATION

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Annotation: In this article, main features of children's literature, its usage in learning and teaching process are explained. Besides, some techniques and ways are suggested as extracurricular activities by the author.

Key words: Children's literature, literature-based, authentic literature, natural language, narrative and informational literature, read-aloud program, collaborative book sharing.

Children's Literature, writings designed to appeal to children—either to be read to them or by them—including fiction, poetry, biography, and history. It also includes riddles, precepts, fables, legends, myths, and folk poems and folktales based on spoken tradition.

Nobody can argue that children's literature can be most common and effective factor in children's development. All the types of children's literature is created to children's need to tell stories about people around them and world which they live in. They always help children to understand usual and crucial events easily in a childish way and make their out looking broader. Also education plays an important role in children's development. What can we do to join these two main things in this process? Now we will suggest some ideas about using children's literature in both teaching and upbringing them.

Gambrell et al. (2000, p. 2) summarize the characteristics of their approach to literature-based instruction as follows:

- Literature is used as an important vehicle for language arts instruction.
- High quality narrative and informational literature provides the basis for a consistent read-aloud program in which children are read to daily.
- Literature is the sole or primary basis for initial reading instruction, or it is a significant supplement to a basal program.
- Opportunities are provided for students to listen to and read books of their own choosing.
- Students are provided with sustained time for both independent and collaborative book sharing, reading, and writing activities.
- Discussions of literature among students and teachers are common place.

Also using children's literature in teaching foreign languages is considered to be useful way to teach culture, history and lifestyle of the country whose language is taught. Similarly, Ghosn (2002, p. 173), in summing up the reasons why authentic literature can be of value in the primary school EFL class, fails to acknowledge the difficulties that teachers of English as a foreign language inevitably face in attempting to base language teaching and learning on 'authentic literature':

1. Authentic literature provides a motivating, meaningful context for language learning, since children are naturally drawn to stories.
2. Literature can contribute to language learning. It presents natural language, language at its finest, and can foster vocabulary development in context.
3. Literature can promote academic literacy and thinking skills, and prepare children for the English-medium instruction.
4. Literature can function as a change agent: good literature deals with some aspects of the human condition, can thus contribute to the emotional development of the child, and foster positive interpersonal and intercultural attitudes.

In classroom teachers have many course books, text books and other manuals to teach foreign language. Managing the lesson time is sometimes a bit difficult because of having many things to do. In this field, there is no point of worrying, teachers can use children's literature in extracurricular activities. We suggest following activities for using children's literature in extracurricular activities;

- Organizing debates or conversations about some pieces of writings of children's literature. In this activity, teacher should select accurate literary work which is suitable for the age of learners and encourage them to read and discuss. It can improve learner's speaking skills and also critical thinking.
- Preparing some performances based on children's stories, fairy tales, legends and others.
- Organizing some competitions on reading books and writing essay in a particular theme which is based on children's literary works. It can help to improve learners reading and writing skills.

As far the upbringing function of using children's literature, learners load some ideas about the difference between evil and good, friend and enemy, love and envy, success and failure, good and bad manners. They begin to analyze their personality and try to be as desired good person which they find ideal through some stories and tales.

We want to conclude our ideas about this theme with the words of Ngugi wa Thiong'o " *Literature is the honey of a nation's soul, preserved for her children to taste forever, a little at a time!*"

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