

Integrating Research into Literature Teaching: An Emancipatory Practice

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Abstract. Various fields have documented and concretized a growing interest in the nexus between research and teaching. There is, however, a paucity of literature explaining how this integration can happen in a literature class, instigating epistemological and pedagogical turns among literature teachers. With the shifts in literature education, the challenge of this integration has even doubled, yet it remains relatively uncharted territory. This paper is, therefore, informed by a two-fold intent—discuss three possible approaches to this integration and suggest measures ensuring quality research-integrated literature teaching.

Keywords. Integration, emancipatory research, literature teaching.

Context and Concerns

In the years we have taught literature, we have observed that our learners' initial step of awareness and later understanding of what they are reading is their spontaneous, authentic response to the literary text. Such a response demonstrates either the depth of their appreciation or their inability to articulate their understanding. In turn, a literature teacher is challenged to keep the flow of discussion learner-centered and engaging. Oliver (1994) argued that asking learners to read irrelevant literary selections allows them to suffer the tortures of the classroom. While we have been warned by existing studies reiterating this observation, the same problem persists.

The problematics of literature teaching remain and have grown exponentially—teachers required learners to respond to antiquated readings to which they could not relate or even understand the language, to say the least. It should be clear, however, that we do not antagonize the teaching of classics as they significantly reflect our cultural heritage. Instead, we encourage fellow teachers to heed the call of teaching them in a way that our learners can relate to and establish a more profound connection. It is such a relationship that they recognize between their readings and their own lives and values. Needless to say, if the fundamental purpose of literature teaching is to make them engaged readers, then the readings and tasks should be engaging first.

How Should We Teach Literature?

As social quandaries have doubled in shape and volume, not to mention the proliferating fake news, disinformation, mental illness, and extrajudicial executions, the core purpose of literature teaching is further questioned. The challenge is not merely to make literature classes interesting but also to make them more socially relevant. In his *Literature and Society*, Lopez (1961) first articulated the significance of Filipino authors' historical sense and liberative works. This articulation grants our learners the right to engage in the struggle for human rights, social justice, and national liberation. Contemporary studies have discussed the benefits of learning beyond the classroom (Claiborne et al., 2020). It involves teaching-learning tasks that influence learners to think and interpret critically. The paradigm shifts in literature education invite us to reflect if our "classic" readers' response approach of Rosenblatt (1978) remains relevant or if we need to advance our practice while challenging the old, predictable path we have taken for years.

If you were to question how your teaching of literature has interrogated social norms or deviated from

the typical teacher-centered approach, would you say that you have gone far and made great strides? How did you make your literature teaching socially relevant? Kalamees-Ruubel & Läänemets (2012) claimed that the individual and social spheres converge in a literature class, where “mutual influence results in the creation of a new self-image for the nation and the individual. The role of literature in developing an individual, ethnic group, or nation has always been significant “(Mihkelev, 2011, p. 103). We, hence, aim to underscore in this paper that our teaching should be mediated by critical discourses, nationalistic narratives, language, and intertextuality while working on historical and cultural contexts (Fairclough, 2003). To put it another way, we shall learn to imbibe and embody a FREE Critical Paradigm. Complementary to this statement, in the keynote of the late Francisco Sionil Jose, a Philippine National Artist in Literature, delivered at the National Conference on Literature Education in 2018, he mentioned that literature is the capital of the nation. It is where our roots can be traced back and our aspirations are understood.

Our national literature, folklore, and traditions have formed our emergent nationalism (Dorson, 1966). Literature articulates and addresses our pursuit of national history. It even provides the nation with a mythological, folkloric hero and father figure to admire. The question is, how do we ensure that our teaching is imbued with this aspiration? We contend that literature teachers play a significant role in bringing the issues to the fore while allowing ourselves to contemplate how we can help our learners develop social-cultural-historical sensitivity in our literature class. We may even borrow the classic words of Levine (1970) to ask, how can our literature teaching be more human, self-involving, and integrative? After all, we are responsible for developing patriotic, nationalistic, and progressive learners who deeply respect human rights (Department of Education [DepEd], 2022).

Parungao-Callueng and Clarin (2022) reminded elsewhere in this issue that while literature teachers can choose their literary texts for learners to decipher, the selection should stem from a deliberate engagement with the texts as a discipline and a subject. The choice is heavily informed by a more profound sense of purpose—interrogating and challenging patriarchy, prejudices, and inequality. We strongly believe it is high time to challenge parochial and mechanical teaching and foster transdisciplinary literature teaching to develop and advance self-understanding and social awareness. Integrating research into literature teaching can maximize the possibilities of achieving this goal. Through research, teachers and learners can engage in a dynamic process of knowledge production while transcending essential learning and giving voice to the revolt of, if we may borrow Dostoevsky’s title to fit what we mean, “the insulted and the injured.”

Unfortunately, teaching literature with research integration to intensify social sensibility has scarcely begun, perhaps due to personal agenda, political pressure, or the ideals of being nonpartisan or nonpolitical, thereby upholding the teaching of literature merely “for its own sake.” Have we lacked the motivation to teach literature as a liberating process or emancipatory practice? Thus, have we not moved from the areas and ideals of New Criticism that demote political content? In our attempt to contemplate how far the teaching of literature has deviated from Ordonez’s (2001) claim that “no longer would literature be taught as artifacts of dominant values but as living examples of emancipatory practice” (p. 103), we felt, however grudgingly, that we had lost the track. Is our teaching of literature for the people held in low repute?

Our idea of emancipatory practice neither means tossing out the aesthetics of literature nor setting them aside. We mean fostering a kind of teaching that lets learners relate their state of affairs—personal, political, social, and emotional—to the readings while encouraging them to conduct small-scale research grounded in social realities. From this view, learners can understand the essence of literary texts as an artifact of significant human experience. We even find that our learners are encouraged to examine their thoughts and feelings and interrogate their culture-bound biases while trying to understand the data they collect from the field.

Are We Integrating Research Into or With Teaching Literature?

Education specialists and curriculum experts have explored the gains derived from the nexus between research and teaching (Hattie & Marsh, 1996; Obwegeser & Papadopoulos, 2016). A growing interest in this subject has likewise been identified. In this article, however, we want to emphasize that we intend to foster more heuristic integration. We, thus, prefer to call it “integration into” rather than “integration with.” In our understanding, integrating research into literature teaching is a process that makes research an essential element of literature teaching, which is far different from the latter of just coalescing them. While there are several ways to integrate research into teaching, our basic premise is simple—learn concepts and acquire skills one at a time.

Teachers should not expect learners to produce grand literary research without introducing them to its fundamentals. The teachers, too, must be a model for learners in conducting research.

Dr. Venancio L. Mendiola, a renowned literature professor, cautioned us, though not verbatim: We do not call ourselves literature teachers if we are just a page away from our learners. In the workshop we delivered at the International Conference on Literature Education in 2021, we materialized how research could be inductively and deductively integrated into teaching, suggesting research-enabling activities as the footing that promotes socially relevant knowledge production and transformative literature education.

While many senior high schools have been offering research as a discipline, there is a global call for an intensification of its goal since learners have, arguably, not fully realized the value and implications of research for their optimum learning. Integrating research into literature teaching in basic education may address the need for university-and-employment-ready graduates who are equipped with the essential competencies (Weller, 2016). DepEd has taken several initiatives in the Philippines to promote, inculcate, and sustain a research culture among elementary and secondary schools in the country. Senior high school learners have been introduced to two practical research subjects, exposing them to various paradigms (Roxas, 2020).

Becoming a research-oriented literature teacher poses personal and professional challenges. We must, hence, remain grounded and contemplate some questions.

1. How do I see research being integrated into my teaching?
2. Am I capable of fostering research in my discipline?
3. Am I open to taking new paths to see how research can benefit my teaching?
4. How accepting am I of pedagogical challenges to redesign my teaching?
5. Is my academic community on board with my new plan to get learners interested in research?

Our questions also require a collaborative effort from other academic community members.

Overview of the Integration

Table 1

Our Collective Understanding of Integrating Research Into Literature Teaching

Literature Teaching and Research Nexuses <i>(Deepening)</i>	FREE Critical Paradigm in the Contextualized Worktext in Literature Teaching (LEAP, Inc., 2021)				FREE Paradigm (Cruz, 2009)			
	Frees the mind	Radicalizes the classroom	Encourages scholarship	Ensures love for learning	Feed the text	Read the text	Enhance the text	Enjoy the text
Research-Led	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Research-Based	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Research-Informed	✓	✓	✓	✓				

Table 1 presents the convergence of literature teaching and research nesting within the elements of the Free Critical Paradigm proposed by the organization and the Free Paradigm of Dr. Isagani R. Cruz.

Published studies have explored various teaching and research integrations, primarily in higher education, specifically in the built environment discipline (Griffiths, 2004); considering the importance of disciplinary spaces (Healey, 2005); and disciplinary community and academic department members (Jenkins et al., 2007). While these studies have substantially discussed integration, the contention remains that no specific integration is considered the best among others (Elsen et al., 2009; Jensen, 1988; Visser-Wijnveen et al., 2010).

No specific local study has yet integrated research into literature teaching and in the context of basic education. Our purpose is not to present empirical data about integration, but we aim to suggest the following integrations for literature teaching.

1. Research-Led Literature Teaching

Learners draw a clear understanding of the literary topic/creative work through related literary research or criticism about it. In other words, the literature class is influenced and informed by research outcomes or existing findings. The literature teachers, on the other hand, function as experts who can present their works that will serve as a starting point for learners to take on the role of critics.

2. Research-Based Literature Teaching

Learners generate literary research outcomes or existing findings. They are the ones who conduct the small-scale research with other learners or their teachers as their co-researchers. Undertaking emancipatory or qualitative literary research activities will provide them with authentic research experience, allowing them to embody their research disposition, apply disciplinary knowledge, and learn or unlearn concepts and skills.

3. Research-Informed Literature Teaching

Learners function as research participants in a study spearheaded by their teachers. The primary purpose of this integration is to assess and improve literature instruction. The learners as the data source will be invited to engage in in-depth and reliable data collection procedures. The teacher will play a dual role as research developer and researcher, requiring them to remain data-driven, truthful, reflexive, and contemplative.

The dimensions of research-teaching links imply that research-led literature teaching emphasizes research content and process but predominantly positions learners as an audience for disciplinary research.

On the other hand, research-based literature teaching puts the learners in a more challenging position. It expects that learners are conceptually and methodologically prepared for this integration. Research-informed literature teaching demands significant effort from both the teachers and learners. They will work collaboratively with a common goal of improving the teaching and learning process.

Table 2*Research and Teaching Literature Nexuses*

Nexus	Emphasis	Purpose	Learner - Teacher Roles	Interaction	Learning Activities
Research-Led Teaching	Research content	Incorporate novel findings into the teaching of literary topics, including own research	Learners as critics Teachers as researchers	Passive	Attend as an audience at a research congress or literature conference Read and critique literary criticisms/research to draw knowledge
		Incorporate novel findings into the teaching of literary topics, including own research			
Research-Based Teaching	Research process	Provide authentic research and inquiry-based learning experiences	Learners as researchers Teachers as research partners	Active	Conduct qualitative literary research integrated with social issues Team up with fellow learners or teachers
Research-Informed Teaching	Teacher inquiry	Assess the level of performance in literature class Evaluate instructional or learning goals in literature class Take measures to improve literature teaching and learning	Learners as research participants Teachers as research developers and researchers	Active	Conduct collaborative research to assess or evaluate one's teaching and learning

Table 2 shows the various research and teaching nexuses applicable to literature teaching. As researchers looked more closely at the issues, they found the need to establish a more profound knowledge of how literature teachers understood research and its implications for their teaching.

Integrating research into literature teaching to develop learners' social sensibilities is more of a skills-based, methodological, and pedagogical question for the literature teacher. The primary reason we feel lost in the process is our resistance to pedagogical innovation. We argue against hostility toward change or the way to change without experiencing it first. The hostile stance impedes us from liberating ourselves from unyielding, rote learning, thereby killing the lifeblood of the literary text we teach.

Integrating research into teaching is an emancipatory practice that necessitates significant aspects of the curriculum.

1. Orientation/Nature of the Discipline and Instructional Goals with Research

- a. Our instructional goals should extend beyond identifying literary elements and traditions. Learners should acquire fundamental skills in writing criticism or conducting emancipatory research to reconnect and rearticulate social issues from the text to real-life situations. We may use previously published gender critiques such as ours as samples in feminism (Jocson, 2020) and gay literature (Wright, 2017), and others. The literary text will then serve as a space where learners determine and challenge binary oppositions and discourse tensions.
- b. Literature teaching may also be oriented toward advancing learners' perspectives and developing research dispositions while deepening their understanding of the texts, elements, and traditions for developing qualitative literary research questions.
- c. We introduce learners to the existing knowledge base (research-led) related to our literary topic at the beginning of a module, a quarter, or a semester. After they are introduced to research findings or methods, taking the position of a critic, we invite them to advance their roles in our curriculum—a rung of the ladder.

2. Teacher and Learner Roles in Integrating/Embedding Research Into Teaching and Learning Literature

- a. We must consider the teacher and learner roles in integrating research into teaching and learning. As literature teachers, we may be positioned as experts in conveying the outcomes of our literary research or those of others in the discipline. The learning module/lesson activity shall support learners' acquisition of disciplinary research skills. In that case, however, we must be role models and use our research experience to assist them.
- b. If, on the contrary, our language arts/literature curriculum is set up so that learners can do their research on their own or with our help as research assistants, we shall take on a guiding or partnership role.

3. Nature of Learning Tasks Learners Undertake

- a. Integrating research into literature teaching requires learners to take a deeper approach to learning. Our learning tasks, hence, should be developmental. We must prepare enabling activities that will help them achieve greater outcomes. The typical small-group discussions or think-pair-and-share about their initial, authentic responses to their readings help elicit critical ideas while fostering active collaboration and communication. When we feel they are ready to conduct the individual tasks, we may ask them to do guided-small-scale literary or arts-based research.
- b. Inquiry-based learning involves our learners' direct engagement with criticism and research. Therefore, we need to promote the inquiry process in our literature class. We may teach them the importance of specifying a problem, develop an affirmative stance

on criticism, and engage them in high-level questioning. We shall prepare our learners to undertake independent emancipatory research projects, perhaps called qualitative literary term papers, at the end of a quarter or semester (research-based). Introducing learners to our research outputs can increase their depth of understanding of social realities as mirrored by their readings.

Recommendations/Directions

While there are numerous ways to make the integration possible, we recommend the following measures.

1. Use the Most Recent and Innovative Research Findings and Debates in the Discipline

- a. Encourage learners to use knowledge repositories, Scopus-indexed literary or language journals, and other highly reputable journals to advance their readings and write criticism and qualitative literary research.
- b. Let learners use conference proceedings, abstracts, or news articles about current literary research findings to learn about different points of view, niches, and contemporary literary research topics. This approach helps them show how knowledge is made in the field and how it is affected by context and debate.
- c. Encourage Grade 11 or 12 learners to be members of organizations of literature enthusiasts or scholars in the country. Their membership will encourage them to participate in knowledge production and dissemination. They will also find their niche in the discipline.

2. Maintain Knowledge Repositories and Scholarly References Regularly

- a. Adding conference papers, presentations, or journal articles that have come out recently to reading lists or course packs is another way to get learners interested in new research results.
- b. Encourage learners to start their emancipatory research blogs and invite others to follow them. It may increase not only awareness but also interest in collaboration.
- c. Learners should be required to use the online library and correctly cite references in their papers.

3. Use Assessments that are Related to Research and Inquiry

- a. Develop a research culture involving faculty members and their learners.
- b. Create a school-based conference for literary research, literary criticism, and poster presentations to disseminate knowledge and assess learners' outcomes.
- c. Promote peer review of learners' works to develop their capacity to appraise research.

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