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Developing Competence In Literary Text Analysis Through Contextual Tasks In Literature Lessons

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Abstract: This thesis examines the didactic role of contextual tasks in developing students' competence in literary text analysis. Contextual tasks are understood as activities that place a literary text within meaningful interpretive situations and require students to connect textual evidence with historical, cultural, ethical, and personal contexts. The study argues that literary competence develops more effectively when students move beyond reproducing plot information and engage in explaining motives, comparing viewpoints, interpreting artistic details, and supporting conclusions with textual evidence. The findings show that contextual tasks promote deeper comprehension, independent interpretation, critical reasoning, and the transfer of literary knowledge to new situations.

Keywords: literary text, contextual task, literature lesson, literary competence, interpretation, reading comprehension, textual evidence, critical thinking, contextual learning.

Introduction

Literature education is not limited to acquiring information about writers, genres, characters, or plots. Its central purpose is to develop a reader who can understand the structure of a literary work, recognize the relationship between form and meaning, interpret implicit ideas, and justify an individual response through textual evidence. When classroom tasks focus mainly on recalling events or reproducing ready-made interpretations, students may know the content of a work without acquiring the competence necessary for independent analysis. Contextual tasks offer a productive way to overcome this limitation because they transform reading into a meaningful intellectual situation in which students use knowledge to solve a concrete interpretive problem.

Contextual teaching is based on the principle that learning becomes more meaningful when new knowledge is connected with prior knowledge, experience, and relevant situations [1]. This principle corresponds closely with literary reading. Rosenblatt's transactional approach emphasizes that literary meaning emerges through interaction between reader and text under particular circumstances [2]. Literary analysis can therefore be strengthened when students consider how meaning relates to social experience, historical conditions, cultural codes, artistic choices, and the reader's interpretive position.

The study employed theoretical analysis, comparative analysis, and didactic modelling. Research on contextual learning, reader-response theory, situated cognition, literary understanding, and reading comprehension was examined to identify principles applicable to literature lessons. Contextual tasks were analysed according to the cognitive operations they activate: locating textual evidence, establishing semantic relationships, interpreting character motivation, connecting details with broader contexts, comparing readings, and producing evidence-based conclusions. The methodological model was also informed by the view that knowledge is situated in activity and context rather than being fully separable from the circumstances in which it is used [3].

The analysis indicates that contextual tasks contribute to literary competence when context functions as an interpretive resource rather than as background information. Providing historical information before reading does not automatically deepen understanding. The didactic effect appears when students use that information to explain a character's decision, interpret a conflict, or reconsider the meaning of an episode. Context then becomes part of the reasoning process, and students learn to select relevant information and determine whether it is supported by the text.

A contextual task may also connect a literary situation with a contemporary or familiar problem. When students compare a character's moral choice with a similar dilemma in present-day life, they must distinguish between the values represented in the text and their own judgments. This encourages them to move beyond unsupported reactions and construct interpretations through evidence. Such work corresponds to the view that literature instruction should provide inquiry-based opportunities and multiple tools for interpreting texts [4].

Another important result concerns artistic details. Students often identify metaphor, symbol, landscape, dialogue, or portrait description without explaining their function. A contextual task changes this procedure by placing the element within a meaningful question. Instead of merely naming a symbol, students may explain how its repeated appearance changes the understanding of the protagonist or how a landscape description reflects a turning point in the narrative. Such tasks integrate literary terminology with practical interpretation and gradually convert isolated theoretical knowledge into analytical competence.

Contextual tasks also support the comparison of perspectives. Literary works frequently contain conflicting voices, incomplete information, and ambiguous motives. Asking students to reconstruct an event from different viewpoints, compare possible interpretations, or determine which conclusion is better supported by evidence develops interpretive flexibility. Langer's conception of literary understanding highlights the importance of building and revising evolving understandings while reading [5]. Contextual activities support this process because new evidence or a new interpretive situation can challenge an earlier conclusion.

The effectiveness of contextual tasks depends on maintaining a balance between context and text. Excessive emphasis on biography, history, or personal experience can move attention away from the literary work itself. Contextualization should therefore lead students back to textual evidence. A productive task begins with a meaningful situation, requires the learner to identify relevant details in the work, and ends with an interpretation that can be discussed and justified.

The findings also suggest that contextual tasks should be sequenced according to cognitive complexity. At an initial level, students can connect an explicit detail with a familiar context. At a more advanced level, they can integrate information from different parts of the text, examine historical or cultural conditions, evaluate alternative interpretations, and formulate an independent conclusion. This progression is consistent with research emphasizing explicit comprehension instruction together with meaningful reading, discussion, and interpretation [6]. Competence is therefore developed through a system of increasingly demanding contextual situations rather than through isolated difficult assignments.

Contextual tasks provide an effective didactic mechanism for developing competence in literary text analysis. They help students connect textual details with broader meanings, apply literary concepts in interpretive situations, compare perspectives, and justify conclusions with evidence. Their value lies not in adding external information to a lesson, but in creating conditions in which students actively use context to construct and verify meaning. When systematically integrated into literature lessons, such tasks transform literary analysis from reproduction of predetermined interpretations into independent, evidence-based, and reflective reading.

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