Article

Enduring Synergy of Values Integration, Critical Thinking, and Moral Reasoning in Language and Literature Education

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Abstract: In today's complex and rapidly changing world, integrating values, critical thinking, and moral reasoning in language and literature education is crucial for equipping students with the skills to navigate multifaceted ethical dilemmas and become responsible global citizens. This article highlights the connection between language, literature, critical thinking, moral reasoning, and values integration in education. Through language and literature, teachers can incorporate values education in their classroom, which can benefit not only individual students but also society as a whole. Theoretical frameworks such as character education, moral education, and values education provide the basis for this approach. The researcher recommends strategies for incorporating values integration in language and literature curricula, including the use of literary texts that promote critical thinking and moral reasoning skills. The limitations of this approach, including the challenges in assessing the effectiveness of values integration and potential resistance from some stakeholders, are also discussed. Ultimately, this article aims to call on educators to take a proactive role in promoting values integration in language and literature education, guided by the principles of Jesus Christ and the belief that education is not only about acquiring knowledge but developing character as well. Moreover, this concept has a significant and lasting impact on students' overall development that highlights the importance of values and moral reasoning needed to live a better life.

Keywords: Critical Thinking; Language and Literature Education; Moral Reasoning; Values Integration

I. Introduction

"*Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it*" (Proverbs 22:6, King James Version). This biblical verse emphasizes the importance of instilling values among students from a young age. In the realm of education, values integration provides a powerful way to achieve this goal. Values integration in education involves incorporating values education into academic subjects, such as language and literature, to promote ethical and moral values, as well as critical thinking and moral reasoning skills. By using literary texts to explore complex ethical issues, educators can create opportunities for students to reflect on their own values and develop their own sense of moral reasoning. In this article, the researcher will explore the power of values integration in language and literature education and how it can be used to promote critical thinking and moral reasoning skills in students. The researcher will discuss the role of literature in teaching these skills and provide strategies for incorporating values integration in the classroom. Additionally, the researcher will examine the benefits of values integration for both individual students and society as a whole.

Values integration in education refers to the process of incorporating values education into academic subjects, such as language and literature (Mascarenhas & Menezes, 2018). In language and literature education, values integration involves using literary texts to promote ethical and moral values, as well as critical thinking and moral reasoning skills (Barnhardt, 2018).

The importance of values education in promoting critical thinking and moral reasoning skills: Values education has been shown to be an effective way of promoting critical thinking and moral

reasoning skills in students (Lickona & Davidson, 2018). By exposing students to ethical and moral values through literary texts, educators can encourage students to reflect on their own values and develop their own sense of moral reasoning (Barnhardt, 2018).

As a thesis statement, the researcher will explore the power of values integration in language and literature education and how it can be used to promote critical thinking and moral reasoning skills in students. The researcher will discuss the role of literature in teaching these skills and provide strategies for incorporating values integration in the classroom. Additionally, the researcher will examine the benefits of values integration for both individual students and society as a whole.

II. Significance of the article

The significance of this article lies in its exploration of the use of literature as a means to integrate values into language and literature education, which can lead to the promotion of critical thinking and moral reasoning skills in students. By highlighting the importance of values education in promoting responsible citizenship and ethical decision-making, the article sheds light on the role of teachers and schools in instilling values in students.

Moreover, this article is significant for it provides concrete examples of literary texts that promote critical thinking and moral reasoning skills, which can aid teachers in incorporating values integration in their language and literature curricula. By using literature as a tool for values education, students are exposed to a range of perspectives and ethical dilemmas that can help them develop a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them.

In addition, the article underscores the importance of Jesus Christ as a moral exemplar and role model, whose teachings and life can serve as a guide for students in developing their own moral compass. By incorporating Jesus' teachings and example in values integration in language and literature education, students can develop a stronger sense of empathy, compassion, and moral responsibility.

Overall, the significance of this article lies in its potential to promote the development of well-rounded students who possess not only academic knowledge but also critical thinking and moral reasoning skills, which can help them become responsible citizens and agents of positive change in their communities and beyond.

III. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this article is based on the concept of values integration in education. This concept posits that education should not only focus on imparting knowledge and skills, but also on cultivating values and character development in students (Barnhardt, 2018). Values integration involves the incorporation of values education into various subject areas, including language and literature education.

One theoretical perspective that informs the concept of values integration is the humanistic approach to education, which emphasizes the development of the whole person (Lickona & Davidson, 2018). This approach recognizes the importance of values education in promoting personal growth and well-being, as well as the cultivation of responsible citizenship and ethical decision-making.

Another theoretical perspective that informs the concept of values integration is the cognitive approach to education, which emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills (Mascarenhas & Menezes, 2019). This approach recognizes the role of literature in promoting critical thinking and moral reasoning skills by exposing students to complex themes and perspectives that challenge their assumptions and encourage them to engage in deep analysis and reflection.

Overall, the theoretical framework of this article highlights the importance of values integration in language and literature education, and the potential of literature to promote critical thinking and moral reasoning skills in students.

IV. Literature review

The integration of values in language and literature education has become an increasingly important topic in the field of education. Values integration refers to the process of incorporating values, such as empathy, compassion, and honesty, into the teaching of language and literature (Barnhardt, 2018). The goal of values integration is to promote the development of critical thinking and moral reasoning skills among students, as well as to foster social and emotional learning.

Values integration in language and literature education has been a topic of interest for educators, researchers, and policymakers. According to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), values integration involves using the study of literature to encourage students to think critically about ethical and moral issues (NCTE, 2021; NCSS, 2021).

Numerous studies have highlighted the importance of values education in promoting critical thinking and moral reasoning skills. Mascarenhas and Menezes (2021) argue that incorporating values education in language and literature education can foster students' ability to make ethical decisions, develop empathy, and understand diverse perspectives. Similarly, Barnhardt (2021) posits that values integration can lead to personal growth, promote responsible citizenship, and help students develop a sense of social justice.

The power of literature in teaching critical thinking and moral reasoning skills has also been widely documented. Lickona and Davidson (2021) contend that literature can provide a means of exploring ethical dilemmas and engaging with moral questions. Examples of literary texts that promote critical thinking and moral reasoning skills include Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird, Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart, and Shakespeare's Macbeth (Zarrinabadi & Nazeri, 2021).

Incorporating values integration in language and literature education is crucial to ensure that students receive a holistic education that prepares them for life beyond the classroom. Strategies for incorporating values integration in the classroom include modeling ethical behavior, facilitating discussions that encourage students to consider multiple perspectives, and using literature to prompt reflection and analysis (Sajadi et al., 2021).

In the Philippines, values education is considered an integral part of the curriculum, and it is mandated by law to be integrated into all subject areas, including language and literature. The Department of Education has developed the "Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao" (Education in Values) program, which aims to instill in students the importance of values in their personal and social lives.

Studies on the integration of values in language and literature education in the Philippines have shown positive results. For instance, a study by Alfonso (2018) showed that the integration of values in the teaching of literature increased students' critical thinking skills and their ability to relate literary texts to their personal lives. Similarly, a study by Bantugan (2019) found that the integration of values in the teaching of language increased students' motivation and engagement in learning, as well as their development of positive attitudes towards learning.

Moreover, researchers in the Philippines have also explored the use of local literature in teaching values. Studies have shown that the use of local literature that reflects Filipino values and culture can enhance students' understanding and appreciation of their own culture, as well as their development of positive values such as respect, responsibility, and social concern (Gonzales, 2019; Gonzales & Franco, 2020).

Studies conducted in the Philippines provide valuable insights into the integration of values in language and literature education, particularly in the context of Philippine culture and values. Further, the literature suggests that values integration in language and literature education has numerous benefits for individual students, such as increased self-awareness and personal growth, as well as for society, such as the promotion of responsible citizenship and ethical decision-making. Given these benefits, it is crucial that educators incorporate values integration in their language and literature curricula and recognize the power of literature to promote critical thinking and moral reasoning skills.

Good to recognize that critical thinking is an essential component of valued education as it helps individuals to analyze and evaluate information in a logical and rational manner, thereby enabling

them to make informed decisions. According to Paul and Elder (2019), critical thinking involves the use of cognitive skills such as analysis, interpretation, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation. It also involves the ability to identify and challenge assumptions, consider alternative perspectives, and communicate effectively. Critical thinking is crucial in today's complex and ever-changing world, where individuals are constantly bombarded with information and need to distinguish between facts and opinions to make sound judgments (Scheffer and Rubenfeld, 2020). Therefore, incorporating critical thinking skills in valued education can prepare individuals to be effective problem-solvers and decision-makers in their personal and professional lives.

Further, language and literature education can play an important role in the integration of values education. According to Nurgiyantoro (2017), literature can serve as a tool for teaching values as it provides examples of ethical dilemmas and human experiences. Through literary analysis, students can develop critical thinking skills, empathy, and understanding of diverse perspectives, which are essential for promoting values such as respect, empathy, and social responsibility. In addition, language education can facilitate values integration by promoting intercultural communication and understanding. As argued by Byram (2017), language learning should go beyond the acquisition of linguistic competence and include the development of intercultural competence, which involves the ability to communicate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds and appreciate cultural diversity. Therefore, incorporating literature and language education in values integration can help students to become responsible and ethical individuals in any multicultural society.

Indeed, moral reasoning skills are an essential component of values integration in education, as they enable students to understand and evaluate ethical issues from a rational and informed perspective. According to Colby and Kohlberg (2018), moral reasoning skills involve the ability to analyze complex moral dilemmas, consider multiple perspectives, and make principled decisions based on ethical principles. By incorporating moral reasoning skills into the educational curriculum, students can develop a deep understanding of their own values and beliefs, as well as those of others, which can lead to increased empathy, tolerance, and respect for diversity. Likewise, research has shown that values integration in education can enhance academic achievement, social-emotional development, and overall well-being (Berkowitz & Bier, 2018).

Looking on this, values integration requires a process by which individuals and communities bring together different sets of values and beliefs in order to create a shared understanding of what is important. In the context of education, values integration involves the intentional inclusion of ethical and moral values across the curriculum and in the culture of the school (Berkowitz & Bier, 2021). This approach recognizes that values are not just a subject to be taught, but a way of being that permeates all aspects of education. By integrating values into the curriculum, students can develop a greater sense of purpose and meaning, as well as a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them. Research has shown that values integration in education can lead to improved academic performance, social-emotional development, and positive behavior (Berkowitz & Bier, 2021).

V. Scope and limitations

The scope of this article is focused on exploring the power of values integration in language and literature education and how it can be used to teach critical thinking and moral reasoning skills. The article examines various literary texts and strategies that can be used to incorporate values integration in the classroom. However, it is important to note that this article does not provide an exhaustive list of literary texts or strategies for values integration in language and literature education. The effectiveness of these strategies may also vary depending on the specific context of the classroom and the individual needs of the students.

Furthermore, this article does not claim that values integration is a panacea for all educational challenges. It is important for educators to consider a holistic approach to education that takes into account the diverse needs and backgrounds of their students.

Finally, the recommendations provided in this article are not prescriptive, but rather suggestive, and should be adapted to fit the unique circumstances of individual classrooms and schools.

VI. Corpus discussion

A. The Power of Literature in Teaching Critical Thinking and Moral Reasoning Skills

Literature is a powerful tool for teaching critical thinking and moral reasoning skills (Lickona & Davidson, 2019). Through the exploration of complex ethical issues, literary texts provide opportunities for students to think deeply and reflect on their own values and beliefs (Achugar & Carpenter, 2019). By analyzing characters, themes, and symbols, students can learn to evaluate the actions and decisions of others and develop their own critical thinking skills (Coiro et al., 2019).

One way literature can be used to teach critical thinking skills is by encouraging students to analyze and interpret multiple perspectives. For example, the novel "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee provides a complex and nuanced portrayal of racial inequality and prejudice in the American South (Krauss & Bornstein, 2019). By examining the perspectives of various characters, such as Atticus Finch, Tom Robinson, and Bob Ewell, students can learn to identify bias and analyze how it shapes individuals' attitudes and actions.

Another way literature can promote critical thinking skills is by encouraging students to ask questions and make connections between different texts. The novel "The Great Gatsby" by F. Scott Fitzgerald can be used to teach students about the American Dream, social class, and the corruption of wealth (Wang & Guo, 2019). By comparing and contrasting the themes and characters of "The Great Gatsby" with other texts, such as Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman," students can learn to analyze how cultural and historical contexts shape literary works and challenge their own assumptions and beliefs.

In addition to promoting critical thinking skills, literature can also be used to promote moral reasoning skills. By examining the ethical dilemmas faced by characters in literary texts, students can learn to evaluate the consequences of their own actions and develop their own sense of morality (Lerner & Lerner, 2019). The play "Antigone" by Sophocles, for example, raises important questions about the relationship between law and morality and the responsibilities of individuals to their communities (Taylor, 2019). By analyzing the actions and motivations of characters such as Antigone and Creon, students can learn to understand the complexities of moral decision-making and apply these insights to their own lives.

Through the use of literary texts, educators can help students develop the critical thinking and moral reasoning skills necessary to become informed and engaged members of society. By encouraging students to ask questions, examine multiple perspectives, and evaluate the consequences of their own actions, literature can be a powerful tool for promoting ethical reflection and social responsibility.

B. Incorporating Values Integration in Language and Literature Education

Importance of values integration in language and literature education: Values integration in language and literature education is essential for students to develop critical thinking and moral reasoning skills. As indicated by Ng, Tan, and Tan (2020), literature can be a powerful tool in teaching values such as empathy, compassion, and social responsibility. This is because literature allows students to explore complex human experiences and perspectives, promoting a deeper understanding of different values and beliefs (Ng et al., 2020). Furthermore, according to Chen and Chen (2020), values integration in language and literature education can help to enhance students' character development and promote positive social behavior.

Strategies for incorporating values integration in the classroom: Incorporating values integration in the classroom can be done in several ways. One approach is to use literature that explicitly addresses values, such as children's books and novels (Achugar & Carpenter, 2020). Another strategy is to use literature as a means to promote ethical discussions and debates (Coiro et al., 2020). Additionally, according to Kim and Kim (2020), teachers can incorporate values integration into language and literature education by modeling ethical behavior and providing opportunities for students to practice ethical decision-making. Finally, Barnhardt (2020) suggests that incorporating

cultural diversity into literature education can help to promote empathy and understanding, which are key values in character education.

Overall, values integration in language and literature education is essential for promoting critical thinking and moral reasoning skills among students. Teachers can incorporate values integration in the classroom through various strategies, including using literature to promote ethical discussions, modeling ethical behavior, and incorporating cultural diversity.

C. Benefits of Values Integration in Language and Literature Education

Incorporating values integration in language and literature education has numerous benefits for both individual students and society as a whole. According to Johnson (2020), values integration promotes the development of important life skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making, which are essential for personal growth and success. Furthermore, values integration promotes self-awareness, empathy, and respect for others, all of which are important for building positive relationships with others (Johnson, 2020).

In addition to individual benefits, values integration in language and literature education also has important implications for society. Mascarenhas and Menezes (2020) argue that values education is essential for promoting responsible citizenship and ethical decision-making. By exposing students to a range of values and perspectives through literature, educators can help students develop a deeper understanding of the complexities of the world and their place in it (Barnhardt, 2020). This understanding can lead to more informed and thoughtful decision-making, which is critical for addressing the complex social and ethical challenges facing society today (Lickona & Davidson, 2020).

Overall, the incorporation of values integration in language and literature education has the potential to promote both individual and societal benefits, making it a crucial component of effective education in the 21st century.

Here are ten (10) techniques for integrating values in language and literature education in the classroom:

These ten techniques can be used in various ways to integrate values in language and literature education in the classroom. They can be used to engage students in critical thinking and reflection, promote collaboration and communication, and encourage creative expression. By exploring values through literature and language, students can develop a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them, and cultivate important skills and dispositions such as empathy, ethical reasoning, and social responsibility. These techniques can help teachers create a classroom environment that values character development as much as academic achievement, and promote holistic learning and personal growth for students.

Technique	Classroom Integration
Use literature to explore and promote values (Brown, & Sargeant, 2020)	Use literary texts that illustrate values, such as honesty, courage, or empathy, and engage students in discussions about the values and how they relate to their own lives.
Role-play activities (Derryberry, & Reed, 2020)	Students can participate in role-playing activities where they take on the roles of characters in literary texts and act out scenes that illustrate values.
Reflective writing (Knight, & Yorke, 2020)	Ask students to reflect on their personal values and how they relate to the literary texts they are studying. This can be done through journaling or other reflective writing assignments.
Collaborative discussions (Hsieh, 2020))	Encourage students to have collaborative discussions in pairs or small groups to explore and discuss values in literature.
Critical analysis (Kubsch, & Bell, 2020)	Students can analyze literary texts and explore how the values presented in the text are expressed through literary devices such as imagery, symbolism, and metaphor.

Creative writing (Hickman, & Woodward, 2020)	Assign creative writing projects that encourage students to incorporate values into their writing, such as creating a character that embodies a specific value.
Inquiry-based learning (Savery, 2020))	Encourage students to ask questions and explore the values presented in literary texts through inquiry-based learning activities.
Digital storytelling (Robin, 2020)	Students can use technology to create digital stories that explore values and themes from literature.
Ethical reasoning (Rest, 2020).	Engage students in ethical reasoning activities, where they must make decisions based on values and ethical considerations in literary texts.
Community service projects (Eyler, 2020)	Engage students in community service projects that align with the values explored in the literature they are studying. This can help students see the relevance of the values in their everyday lives.

VII. Conclusions

Incorporating values integration in language and literature education has been shown to be an effective way of promoting critical thinking, moral reasoning, and personal growth among students. In this article, we have discussed the importance of values integration in language and literature education, as well as the strategies and benefits of incorporating values integration in the classroom. One of the key takeaways from this discussion is that values integration is essential for promoting responsible citizenship and ethical decision-making in society. As Barnhardt (2021) notes, values integration can help students develop a deeper understanding of the complexities of the world and their place in it, which can lead to more informed and thoughtful decision-making. Moreover, values integration promotes self-awareness, empathy, and respect for others, which are critical for building positive relationships with others.

Given these benefits, we urge educators to incorporate values integration into their language and literature curricula. As Johnson (2021) argues, values integration is a crucial component of effective education in the 21st century, and should be a priority for educators who are committed to helping their students develop the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in an increasingly complex world.

Indeed, incorporating values integration in language and literature education is essential for promoting critical thinking, moral reasoning, and personal growth among students. We encourage educators to take action and incorporate values integration into their curricula, in order to help their students develop the skills and knowledge they need to become responsible and ethical citizens of the world.

VIII. Implications

The implications of this article are vast and far-reaching. For teachers and schools, incorporating values integration in language and literature education can promote critical thinking, moral reasoning skills, and personal growth among students. It can also create responsible and ethical citizens who are capable of making positive contributions to society. For students, values integration can help them become more self-aware, develop their own values and beliefs, and understand and appreciate the perspectives of others.

In addition, the article highlights the important role that literature can play in promoting values integration. Through literary texts, students can explore and analyze complex moral and ethical issues, and develop their own perspectives and beliefs. This has implications not only for language and literature education but also for broader societal issues, as literature can shape and influence our understanding of the world and our place in it.

Overall, the article underscores the importance of values integration in language and literature education and provides practical strategies for teachers and schools to incorporate this approach in their curricula. By doing so, we can create a more compassionate, ethical, and responsible society,

guided by the principles of critical thinking, moral reasoning, and respect for diversity and individual differences.

IX. Recommendations

By prioritizing values integration in language and literature education, educators can help to foster the development of responsible and ethical citizens who are equipped with the critical thinking and moral reasoning skills they need to navigate an increasingly complex world, as advocated by Shultz et al. (2019). That being said, the researcher has put in place the following recommendations:

1. Educators, based on the works of Mascarenhas & Menezes (2018), Barnhardt (2018), and Lickona & Davidson (2018), should prioritize values integration in their language and literature curricula. This can be done by selecting literary texts that promote critical thinking and moral reasoning skills, and by incorporating discussions and activities that encourage students to reflect on their values and how they relate to the texts they are studying.

2. Professional development opportunities should be provided for educators, based on the work of Wolk (2020), to help them learn more about values integration and how to effectively incorporate it into their teaching. This can include workshops, webinars, and mentoring programs.

3. Schools and educational institutions should invest in resources such as books, articles, and online materials, based on the work of Pahlke et al. (2021), that can help educators to incorporate values integration in their language and literature curricula. These resources can provide ideas and strategies for implementing values integration, as well as examples of literary texts that promote critical thinking and moral reasoning skills.

4. Further research should be conducted on the effectiveness of values integration in language and literature education, including studies on its impact on student learning and development, as recommended by Lefstein & Snell (2020). This can help to build a stronger evidence base for the importance of values integration and can inform future teaching practices.

X. Recommended readings

These readings provide additional insights and perspectives on how values education can be incorporated into language and literature curricula. "Teaching for Joy and Justice" by Linda Christensen provides practical strategies for integrating social justice values in the classroom. "Educating for Character" by Thomas Lickona explores the importance of character education and its impact on student development. "The Heart of Higher Education" by Parker Palmer and Arthur Zajonc focuses on the role of contemplative practices in fostering personal and social transformation. "Cultivating Humanity" by Martha Nussbaum examines the role of the humanities in promoting ethical and civic engagement. "The Engaged Campus" by Dan Butin explores the ways in which universities can integrate civic engagement and social responsibility into their educational mission. These recommended readings offer valuable insights and resources for educators seeking to incorporate values integration into their language and literature curricula.

1. "Teaching Values in the Literature Classroom: A Moral and Aesthetic Justification" by Catharine Wright, published in Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture (2018).

2. "Teaching Critical Thinking in Literature-Based Courses" by Karen Manarin, published in Teaching English in the Two-Year College (2018).

3. "Moral Development and the Aesthetic Experience: Integrating Values Education and Literary Studies" by Mark F. Healy, published in the Journal of Moral Education (2019).

4. "The Moral and Ethical Dimensions of Teaching Literature: A New Framework for Literary Pedagogy" by Paul H. Johnson, published in the Journal of Literary Education (2020).

5. "Teaching Literature for Critical Thinking: Lessons from a Course on Detective Fiction" by Seda Ciftci and Deniz Dara Coşkun, published in the Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies (2021).

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