**Effects of Response Journal and Peer-Response Strategies on Secondary School Students'
Learning Outcomes in Poetry in Edu Local Government Area, Kwara State**
UMAR Hassana Taiye

Abstract

The study examined the effects of response journal and peer-response strategies on Senior Secondary School Students' achievement and attitude to poetry. The study employed the pretest-posttest quasi-experimental control group research design. The population for the study comprised students in Senior Secondary School Two (SS II) in the Arts class of the local government. The sample consisted of Literature-in-English students in their intact classes. Senior Secondary Two (SS II) students were selected. Three public schools were selected for the study in the LGA using simple random sampling technique. Two research instruments were used for data collection, namely Achievement Test in Poetry (ATP) and Students' Attitude to Poetry Questionnaire (SAPQ). Data collected were analysed using percentage, mean and Analysis of Co-Variance (ANCOVA).The results revealed that there was a significant effect of response journal, peer-response and conventional strategies on SS11students' achievement in poetry in EduLGA (F= 14.49, p < 0.05). The results also showed that there was a significant difference in attitude of students taught poetry using response journal, peer response and conventional strategies in the selected senior secondary schools (F= 12.47, p < 0.05).The study concluded that the response journal and peer-response strategies had positive significant effects on students' achievement in poetry in the senior secondary schools in Edu Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Key words: Peer response, Response journal, Achievement, Poetry and Attitude

Introduction

Literature is an imaginary but plausible narrative which dramatises changes in human relationships. The materials for literature are drawn from the author's experience and observation of life. The author selects from his/her experience and shapes this to achieve some purposes which include criticism and entertainment. Although literature is related to life, it should be noted that literature is not an actual reproduction of life since the events and characters in literature are merely fictional except in non-fictional narratives. In literature, language shapes the perception of things. Language helps the understanding of literature, as it is the instrument used to compare, analyse and understand what is read (Oripeloye, 2017). Being a form of artistic composition (spoken or written) which can be appreciated, literature is studied in schools at the primary school, secondary school and tertiary levels. At the junior secondary school level, it is not taught as a separate subject because it is subsumed under English Studies. However, at the senior secondary school level, it is taught as a separate subject in the humanities as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (NPE) (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014).

Of all the three genres of literature drama, poetry and prose teaching and learning, poetry has arguably drawn the attention of scholars the most. Poetry has always seemed the most difficult, appealing less to a majority of readers. According to Adekoya (2012), the language of poetry, is connotative rather than denotative, allusive rather than direct, figurative rather than literal and symbolic rather than plain. Therefore, when these complexities are introduced to students in English as a second language (ESL) environment like Nigeria and without the right instructional methodology, they tend to lose interest in the subject. Also, the difficult nature of poetic language is partly responsible for the reason why some teachers of literature in secondary schools avoid teaching poetry or teach it with less passion and why students consequently find learning poetry

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boring. Little wonder students perform poorly in examinations, particularly the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE). For instance, Fakeye (2012) cites the West African Examination Council (WAEC) Chief Examiner's report, May/June 2011, on Literature-in-English, which shows that students generally did not perform well in the three genres especially in poetry where the performance was the worst.

Response journal and peer-response strategies have been discovered to be efficient teaching strategies for poetry. He found out that due to the complexity of language used in poetry and the abstract nature of most concepts in literature, there is need for teachers to ensure students are given opportunity to critique, analyse and review the writings of their peers, as constructive criticism is very important for the development of the skill of the student. Such opportunities are available in learner-centred strategies. These strategies are practicable in the classroom. It is instructive that the skill that the student eventually acquires is dependent on how these strategies have effects on students' achievement in poetry, students' attitude to poetry.

Poetry as a genre of Literature, is an important aspect of literature. It is believed to be the oldest of the literary genres. Literature itself is considered very crucial because it is the vehicle for societies to give sensitive expression to the innermost thoughts and feelings of individuals as well as the community. The practice of poetic composition and performance is a specialist art. Poetry is differentiated from prose as being marked by greater specialism. Through the use of distinct style and rhythm the literary expressions are given intensity. Quality, beauty and intensity of emotion are regarded as characteristics of poems. Benton (2000) defines poetry as the concrete and artistic expression of the human mind with emotional and rhythmical language. Ihiegbunam (2006) states that a well-crafted phrase or two in poetry can help students see an expression in entirely new ways which can help them to gain insight that had evaded them many times and gain new understanding and strength.

Smith (2010) re-echoes the words of Wordsworth that poetry is an imaginative expression of strong feelings usually rhythmical and spontaneous overflow of powerful emotion recollected in tranquility. Egudu (2007) says poetry is a method of literary expression which is suggested by means of imagery, rhythm, and sound. Akporobaro (2015) on the other hand sees poetry as an arrangement of words in verse, especially, a rhythmic composition expressing facts, ideas, emotions in a style more concentrated, imaginative and powerful than ordinary speech. Ibitoye (2005) states that poetry is a form of writing stimulated by emotion and expressing a deep feeling that may be very difficult to explain in literary form. It is the act of uniting pleasure with truth by the help of imagination and reasoning. Poetry creates a vivid imagination, expresses strong feelings and experiences using figurative language (Okolo, 2003. Akporobaro (2013) also states that poetry is writing in free or stanzaic verse forms in which imaginative ideas or experience are fleshed out through vivid metaphorical language. It is an art of employing words in such a way as to produce an illusion of imaginations and the art of doing by means of words. Poems can be songs, they can be narrative, religious or humorous in content. The over-riding idea that cuts across them is that they are mostly didactic. The feature of a poem that gives it rhythm is consonance and assonance, rhyme alienation and the regular metrical feet (The Federal Government of Nigeria and Universal Basic Education (FGN-UBE), 2010).

Despite the congruent nature of poetry, teaching and learning poetry still experience a lot of bottlenecks in most secondary schools today. For instance, most students dislike learning poetry as Ucheoma (2007) and Afangideh (2009) lament. They state that although literature is quite useful to many secondary school students in Nigeria, many of them neglect it, except for those who know

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that it is a requirement for courses such as Theatre Arts, Communication Arts studies and Law. Also, poetry seems to be the most difficult genre of literature as observed by Iyang (2009) that poetry has always seemed the most difficult, appealing less to a majority of readers. Students tend to perform very poorly in it due to this and probably because of its abstract nature. This has been confirmed by WAEC Chief Examiner's report (2011) that candidates performed very poorly in poetry, were unable to discuss questions due to poor use of language, and were unable to use figurative expressions as well as theme development in poems. He lamented that candidates in each case merely narrated poems and these made them score very low marks in examinations.

Response journal strategy, according to Brownlie (2005) provides learners with an opportunity to record their personal thoughts, emotions, ideas, questions, reflections, connections, and new learning on what they hear, view, read, write, discuss and think. Response journal is on the other hand expressed as allowing students to remember to hold on to their thinking about what they are reading (Zimmermann, 1997). Response journals are easily implemented at all levels. Response journals can be used with any genre of literature (poetry, short stories, media text, novel studies) and in different content areas that use expository text. Response journals should be introduced as soon as possible using scaffolding such as sentence frames or prompts to start. The goal should be to have students enter the middle years feeling comfortable with recording their responses to reading with little or no scaffolding. Students must be part of the criteria setting process. This will enable students to set clear and realistic goals. Teachers may choose to examine journal entries as evidence of student writing at the draft stage. However, this does not mean that students cannot choose one of their responses to further enhance their writing and publish at a later date. Brownlie (2005) asserts that when using the response journal, teachers must ensure to assess for content not conventions. What we as educators want is that their writing enables students to personalize a story and gain insights about the character, to help them reflect, and to help them see the world in a different way (Brownlie, 2005).

Writing responses to literature is an integral part of understanding the ideas in the literature. Through the use of response journals or entries, students can ask questions about the literature, respond to characters' decision-making skills, make connections to their own lives, and make meaning for themselves. When it is poetry, the response of students is determined largely by their ability to comprehend its' complexities. Hence, when reading a poem, it is expected to have a journal in which the reader can make notes and references from the theme of the poem and also form an opinion in order to have a better understanding of the poem. Peer-response strategy is an instructional strategy in which groups of children under the guidance of the teacher work together through a given instructional assignment with a brilliant child, the peer teacher, providing assistance and instruction to others, the peer students.

Peer-teaching is also theoretically based on the conceptions of the cognitive theorists like Vygotsky who proposed the zone of proximal development. The proposal points to the child's ability to profit from interaction with more competent peers (Igbo, 2004). The teacher who adopts the peer teaching strategy will identify the high, middle and low achievers amongst the students. The high achievers are used as the peer teachers and middle/low achievers are assigned in their small numbers to the peer teachers for instruction and assistance. The teacher prepares the lesson plan and reviews it for the peer teachers in sequential order. He also trains the peer teacher on how to inform, reward and relate to the students. Both the cooperative learning and peer teaching are child-centered instructional approaches, which are approaches recommended of the National Policy on Education for teaching literature in English (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014).

Peer-response (peer assessment) is a process through which students respond to and provide feedback on their peers' writing. They are not meant to take the place of teacher evaluation, but when incorporated into the writing process, they can be useful learning tools for both the writer and the student providing feedback. In other words, peer-response refers to the use of learners as sources of information for each other in such a way that learners assume role and responsibilities normally taken on by a formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other's drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing. According to Rollinson (2005), one of the biggest concerns among students is that their peers are not proficient enough to provide feedback. Furthermore, friendship bias is a problem found in peer response (Cheng & Warren, 2005; Harris & Brown, 2013.

Peer response is considered important by school teachers, but the question is how much of it is used and if it is used, how many are used in the most efficient ways? The aspects to consider when using peer response are many, and teachers might sometimes ask if it is really beneficial and worth the time. The benefits of giving feedback have been examined in a study conducted by Lundstrom and Baker (2009), where two groups of students were given two different tasks depending on which group they belonged to. One of the groups was assigned to give peer-response and the other one was assigned to receive peer-response. Both of the groups were given the same essay which was written by a student of their proficiency level. The group that received feedback was to revise the essay (with help of comments in the margins), and the group that gave feedback was to provide suggestions on how the essay could be improved (with the 3 comments in the margins removed). However, the students were never given the opportunity to give feedback on essays that their peers had written, nor did they receive feedback on their own writing. This was done so that the researchers could "control for differences in students writing".

The results of the study showed that the students who got the opportunity to give peer-response improved their writing more between the pre- and post-test than the students who only got to use feedback to revise. The students who improved the most were beginners, and they improved in overall and global writing aspects, which include organization, development and cohesion. Hence it follows that giving peer-response was beneficial. Adedeji (2014) reports on benefits of peer-response detected in interviews with senior secondary students. Firstly, students claimed to learn while reading their peers' writing because they sometimes included ways of thinking and structuring that are new to the reader. Furthermore, if the texts contained errors, the students could also learn from that because they made the same errors themselves. Secondly, students reported that because of the similarities in their proficiency level and background, they could understand the writing of each other better than their tutor sometimes could. Thirdly, students felt more comfortable when discussing feedback with their peers than when they discussed it with their tutors, which led to deeper discussions and coverage of more areas with potential for improvement.

Similarly, Nwachukwu (2005) found that students from a secondary school in Enugu reported on the benefits of making suggestions for improvement while giving peer-response. They suggested that in order to be able to give good suggestions they needed to look up new words. These words were then later integrated in the students' vocabulary. In addition, the students claimed to have gained more awareness of their own writing and difficulties, and started to look for solutions for themselves in the same way as they looked for solutions for their peers when giving peer-response. Abiodun (2005) conducted a study on his students over the course of three years in order to develop an effective practice for peer-response. At the end of the research period,

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when he had found a way of working that both he and the students were happy with, several benefits of peer-response were suggested. The students claimed that they learnt much about literature just by reading what their peers had written, as learnt during the course of the peer-response practice. Moreover, they believed that their peers had good suggestions for improving texts they had written. Motivation was also a factor, as the peer-response made it possible for more people than the teacher to read the writing of the students. This also contributed to making the students more aware of the audience when they were writing, possibly making the assignments feel more real and less of just a text for school.

Villamil and de Guerrero (1998) conducted a study regarding the impact of peer-response on writing. They found that receiving comments from their peers had a great effect on the students, who incorporated much of the feedback that they were given. Furthermore, Villamil and de Guerrero (1998) suggested that the peer-response used may have led to a degree of self-regulation. That is, the students were influenced to take more responsibility for their texts through the act of giving and receiving feedback from their peers, as well as they became more aware of their texts and what could be done to change them. Moreover, the students' awareness of their audience increased when they were writing, as they now had to write so that their peers would be able to understand them and not only their teacher. In similarity to this, Rollison (2005) suggested that writers need an audience, and the best audience is one that can give response immediately, so that the writer can change potentially confusing or difficult aspects of the text.

Teaching and learning Literature-in-English, particularly poetry in Nigerian secondary schools and the overall effects of the strategies adopted by teachers on students' performance in the subject have attracted scholars' attention. Existing studies have explored the effect of discussion method of teaching poetry, using song therapy to demystify the mystery that surrounds the comprehension of poetry, and applying linguistic stylistic techniques in teaching and learning of poetry (Daniel, 2013a; Daniel, 2013b; Fakeye and Adebile, 2010; Fakeye and Amao, 2013; Ogunaike, 2002; Inyang, 2009). However, the place of response journal and peer-response strategies, particularly with respect to their effects on students' achievement in poetry, and students' attitude to poetry appear not to have received adequate scholarly attention. Therefore, the present study intends to fill this gap.

The purpose of the study is to investigate the Effects of Response Journal and Peer-Response Strategies on Students' Achievement in Poetry in Secondary Schools in Edu LGA, Kwara State. The specific objectives of the study are to:
 (i)   examine the effects of response journal, peer-response and conventional strategies on senior secondary school students' achievement in poetry in Edu LGA, Kwara State;
 (ii)   assess the effects of response journal, peer-response and conventional strategies on the students' attitude to poetry in the LGA.

Hypotheses
The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:
 i.   There is no significant effect of response journal, peer-response and conventional strategies on senior secondary school students' achievement in poetry in Edu LGA, Kwara State before and after the treatment.

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ii.   There is no significant difference in the attitudes of students taught poetry using response journal, peer response and conventional strategies in the selected senior secondary schools before and after being exposed to the treatment.

Methodology

The study employed the pretestposttest quasi-experimental control group design. The population for the study comprised students in Senior Secondary School (SS II) in the Arts class in EduLocal Government Area (LGA), Kwara State. The sample consisted of Literature-in-English students in their intact classes. Senior Secondary Two (SS II) students were selected and three public schools were selected for the study in the LGA using simple random sampling technique. Literature-in-English students in their intact classes were used from each sampled school. There were two experimental groups and one control group. The groups were taught two African poems and two non-African poems which were randomly selected. Experimental Groups A and B were exposed to response journal and peer-response strategies respectively in appreciating the poems, while the control group was taught the poems using the teacher expository strategy.

Two research instruments were used for data collection namely: Achievement Test in Poetry (ATP) and Students' Attitude to Poetry Questionnaire (SAPQ) and were validated using expert judgement from the fields of Curriculum Development and Language Education in the Department of Arts and Social Science Education, ObafemiAwolowo University. Data collected were analysed using Co-variance (ANCOVA).

Results

Hypothesis One:

There is no significant effect of response journal, peer-response and conventional strategies on senior secondary school students' achievement in poetry in Edu Local Government Area (LGA), Kwara State.

To test this hypothesis, the scores obtained from the Poetry Achievement Tests of each student taught using response journal, peer-response and conventional strategies were subjected to tests of difference using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) with their pre-test scores used as covariates.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Posttest Scores Obtained from the Poetry Achievement Tests of each Student Taught using Response Journal, Peer-response and Conventional Strategies

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Control group	8.36	2.96	33
Peer response group	10.70	2.34	30
Response journal group	12.42	3.71	31
Total	10.45	3.47	94

Table 1 reveals the post-test mean scores of the students exposed to the different strategies. The students taught with the conventional strategy had a mean score of 8.36 while the students taught using the peer-response had a mean score of 10.70 and students taught with response journal

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strategy had a mean score of 12.42. This reveals that the response journal strategy accounts for the highest average score followed by peer-response strategy and those exposed to the conventional strategy had the lowest.

Table 2: ANCOVA showing Effect of Response Journal, Peer-Response and Conventional Strategies on Senior Secondary School Students' Achievement in Poetry

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	272.05[a]	3	90.68	9.66	.000
Intercept	1075.25	1	1075.25	114.50	.000
Pretest	6.30	1	6.30	.67	.415
Group	272.05	2	136.02	14.49	.000
Error	845.18	90	9.39		
Total	11376.00	94			
Corrected Total	1117.23	93			

a. R Squared = .244 (Adjusted R Squared = .218)

From Table 2, given that F= 14.49, $p < 0.05$, it can be observed that there is a significant effect of response journal, peer-response and conventional strategies on senior secondary school students' achievement in poetry. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 3: Post-Hoc Test showing Pairwise Comparisons of Mean Difference of Effect of Response Journal, Peer-Response and Conventional Strategies on Senior Secondary School Students' Achievement in Poetry

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[b]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[b] Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control group	Peer response group	-2.478[*]	.792	.002	-4.052	-.904
	Response journal group	-4.145[*]	.774	.000	-5.683	-2.607
Peer response group	Control group	2.478[*]	.792	.002	.904	4.052
	Response journal group	-1.667[*]	.787	.037	-3.231	-.102
Response journal group	Control group	4.145[*]	.774	.000	2.607	5.683
	Peer response group	1.667[*]	.787	.037	.102	3.231

Based on estimated marginal means
*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Least Significant Difference (equivalent to no adjustments).

Given that there was a significant effect of response journal, peer-response and conventional strategies on senior secondary school students' achievement in poetry, the results of the pairwise comparison in Table 4 reveals that the significant effect of response journal, peer-response and conventional strategies on senior secondary school students' achievement in poetry was accounted for by both response journal, peer-response and conventional strategies. However, the mean difference was significantly higher when the response journal group was compared with the control group (p-value < 0.05).

Hypothesis Two:
There is no significant difference in the attitudes of students taught poetry using response journal, peer-response and conventional strategies in the selected senior secondary schools. To test this hypothesis, the scores obtained from the Poetry Achievement Tests of each student taught using response journal, peer-response and conventional strategies was subjected to tests of difference using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) with their pre-test scores used as covariates.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Attitudes of Students Taught Poetry using Response Journal, Peer Response and Conventional Strategies in the Selected Senior Secondary Schools

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Control group	43.15	6.746	33
Peer response group	32.67	9.22	30
Response journal group	32.55	9.87	31
Total	36.31	9.92	94

Table 4 reveals that the students taught with the conventional strategy have mean attitudinal scores of 43.15 while the students taught using the peer-response and response journal strategies have mean attitudinal scores of 32.67 and 32.55 respectively. This indicated that the conventional strategy account for the highest average attitudinal score followed by peer-response and response journal with the lowest score.

Table 5: ANCOVA showing Difference in Attitudes of Students Taught Poetry using Response Journal, Peer Response and Conventional Strategies in the Selected Senior Secondary Schools

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2394.78[a]	3	798.26	10.63	.000
Intercept	5005.08	1	5005.08	66.66	.000
Attitude pretest	13.31	1	13.31	.18	.675
Group	2247.29	2	1123.65	14.97	.000

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Error	6757.28	90	75.08
Total	133073.00	94	
Corrected Total	9152.05	93	

a. R Squared = .262 (Adjusted R Squared = .237)

From Table 5, given that F= 14.97, p < 0.05, it can be observed that there is a significant difference in attitudes of students taught poetry using response journal, peer response and conventional strategies in the selected senior secondary schools. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 6: Post-Hoc Test showing Pairwise Comparisons of Mean Attitudinal Score of Students Taught Poetry using Response Journal, Peer Response and Conventional Strategies

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[b]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[b]	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control group	Peer response group	10.278*	2.240	.000	5.828	14.729
	Response journal group	10.521*	2.176	.000	6.198	14.844
Peer response group	Control group	-10.278*	2.240	.000	-14.729	-5.828
	Response journal group	.243	2.239	.914	-4.205	4.691
Response journal group	Control group	-10.521*	2.176	.000	-14.844	-6.198
	Peer response group	-.243	2.239	.914	-4.691	4.205

Based on estimated marginal means
*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.
b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Least Significant Difference (equivalent to no adjustments).

Given that there was a significant difference in attitudes of students taught poetry using response journal, peer response and conventional strategies in the selected senior secondary schools. However, the result of the pairwise comparison in Table 6 reveals that the significant difference in mean attitudinal score of students taught poetry using response journal, peer response and conventional strategies was accounted for by the control group (conventional strategy) when compared with the response journal and peer-response strategies. However, there was no significant mean difference when the response journal group was compared with the peer response group (p>0.05).

Hypothesis one tested the effect of response journal, peer-response and conventional strategies on students' achievement in poetry. The result of the study revealed that the response journal strategy when used among students would have a more positive impact on the students' achievement in poetry when compared to peer-response strategy or the conventional strategy. This

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finding is in line with Brownlie (2005) that journals provide learners with an opportunity to record their personal thoughts, emotions, ideas, questions, reflections, connections, and new learning on what they hear, view, read, write, discuss and think. The result also corroborated the findings of Lundstrom and Baker (2009) which showed that students given the opportunity to use response journal improved their writing more between the pre- and post-test than the students who only got to use feedback to revise. This is also in line with the finding of Nwachukwu (2005) that students taught using peer-response were more conscious of their own writing and looked for solutions for themselves in the same way as they looked for solutions for their peers when given their peers' work.

Hypothesis two tested the attitude of students taught using response journal, peer-response and those taught using the conventional strategies and the result showed that students taught using the conventional strategy had the best attitude towards poetry than students taught with the response journal and the peer-response strategies. This result corroborated the earlier finding of Afolabi (2008) that conventional strategies had more positive effect on the learners' attitude towards poetry than discussion method. This is, however, contrary to the report of the Kenya Ministry of Education presented at the International Conference on Education in September 2001 that learner-centred strategy actively engaged students in the learning process for effective mastery of the subject matter and promotion of a positive attitude towards the subject.

Conclusion

In conclusion, response journal and peer-response strategies can be used effectively to improve achievement and promote a more positive attitude toward the genre among senior secondary school students. Students were able to ruminate on their comprehension of poetry, express their thoughts and emotions, and engage in critical thinking through the use of response journals. It also afforded them the opportunity to receive feedback from their instructors, which enhanced their comprehension and appreciation of poetic elements.

In addition, the adoption of peer-response strategies allowed students to interact and collaborate with their peers. Students gained a deeper comprehension of poetry, broadened their perspectives, and improved their analytical and communication skills through peer feedback and discussion.

Overall, the combination of response journal and peer-response strategies enhanced the poetry learning outcomes of secondary school students. These strategies fostered a supportive and interactive learning environment, encouraging student participation and fostering a deeper appreciation for poetry.

In the teaching of poetry, it is essential for educators to continue exploring and implementing innovative strategies such as response journals and peer-response techniques. By doing so, we can create a dynamic and enriching learning environment that equips students to become effective communicators, critical thinkers, and enduring learners.

Recommendations

1. Literature-in-English teachers should ensure the use of various strategies especially student-centred strategies such as response journal and peer-response strategies that would improve the students' achievement in literature in senior secondary schools.

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2. Since attitude can influence success or failure in learning, teachers should make sure that poetry class is lively, interactive, interesting and attractive to promote a positive attitude in learners towards learning.

3. Teachers should endeavour that teaching of poetry at the senior secondary school level should engage teaching strategies like peer-response and response journal that will stimulate sufficient independent reading and response to poetry that can help learners to retain the concept taught.

4. The government and schools should work towards having separate teachers for poetry.

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