Analysis of Classical and Modern Literature in English Language Teaching

Mia Angela M. Cancela*, Nissha Mykaela Casanova, Marjorie C. Paz, Jasmin Kyle A. Ricafrente, Bea Bianca M. Trinidad

College of Education, Polytechnic University of the Philippines - Taguig Campus, General Santos Ave, Lower Bicutan, Taguig, Metro Manila

***Corresponding Author**

DOI: https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.1026EDU0675

Received: 11 October 2026; Accepted: 16 October 2026; Published: 02 November 2026

ABSTRACT

Proposals by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to reduce General Education (GE) units have placed the position of literature in Philippine higher education in question, compounding long-standing problems in English Language Teaching (ELT) such as inadequate teacher preparation and a persistent gap between curricular intent and classroom practice. This qualitative narrative inquiry examined how students and faculty at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) Main Campus narrate the role of classical and contemporary Literature in English in developing critical thinking, cultural understanding, and language proficiency under these constraints. Narratives were gathered from ten students of the College of Arts and Letters and the College of Education through semi-structured interviews and an online written interview form, and from two faculty members who teach Literature in English, and were analyzed using the constant comparative method. Eight axial categories emerged and were clustered into five themes: literature as mirror and window; from reading the word to reading the world; language growth through affective engagement; classical and contemporary texts as complementary stances; and institutional limit-situations. Students uniformly opposed the removal of literature from the curriculum, and faculty corroborated that literary study builds analytical skill, vocabulary, and civic awareness while also identifying a widespread "fear of reading." Classical texts were valued for analytical rigor and historical depth, and contemporary texts for immediacy and emotional connection. Integrating Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory with Freire's Critical Pedagogy, the study proposes that aesthetic, lived-through reading is the entry point to critical consciousness and that institutional constraints operate inside, not outside, the reader–text transaction. It argues that literature's value in ELT is integrative, since language, criticality, and citizenship develop together, and translates this argument into concrete strategies: stance-sequenced lessons, classical–contemporary text pairing, scaffolded theoretical language, problem-posing dialogue, and creative assessment.

Keywords: Literature in English, classical and contemporary literature, English language teaching, transactional theory, critical pedagogy, narrative inquiry, General Education curriculum

INTRODUCTION

Recent changes in Philippine higher education have revived debate over the place of literature in the General Education (GE) curriculum. Proposals by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to reduce GE units and consolidate humanities courses have drawn sustained objection from higher education institutions and academic organizations (GMA News Online, 2026; Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2026). At the center of this debate is a question this study takes up directly: what does literature contribute to students' critical thinking, cultural competence, and language proficiency, and what is lost when its curricular space contracts? Answering that question requires the perspectives of the students who study literature and of the faculty who teach it.

The debate unfolds within wider systemic problems. The Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II, 2025) reported a wide gap between the intended and the implemented curriculum, with little evidence that current curricular goals are being met, and attributed implementation problems to weak teacher

preparation, insufficient professional development, scarce instructional materials, and poorly aligned curricula. These problems weigh heavily on literature teaching in ELT, where literature is expected to serve at once as a vehicle for language learning, critical literacy, and cultural formation. Prior studies indicate that many English teachers received little specific preparation for teaching literature and that no shared instructional model guides them (Durante, 2025; Lopez, 2024).

The post-pandemic shift to digital and blended learning has compounded these difficulties, particularly in resource-poor institutions where teachers lack the materials needed to adapt literature instruction (Del Rosario, 2024). Teachers must also balance Western canonical texts with Philippine and other contemporary literatures, yet existing guidelines offer little help in selecting texts. As a result, the potential of literature for English language learning remains underrealized. This study therefore investigates how students of the College of Arts and Letters and the College of Education at PUP, together with faculty who teach Literature in English, narrate their experiences of classical and contemporary literature.

Statement of the Problem

Studying Literature in English in higher education requires students to be proficient in English, to attend to the nuances of literary language, and to think critically about difficult concepts and ideas. Although these outcomes are central to the College of Arts and Letters and the College of Education at the PUP Main Campus, little is known about how students themselves experience literature courses, the texts assigned to them, and the social contexts in which reading takes place. Equally little is known about how faculty members negotiate text selection and adapt their teaching to curricula and institutional policies. This study examines these student and faculty narratives in order to inform the teaching of Literature in English. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do students construct and narrate their experiences in learning Literature in English at the College of Arts and Letters and the College of Education, PUP Main Campus?
2. How do students narrate and make sense of the challenges they encounter in learning Literature in English?
3. How do students' narratives reveal their beliefs and perspectives about the teaching of Literature in English?
4. How do students narrate the strategies they use, and would use as future teachers, in response to these challenges?
5. How do students and faculty narrate the influence of institutional context and available support on the teaching and learning of Literature in English?

Thesis Argument

Classical and contemporary literature in English can foster Filipino students' critical thinking, cultural awareness, language proficiency, and postcolonial cultural identity, and these outcomes develop together rather than separately. This integrative potential, however, is not adequately harnessed in Philippine English language classrooms because of a gap between theory and practice sustained by insufficient teacher training, the absence of principled text-selection frameworks, and policies that treat literature as dispensable. Reducing literature's curricular space would therefore remove one of the few sites in higher education where language learning and critical consciousness are cultivated in the same act of reading.

Theoretical Lens

This study draws on two theories. Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory explains how readers make meaning. In this view, meaning resides neither in the text nor in the reader alone but is evoked in the transaction between them, as readers bring their experiences, traditions, and knowledge to bear on the text (Rosenblatt, 1995). Rosenblatt (1988) further distinguishes an efferent stance, in which the reader attends to information to be carried away from the text, from an aesthetic stance, in which the reader attends to what is lived through during reading; actual readings fall along a continuum between the two. Because Filipino students bring distinct

cultural and linguistic histories to their reading, they can be expected to transact differently with classical Western texts and with contemporary Philippine literature in English.

Freire's Critical Pedagogy complements this account by asking what reading is for. Freire (1993) rejects "banking" education, in which knowledge is deposited in passive learners, in favor of problem-posing education, in which teachers and students examine their reality through dialogue and move toward *conscientização*, or critical consciousness. Applied to literature, the theory treats texts as occasions for students to recognize relations of culture, power, and identity, and it asks teachers to examine whether their own practices reproduce or challenge those relations.

Integrating the Two Theories

Each theory, used alone, leaves a gap that the other fills. Reader-response approaches derived from Rosenblatt have been criticized for privileging personal identification while leaving the social and political dimensions of response unexamined (Lewis, 2000). Critical pedagogy, conversely, can slip into a new form of banking when critical readings are delivered to students rather than arising from their own engagement with texts. This study therefore integrates the two into a transactional–critical lens built on three working propositions. First, the aesthetic transaction is the entry point to critical consciousness: a text that is lived through emotionally gives students a personal stake in the social reality it represents, which problem-posing dialogue can then examine. Second, stance is shaped by the text and its framing, so classical and contemporary texts may invite different positions on the efferent–aesthetic continuum and play complementary roles in moving students toward critique. Third, the transaction is not a private event: institutional conditions such as time, reading load, and the language of instruction enter the space between reader and text, functioning as what Freire (1993) calls limit-situations, which can either be accepted as given or named and acted upon. These propositions guided the analysis and are revisited in the discussion as the study's theoretical contribution.

Scope and Limitation

This study uses qualitative narrative inquiry to investigate the teaching and learning of Literature in English at the College of Arts and Letters and the College of Education of PUP. It covers ten college students enrolled in teacher education and literature-related programs and two faculty members who teach or have taught Literature in English. Student data were collected through semi-structured interviews, conducted face to face with five students and through an online written interview form with the other five; faculty data consisted of the faculty members' responses to the interview guide and their commentary on de-identified student responses. The study does not involve classroom observation, experimental intervention, document analysis, or evaluation of specific literary works, curricula, teacher education programs, or institutional policies, and it does not measure the effectiveness of literature teaching. Two methodological limitations should be noted: written responses do not permit the real-time probing possible in face-to-face interviews, and the faculty sample is small. The findings are particular to the two colleges and are not intended for statistical generalization; instead, the study offers contextualized insight into students' and teachers' experiences. In this study, classical (canonical) literature refers to works published before 1990 that possess enduring literary and historical significance and are characterized by complex language, dense themes, and cultural or historical weight, while contemporary (modern) literature refers to works published after 1990 that address current social issues, contemporary language use, and present-day experiences.

Significance of the Study

The study is expected to benefit several stakeholders. Literature teachers can use students' and colleagues' narratives to narrow the gap between belief and practice in using difficult texts, organizing reader-response activities, and applying critical pedagogy despite institutional limitations, and the strategies derived from the findings give them concrete guidance on text selection and assessment. Students in teacher education and literature programs benefit from a clearer account of how they read classical and contemporary texts, where they struggle, and how their expectations relate to their competencies in literary analysis. School administrators gain evidence for identifying resource needs and developing policies, while teacher education institutions gain insight into gaps in literature pedagogy courses and in the preparation of new teachers. The Commission on Higher Education gains student- and faculty-grounded evidence relevant to the ongoing GE reform, and the

Department of Education gains information on policy–practice gaps relevant to K to 12 standards. Future researchers in Philippine ELT gain a transactional–critical framework and a set of propositions that can be tested in other contexts.

RELATED LITERATURE

Urgent Policy Context: Constraints on Literature Education

The urgency of the present study is heightened by ongoing policy discussions on GE in Philippine colleges and universities. During a public consultation on May 5, 2026, CHED defended a proposal to reduce the minimum GE requirement from 36 units to 18 to 21 units and to move toward an outcomes-based curriculum (Rappler, 2026). Under the proposal, several current GE subjects, including Philosophy, Ethics, Art Appreciation, and Philippine History, would be folded into broader integrated courses (GMA News Online, 2026). CHED officials described the change as a shift from a content-based to an outcomes-based curriculum, prompted by concerns about overlap between senior high school and college GE subjects. After public criticism from academic groups and faculty associations, CHED moved implementation from Academic Year 2026–2027 to 2028 (Philstar.com, 2026). The postponement eases the immediate pressure but leaves unresolved the place of literature in a reframed GE curriculum.

The case for literature in this debate rests largely on its contribution to critical thinking. List and Sun (2023) show that higher-order and critical-analytic thinking develop when learners analyze multiple texts and weigh competing interpretations, which is precisely the work literary analysis demands. Siraji and Paraja (2023) likewise note that literature-based teaching fosters critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and cultural awareness. Literature, whether classical or contemporary, therefore does more than preserve culture; it develops the higher-order thinking that the revised GE curriculum itself claims to prioritize.

Opposition to the proposal from the academic community has been substantial. Faculty from Silliman University, Ateneo de Manila University, the University of the Philippines, De La Salle University, and the University of Santo Tomas argued that the proposed merging would dilute the humanities and students' aesthetic formation (GMA News Online, 2026). Ateneo de Manila University (2026) questioned whether the new GE could meet its targets when Language and Literature, Humanities and Social Sciences, and mandated subjects would be distributed across a few integrated courses. Academic organizations criticized the privileging of "functional literacy" over "critical literacy" (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2026), and the Philippine Social Science Council (2026) affirmed the role of GE in developing critical and ethical reasoning. A teachers' organization estimated that 60,000 to 90,000 GE faculty would face reduced loads, termination, or loss of income (Davao Today, 2026). Although faculty opposition is well documented, little research has examined how this policy uncertainty is experienced by the students and teachers of literature themselves.

Pedagogical Approaches and Skills Development

Research consistently favors learner-centered approaches. Castro (2021) found that literature circles shifted instruction from teacher-led to learner-centered learning by requiring students to question texts, formulate interpretations, and respond critically to peers, a result echoed by Matmool and Kaowiwattanakul (2023). Viado and Espiritu (2023) showed that critical thinking develops best when collaboration is combined with individual reflection such as reflective writing, and Wu (2023) reported gains in analytical skill through guided questions, reflective writing, and structured discussion. Questioning is decisive: Quanqin and Cheong (2023) found that open-ended, higher-order questions move students beyond comprehension whereas recall questions limit critical thinking, and Anaktototy and Lesnussa (2022) showed that the Directed Reading Thinking Activity improves both comprehension and critical thinking. Graphic organizers (Min et al., 2023), explicit critical thinking programs (Moghadam et al., 2023), flipped classrooms (Yulian, 2021), and inquiry-based methods (Baddane & Ennam, 2024) have also produced measurable gains.

Developing higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) through literature has become a major focus of ELT. Gopalan and Hashim (2021) found literature particularly effective for developing HOTS among ESL learners when activities are deliberately planned, and Wang (2021) showed that assessment practices shape the level of cognitive engagement. Hamza (2021) reported positive student attitudes toward critical thinking techniques in

literature classes, although implementation varied with institutional constraints and teacher preparation. In the Philippines, Tan (2023) documented substantial gaps in the critical reading of Grade 10 learners, particularly in inference, evaluation, and synthesis. Al Roomy (2022) and Negoescu (2023) emphasize the reciprocal relationship among critical reading, comprehension, and independent judgment, while Muxamedjanov and Basirjonova (2025) highlight continuous, staged engagement through guided analysis, discussion, and independent interpretation.

Reader-response approaches foreground the active role of the reader. Benonguil and Barnido (2022) concluded that students' feelings and opinions about a literary work can be a productive starting point for understanding it, Rifqi et al. (2022) documented students' imaginative re-creations of "The Gift of the Magi," and Suarez and Diva (2022) found that affective engagement can support rather than hinder analysis. Bustamante (2022) showed that multiple interpretive lenses aid comprehension, and de Jong (2024) and Sembiring et al. (2024) found that systematic use of analytical frameworks produces lasting gains in interpretation. On the question of text type, DerKhachadourian (2023) found integrated approaches combining close reading with interactive methods effective, Tojiboyeva (2025) argued for balancing classical and contemporary texts, and Hassan et al. (2025) showed that classical literature can cultivate critical thinking beyond memorization. Related studies extend these benefits to writing (Abdalrahman, 2021; Luo & Yang, 2024), listening and speaking (Fernandes et al., 2024), and questioning (G & Pineda, 2024). Gaps nonetheless remain regarding which approaches suit which learners and how teachers should adapt strategies across educational and cultural contexts.

Curriculum, Resources, and Text Selection

Al-Saeed and Alenezi (2021) noted that literary content in EFL textbooks lacks adequate support and speaking activities, and Nguyen et al. (2024) found that critical thinking tasks in modern textbooks such as *Pathways* are not methodically arranged. Heggernes (2021) argues that texts should be chosen intentionally to develop intercultural communicative competence, while Myren-Svelstad and Grüters (2022) point out that teachers' text selection reflects their underlying beliefs about the purpose of literature. Yang (2022) observed that students are more interested in contemporary or young adult literature, whereas teachers seek to preserve exposure to culturally important works, and Geisler and De Caetano (2023) argue that diverse and marginalized voices support both language acquisition and critical thinking about justice. However, few studies examine how teachers can systematically combine canonical and contemporary literature.

Linguistic difficulty remains a serious barrier. Altun (2023) argues that texts must match learners' proficiency, and Asadi (2023) shows that teachers spend disproportionate time on grammar and vocabulary when texts are too difficult. In the Philippines, Tan (2023) found wide variation in reading proficiency among students of the same grade level, and Omer and Ali (2025) and Fernandes et al. (2025) show that effective scaffolding is essential for complex texts. Institutional support matters as much as classroom technique: Gumarang and Gumarang (2021) link declining educational quality to weak support systems, Toquero and Capistrano (2024) find that effective literature teaching depends on institutional, administrative, and leadership support, and Galvez et al. (2023) highlight the importance of teachers' own understanding of why literature matters.

Resource distribution also matters. Tomas et al. (2021) showed that limited libraries and teaching materials undermine reading development, Idulog et al. (2023) linked students' reading performance to access to books, and Del Rosario (2024) documented shortages of new books, library systems, and digital materials in rural schools. Luukka (2021) found that the meanings teachers attribute to literature shape how central it becomes in language education, and Durante (2025) noted that critical literature pedagogy is constrained by limited materials and by school leaders' unfamiliarity with literature education. Time constraints also restrict text selection and the use of new techniques (Alerta, 2021; Sun, 2021), and uneven resources limit students' access to diverse literary texts (Patunob & Ibojo, 2023). Few studies have examined equitable funding approaches or low-resource methods for literature instruction.

Teacher Professionalism and Experience

Many preservice teachers feel underprepared to teach literature. Durante (2025) argues that critical literacy pedagogies require training beyond standard English or EFL preparation, and Gandana et al. (2021) show a disconnect between the theory and practice of teaching critical thinking in teacher education. Gopalan and

Hashim (2021) indicate that HOTS development depends on continuous rather than one-time professional development, and Portilla Quintero and Herrera Molina (2021) argue that critical pedagogy remains inadequately reflected in teacher education. In the Philippines, Lopez (2024) found that EFL teachers acknowledged gaps in their knowledge of critical thinking theory, question design, discussion facilitation, and formative assessment, and that their beliefs diverged from their practice. Similar gaps in theoretical grounding and pedagogical skill for teaching critical thinking through literature have been documented elsewhere (Azarcon-Sanchez et al., 2024; Bachtiar et al., 2023; Fernandes et al., 2025; Jalani, 2025; Sun, 2021; Yamin et al., 2022).

Heavy workloads compound these gaps. Tarrayo et al. (2021) found that heavy teaching loads limited Philippine English teachers' participation in professional activities, and Diamante and Calla (2024) found that workload affected instructors' motivation and lessons. Sustaining student engagement remains a persistent difficulty (Gong, 2021; Muxamedjanov & Basirjonova, 2025; Sun, 2021; Wang, 2021), and large classes inhibit literary discussion and personalized feedback (Quinquino & Ong, 2025). Research on sustainable workloads and optimal class sizes for literature teaching is still needed.

Synthesis

The reviewed literature shows that literature, when deliberately taught, develops students' higher-order thinking, language skills, and cultural understanding, and that learner-centered methods such as literature circles, guided questioning, collaborative discussion, and reflective writing outperform lecture-based instruction. In the Philippine context, however, a gap persists between policy goals, theoretical objectives, and classroom practice, sustained by insufficient teacher training, weak institutional support, heavy workloads, large classes, and limited resources. Three gaps follow. First, most studies measure skill outcomes, but few examine how students themselves understand and experience literature. Second, faculty perspectives are seldom placed in dialogue with student perspectives. Third, reader-response and critical pedagogy research have largely proceeded separately, leaving unexplained how personal response becomes critical consciousness. The present study addresses these gaps through a narrative inquiry framed by an integrated transactional–critical lens.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a qualitative narrative inquiry design with attention to the social dimension of experience. Its aim was to elucidate how literature-based teaching shapes college students' critical thinking, cultural understanding, and language skills, and how curricular and policy constraints affect literature-centered instruction. Narrative inquiry was chosen because it draws on participants' lived experience and allows researchers to study how students construct their understanding of engaging with texts; it suits educational research because it captures the social and interpretive aspects of learning that quantitative methods cannot (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Wei, 2023).

Tradition of Inquiry and Data Analysis

Three narrative commonplaces anchored the inquiry (Clandinin & Caine, 2008). Sociality refers to the personal and social conditions that shape students' experiences, including their aspirations, institutional context, and classroom relationships; temporality recognizes that students' stories take shape across their past, present, and anticipated futures; and spatiality situates these stories in physical and institutional places such as schools, classrooms, and the contexts of literature teaching (Pino Gavidia & Adu, 2022).

The analysis followed Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) inductive, comparative approach, which begins during data collection. Transcripts, written responses, and notes were read repeatedly, and meaningful segments were highlighted and labeled (open coding). After several responses had been coded, related codes were grouped into broader categories (axial coding). Following the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), each new segment was compared with previously coded data until no new categories emerged, and categories were checked for responsiveness to the research questions, exhaustiveness, mutual exclusivity, sensitivity to

the data, and conceptual congruence. The eight resulting axial categories were then clustered into five overarching themes. Faculty narratives were analyzed with the same procedure and compared with student narratives to identify points of convergence and divergence. Holistic and categorical readings were combined: each story was first read in its own temporal sequence and then read across stories to identify shared and distinct patterns. The flow of data analysis is shown in Figure 1.

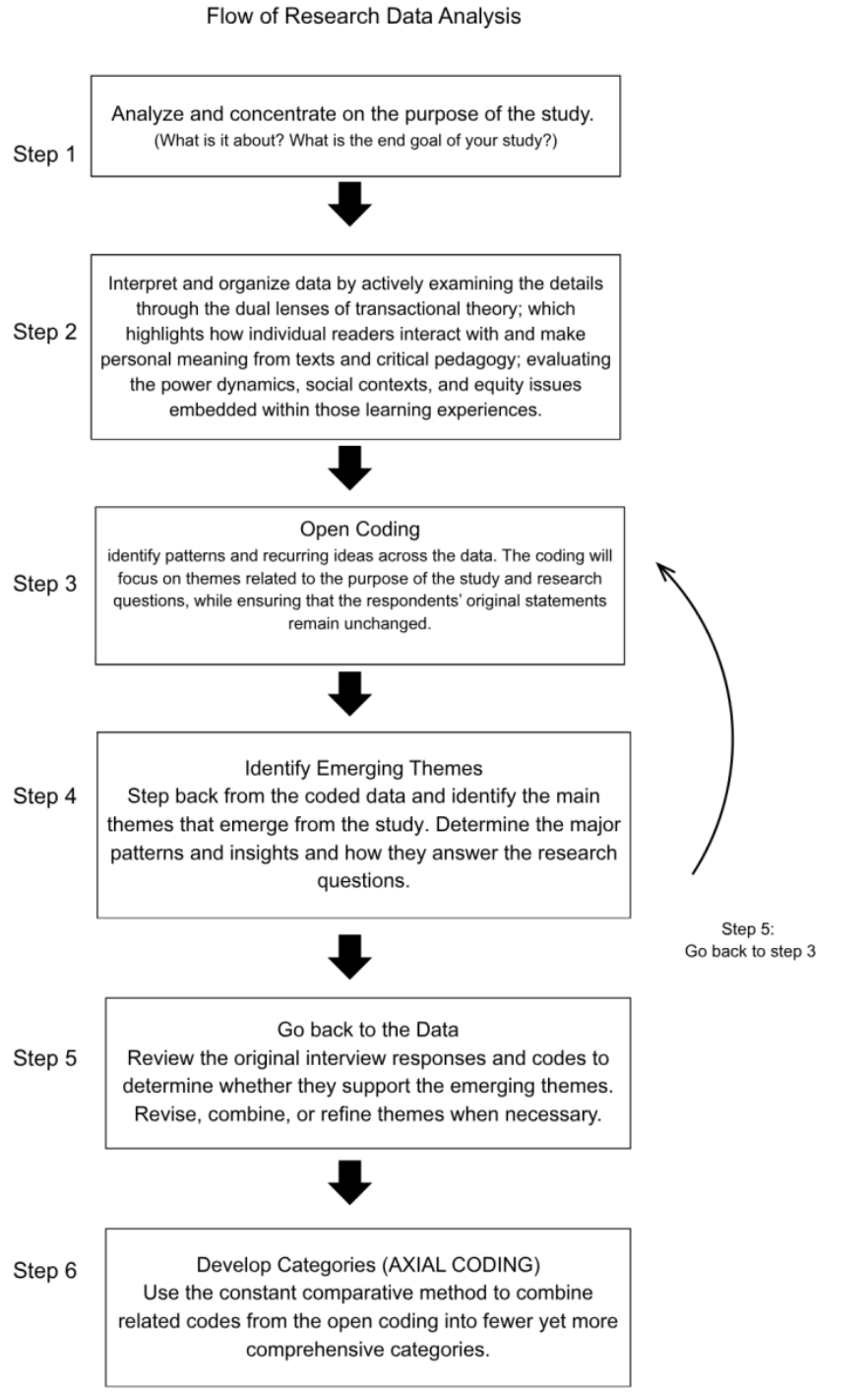


Figure 1. Data Analysis Flow from Merriam and Tisdell (2016)

Sources of Data

The primary data sources were ten student co-participants enrolled in teacher education and literature-related programs who were taking or had recently completed Literature in English courses at the College of Arts and Letters and the College of Education, PUP Main Campus, during Academic Year 2025–2026, and two faculty co-participants who had taught or were teaching Literature in English. Narrative inquiry privileges the depth of stories over the number of participants and commonly involves one to around 20 participants (Adhikari, 2021;

Subedi, 2021). Purposive sampling was used. Student participants had to be enrolled in a teaching, literature, or related program and to have completed or be taking a Literature in English course; faculty participants had to be full-time or part-time faculty of any PUP branch who had taught at least one Literature in English course in the previous three years and who consented to participate.

Instrumentation

A semi-structured interview guide was used with both student and faculty co-participants, with probing questions added as needed. Five student co-participants from the College of Arts and Letters responded in face-to-face interviews, and five from the College of Education responded to the same questions through an online written form. The interview guide questions (IQ) were:

1. How do literary texts help you to enhance your critical thinking abilities?
2. Are there any specific literary texts that you can mention?
3. How do literary texts influence your point of view and deepen your understanding of different cultures?
4. How do literary texts influence your point of view and deepen your understanding in terms of social issues?
5. How does learning through literature improve your learning process in language proficiency (reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills)?
6. What aspect of your course motivates or discourages your engagement with literary texts?
7. Based on your experience, which modification would help in improving the connection between literature and your course?
8. If you were to teach literature in the future, what do you think could be the challenges in teaching literature?
9. Do you agree with the removal of literature subjects in the college curriculum? Why or why not?
10. Based on your experience, what differences have you noticed in studying classical literature and modern literature?
11. Between the two, which one has been more interesting or more meaningful to you, classical literature or modern literature? Why?

Ethical Considerations

This research complied with Republic Act No. 10173 (Data Privacy Act of 2012) and the institutional policies of the PUP Main Campus (Haneef & Agrawal, 2024). Recruitment began only after permission was secured from the Dean and the Department Heads of the PUP Main Campus. Each participant received an Informed Consent Form (ICF) detailing the objectives, procedures, voluntary nature of participation, right to withdraw at any time without repercussions, and data handling; participants were given at least five working days to review it, and each received a signed copy. The study was reviewed and approved by the PUP University Research Ethics Committee (UREC Code No. 2026-0422, April 6, 2026). Participation was voluntary and uncompensated, and the narrative interviews, lasting approximately 30 to 45 minutes, were non-invasive. All participants were 18 years of age or older, and no vulnerable groups were included. To minimize power dynamics, students and faculty were interviewed separately, faculty viewed student responses only in de-identified form, and participation had no bearing on students' academic standing. Students were coded S001–S010 and faculty F001–F002; all raw data were stored in a secure, password-protected database accessible only to the research team, and results are reported in aggregate or de-identified form only.

Declaration on the Utilization of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In accordance with Executive Order No. 46, s. 2024, of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, the researchers disclose that a Generative AI Large Language Model was used to organize ideas and enhance the grammar and fluency of sections of the paper based on the researchers' own notes, outlines, and sources, and to prepare the first draft of the interview guide, which was later evaluated, corrected, and approved by experts in education, English language teaching, and qualitative research. AI was also used for minor language-related tasks such as paraphrasing and proofreading. AI was not utilized in the analysis of the participants' responses and had no impact on the research subjects, theoretical framework, methods, and conclusions. The researchers acknowledge responsibility for the accuracy and originality of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the narratives of ten student co-participants from the College of Arts and Letters (S001–S005, face-to-face interviews) and the College of Education (S006–S010, online written interviews), read alongside the narratives of two faculty co-participants. Faculty narratives are not treated as a separate set of findings; instead, each theme reports where faculty corroborate, extend, or complicate the students' accounts. Figure 2 shows the frequency of the eight axial categories: (C1) Literature as a Mirror of Self and Society; (C2) Perspective-Taking, Empathy, and Cross-Cultural Understanding; (C3) Critical and Analytical Thinking Development; (C4) Sociopolitical Awareness, Advocacy, and Historical Consciousness; (C5) Language, Literacy, and Writing-Craft Development; (C6) Motivation, Identity, and Affective/Therapeutic Engagement; (C7) Curricular, Institutional, and Pedagogical Considerations; and (C8) Classical vs. Contemporary Literature as an Interpretive Frame. Table 1 maps each interview question to the research questions and categories, Table 2 shows the category assigned to each response, and Table 3 shows how the categories cluster into the five themes discussed below.

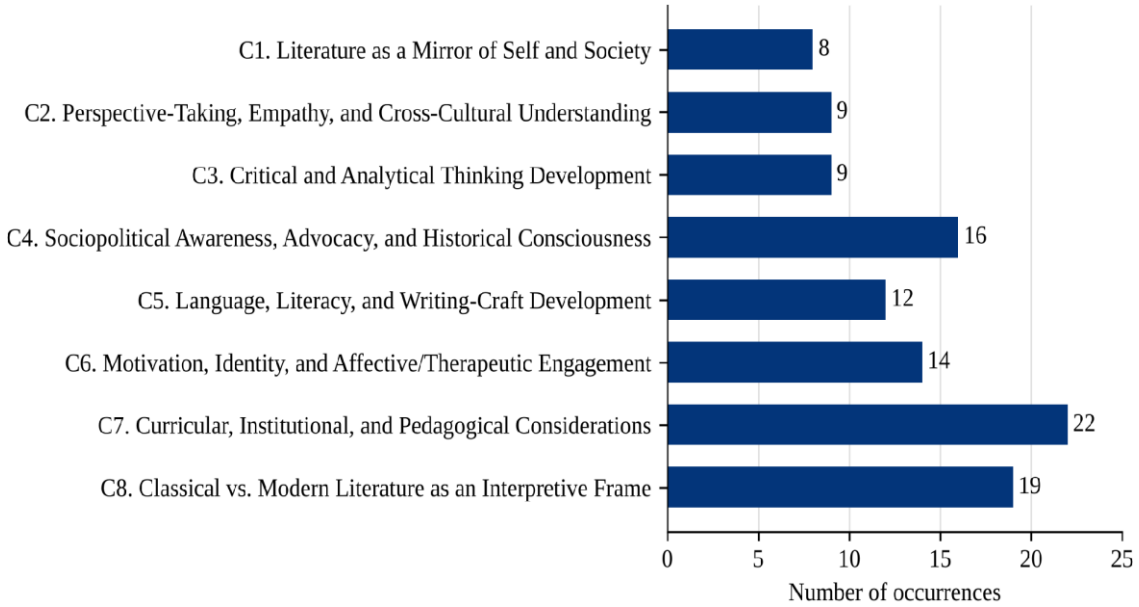


Figure 2. Total Occurrences of All Axial Codes in Data Analysis

Table 1. Question Mapping Table

Interview Guide Question(s)	Research Question(s)	Axial Categories
IQ1: How do literary texts help you to enhance your critical thinking abilities?	RQ3	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6
IQ2: Are there any specific literary texts that you can mention?	RQ1	C1, C2, C3, C4, C6

IQ3: How do literary texts influence your point of view and deepen your understanding of different cultures?	RQ3	C1, C2, C3, C4
IQ4: How do literary texts influence your point of view and deepen your understanding in terms of social issues?	RQ3	C1, C3, C4
IQ5: How does learning through literature improve your learning process in language proficiency?	RQ3, RQ1	C5
IQ6: What aspect of your course motivates or discourages your engagement with literary texts?	RQ2, RQ5	C5, C6, C7
IQ7: Based on your experience, which modification would help in improving the connection between literature and your course?	RQ2, RQ4	C7
IQ8: If you were to teach literature in the future, what do you think could be the challenges in teaching literature?	RQ1, RQ2	C6, C7
IQ9: Do you agree with the removal of literature subjects in the college curriculum? Why or why not?	RQ5	C1, C4, C6, C7
IQ10: Based on your experience, what differences have you noticed in studying classical literature and modern literature?	RQ1	C8
IQ11: Between the two, which one has been more interesting or more meaningful to you, classical literature or modern literature? Why?	RQ3	C8

Note. RQ = research question; C1–C8 = axial categories listed in Figure 2.

Table 2. Axial Category Assigned to Each Co-participant's Response per Interview Question

IQ	S001	S002	S003	S004	S005	S006	S007	S008	S009	S010
IQ1	C3	C3	C2	C1	C3	C3	C4	C3	C6	C5
IQ2	C4	C3	C6	C2	C4	C4	C4	C1	C6	C3
IQ3	C4	C2	C3	C1	C2	C4	C2	C2	C2	C2
IQ4	C4	C1	C4	C4	C4	C4	C4	C1	C3	C1
IQ5	C5	C5	C5	C5	C5	C5	C5	C5	C5	C5
IQ6	C6	C7	C6	C2	C7	C7	C6	C6	C5	C6
IQ7	C7	C7	C7	C7	C7	C7	C7	C7	C7	C7
IQ8	C7	C7	C7	C7	C7	C6	C7	C6	C6	C6
IQ9	C7	C7	C7	C4	C6	C6	C4	C4	C1	C1
IQ10	N/A	C8	C8	C8	C8	C8	C8	C8	C8	C8
IQ11	C8	C8	C8	C8	C8	C8	C8	C8	C8	C8

Note. Summarized from the open- and axial-coding tables of the analysis, adapted from Merriam and Tisdell (2016) in Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation. S001–S005 are from the College of Arts and Letters (personal interviews); S006–S010 are from the College of Education (Google Form). N/A = no response.

Table 3. Clustering of Axial Categories into Themes

Theme	Axial Categories	Occurrences	Research Questions
Theme 1. Literature as Mirror and Window	C1, C2	17	RQ1, RQ3, RQ5
Theme 2. From Reading the Word to Reading the World	C3, C4	25	RQ1, RQ3, RQ5
Theme 3. Language Growth Through Affective Engagement	C5, C6	26	RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, RQ5
Theme 4. Classical and Contemporary Texts as Complementary Stances	C8	19	RQ1, RQ3
Theme 5. Institutional Limit-Situations	C7	22	RQ2, RQ4, RQ5

Note. Occurrences are the sums of category assignments in Table 2 and Figure 2 (N = 109 coded responses; one non-response excluded). Research questions follow the mapping in Table 1.

Theme 1: Literature as Mirror and Window

Students consistently described literature not as an academic requirement but as a mirror of their own lives and a window into the lives of others. S004 captured the mirror function most directly, describing literature as a "direct mirror of real-life societal phenomena" that prompts readers to "reflect back on what we read." The window function appeared most clearly in responses on culture (IQ3), where six of ten responses were coded C2. S002 explained that sharing the struggles of characters allowed readers to "overstep the boundaries of the world," and S004 compared *To Kill a Mockingbird* with *Banana Heart Summer* across their cultural settings, an instance of the intentional text pairing that Heggernes (2021) associates with intercultural communicative competence and that Julia and Jeyanthi (2024) link to cultural competence among ESL learners.

Read through Rosenblatt (1995), these accounts describe meaning evoked in transaction: the texts mattered because students brought their own experiences to them, as when S003 read *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a lesson in perseverance and S005 credited *Am I to Be Blamed* with developing empathy. Faculty co-participants corroborated this pattern, observing that students treat texts as reflections of their own life struggles. The faculty accounts also add a qualification: the mirror works only when students actually read, a point that anticipates the "fear of reading" discussed under Theme 3. The mirror-and-window function is therefore the foundation on which the critical outcomes in Theme 2 are built rather than an end in itself.

Theme 2: From Reading the Word to Reading the World

Sociopolitical awareness (C4) was the most frequent of the content-related categories (16 occurrences) and dominated responses on social issues (IQ4), where six of ten responses were coded C4. Students described a progression from emotional response to analysis to advocacy. S002's account of Lualhati Bautista's *Desaparecidos* illustrates this progression most fully: the novel made Martial Law history "mas masakit" [more painful] than textbook accounts, and that emotional weight became the basis for critical judgment about state violence. S010 similarly contrasted the detachment of news statistics with literature's capacity to humanize conflict in the Middle East. From this foundation, students moved toward critique and action. S008 described deliberately pausing to "question, analyze, and look at situations from different perspectives"; S002 read Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* as a critique of capitalism and technology; S006 analyzed colonial resistance in Rizal's works; S001 connected feminist literature to advocacy for the SOGIE equality bill; and S005 described literature as a source of resistance to police killings.

These accounts follow the path Freire (1993) describes, from passive reception toward critical consciousness, and they support List and Sun's (2023) claim that critical-analytic thinking grows from weighing perspectives across texts; Geisler and De Caetano (2023) similarly found that engagement with diverse literary voices develops critical social awareness. Faculty narratives situated the pattern historically, describing literature as "the voice that gives what society really needs" and recalling generations of Filipino writers who used literature to resist oppression. Where students emphasized personal awakening, faculty emphasized continuity with a national literary tradition of dissent, which suggests that teachers can deliberately frame students' individual responses as participation in that tradition. The sequence observed here, in which emotional evocation precedes and enables critique, is the empirical basis for the first theoretical claim presented below.

Theme 3: Language Growth Through Affective Engagement

All ten responses to the question on language proficiency (IQ5) were coded C5. Students described language growth as a by-product of engaged reading rather than of explicit instruction. S010 described becoming "an active meaning-seeker," S009 described rereading to connect key information, and S005 observed that a person's speech reflects the breadth of his or her reading. Faculty corroborated these accounts with concrete observations: students analyze sentence structures and infer meaning from context clues, and one student's writing (S003) had become sophisticated enough to be falsely flagged by an AI detector. These observations align with Abdalrahman (2021), who found that students absorb and reproduce the structures of literary writing, and with Al Roomy (2022), who links critical reading to comprehension.

Engagement, however, was not automatic. Motivation, Identity, and Affective/Therapeutic Engagement (C6, 14 occurrences) captured both what sustained and what threatened it. Faculty identified a widespread "fear of reading" among students, which S002 echoed in describing the mental strain of dense texts. Students described overcoming this resistance through peer discussion (S005), assignments linked to their career goals (S003), and creative projects that served as emotional outlets (S010); faculty likewise described writing as therapeutic and identified peer discussion as a key support through difficult texts. The convergence is instructive: students and faculty independently located the remedy for reading anxiety in social and creative engagement rather than in more instruction. This supports Sun's (2021) observation that learning proceeds when learners are helped to cope with barriers and Sharma's (2021) account of literature as a motivational resource, and it indicates that in ELT, language gains depend on the affective conditions that keep students reading.

Theme 4: Classical and Contemporary Texts as Complementary Stances

Responses to IQ10 and IQ11 (C8, 19 occurrences) show that students do not experience classical and contemporary literature as rivals. Classical literature was valued for intellectual challenge, historical depth, and the beauty and complexity of its language (S001), but was described as demanding considerable effort. Contemporary literature was valued for its immediacy in addressing problems students recognize from their own lives, such as mental health and financial hardship (S008, S010), and for breaking literary conventions in ways that open new interpretations (S002, S006); S005 regarded contemporary experimental poetry as an effective form of protest against corruption and tyranny.

In Rosenblatt's (1988) terms, the two kinds of text tended to invite different stances. Classical texts drew students toward an efferent, analytic stance concerned with decoding language, form, and historical context, while contemporary texts invited an aesthetic stance of immediate, lived-through response. Students' preference for neither alone suggests that each supplies what the other lacks: classical texts build analytical tools, and contemporary texts supply the personal stake that motivates their use. This interpretation is consistent with DerKhachadourian (2023) and Tojiboyeva (2025), who recommend combining the two. For teachers, the implication is that the classical–contemporary question is one of sequencing and pairing rather than of choosing one over the other.

Theme 5: Institutional Limit-Situations

Curricular, Institutional, and Pedagogical Considerations (C7) was the most frequent category overall (22 occurrences) and accounted for all ten responses to IQ7. Students identified heavy reading loads, high-pressure tests, limited time, inaccessible academic language, and a shortage of local source materials and oral history accounts (S001, S002), while S004 noted the opposite problem of an overwhelming volume of regional materials without guidance. As prospective teachers, students anticipated that their own future students would treat literature as a grade requirement rather than as a source of meaning (S003, S006, S008, S009, S010). Notably, S002 and S005 interpreted low reading comprehension not as individual failure but as the product of systemic and socioeconomic neglect, a reading consistent with the resource shortages documented by Del Rosario (2024) and the difficulty of teaching critical thinking to underprepared students described by Jalani (2025).

Students' proposed remedies were specific: removing alienating jargon and easing high-stakes testing (S002, S010), decolonizing the course to foreground the experiences of colonized peoples (S005), "de-elitizing" academic language (S002), linking texts to current problems rather than to memorization (S001, S003), using task-based activities (S006), and adding creative writing to reduce pressure (S009). Faculty, for their part, proposed genre-based course organization and corresponding teaching strategies. The two sets of proposals are complementary: faculty addressed the structure of courses, while students addressed the conditions of the reading transaction itself. Both align with Toquero and Capistrano's (2024) call to move beyond traditional teaching mechanisms.

These constraints culminate in the policy question. Students uniformly opposed the removal of literature from the college curriculum (IQ9), a position consistent with the wider opposition to CHED's Reframed General Education Curriculum. S004 warned that removing literature would deprive citizens of the capacity to question and understand history, S008 linked literary study to the capacity to confront corruption and inequality, and

S006 and S010 described literature as a source of meaningful communication. These positions echo Goh's (2023) critique of neoliberal pressures on Philippine literature curricula. In Freire's (1993) terms, the constraints students described are limit-situations: conditions that appear fixed but can be named and acted upon. The postponement of the reframed curriculum to 2028 opens precisely such a space for action.

Synthesis: The Integrative Role of Literature in ELT and Higher Education

Read together, the five themes support a single argument: in English language teaching, the value of literature is integrative. The cultural understanding in Theme 1, the critical and civic gains in Theme 2, and the language gains in Theme 3 were not reported as separate outcomes produced by separate activities. They arose from the same acts of engaged reading and depended on the same affective conditions. S002's reading of *Desaparecidos*, for example, was at once an exercise in comprehending complex prose, an encounter with another person's suffering, and a critical judgment about state power. Faculty observations of students' sentence-level analysis and of their civic awareness likewise describe the same students reading the same texts.

This integration has two consequences for higher education. First, it challenges the distinction between "functional" and "critical" literacy that academic organizations criticized in the GE reform (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2026). In these narratives, functional language skills grew through critical and affective engagement, not apart from it; removing literature to make room for skills-focused courses would therefore remove one of the conditions under which those skills develop. Second, the integration is fragile. It depends on students actually reading, and Theme 5 shows that reading loads, inaccessible language, high-stakes assessment, and scarce local materials can break the chain at its first link. The case for literature in higher education is therefore not only a case for keeping literature courses but also a case for teaching them under conditions that allow the reader–text transaction to occur.

Theoretical Contribution: A Transactional–Critical Model of Literary Reading

The findings allow the integration of Rosenblatt and Freire to be stated as a model comprising three claims that neither theory makes on its own.

1. **The aesthetic transaction is a precondition of critique.** Rosenblatt (1995) explains how personal meaning is evoked but not how it becomes social critique, a limitation noted by critics of reader response (Lewis, 2000). Freire (1993) explains critical consciousness but treats texts mainly as codifications of reality for dialogue, without an account of the reading experience itself. The narratives show a recurring sequence of evocation, reflection, problematization, and action, in which emotionally lived-through reading supplies the personal stake that critique then examines (Theme 2). The aesthetic stance is thus a precondition for critical reading rather than an alternative to it, and critical pedagogy that skips this stage risks becoming a new form of banking.

2. **Stance is a principle of curriculum design.** Classical and contemporary texts invited different positions on the efferent–aesthetic continuum (Theme 4). This extends Rosenblatt's concept of stance from an individual reading choice to a principle of curriculum design: a literature course can be sequenced so that contemporary texts open an aesthetic entry point and classical texts develop the analytical tools for critique. The classical–contemporary debate thereby gains a theoretical rather than merely preferential basis.

3. **Institutional constraints operate within the transaction.** Rosenblatt's transaction is usually described as an exchange between a reader and a text. The narratives show that institutional conditions such as time, reading load, assessment pressure, and elite academic language enter that exchange and shape whether it occurs at all (Themes 3 and 5). Freire's (1993) concept of limit-situations names these conditions and adds the possibility of acting on them. The model therefore treats the reader–text transaction as institutionally situated, linking classroom-level reading theory to policy-level debates such as the GE reform.

These claims are offered as propositions grounded in a small, single-institution sample. They are intended to be tested, refined, or challenged in other contexts rather than generalized from this study.

Pedagogical Implications: Strategies for Literature Teachers

Table 4 translates the findings into specific strategies for literature teachers. Each strategy is linked to the theme that motivates it and to the part of the transactional–critical model it enacts.

Table 4. Pedagogical Strategies Derived from the Findings

Strategy	What the Teacher Does	Basis in the Findings
1. Stance-sequenced lesson cycle	Structures each text in four phases: (a) a brief aesthetic response journal before discussion; (b) efferent close reading of language, form, and context; (c) problem-posing dialogue on a question drawn from students' responses; and (d) a creative or civic product.	Themes 1 and 2; evocation precedes critique (S002, S010); Claim 1
2. Classical–contemporary text pairing	Pairs a canonical text with a contemporary, preferably Philippine, text on a shared theme (e.g., *To Kill a Mockingbird* with *Banana Heart Summer*; Rizal with *Desaparecidos*), opening with the contemporary text as the aesthetic entry point.	Theme 4; complementary stances (S004, S008, S010); Claim 2
3. Scaffolded theoretical language	Provides plain-language glossaries of critical terms, pre-teaches key vocabulary, models an analysis before assigning one, and permits Filipino or code-switching in discussion while written analysis remains in English.	Theme 5; alienating and "elite" language (S002, S010); Claim 3
4. Managed reading load	Assigns focused excerpts with guiding questions when time is short, publishes reading schedules in advance, and monitors reading through low-stakes exit slips rather than high-stakes tests.	Theme 3; faculty-reported "fear of reading"; mental strain (S002)
5. Literature circles with rotating roles	Organizes small groups with weekly rotating roles (discussion leader, connector, language analyst, context researcher) so that every student both analyzes and responds.	Theme 3; peer discussion valued by students (S005) and faculty
6. Higher-order question banks	Prepares open-ended questions at the levels of interpretation, evaluation, and application to current issues, and reduces recall questions.	Theme 2; Quanqin and Cheong (2023)
7. Generative themes and local archives	Invites students to nominate local issues as discussion themes and assigns small oral-history or local-text projects that build a shared class archive of Philippine materials.	Themes 2 and 5; lack of local sources (S001, S002); decolonized course (S005)
8. Creative and authentic assessment	Uses counter-narratives, scene rewrites from another character's perspective, reflective portfolios, and analytical essays, scored with rubrics for textual evidence, interpretation, and critical stance.	Themes 3 and 5; creative work reduces pressure (S009, S010)

Note. The strategies are derived from the present findings and should be piloted and evaluated before wider adoption.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

The study investigated how students and faculty narrate the teaching and learning of classical and contemporary Literature in English and its contribution to critical thinking, cultural understanding, sociopolitical consciousness, and language proficiency under current curricular and institutional conditions. The findings are summarized by theme.

1. **Literature as Mirror and Window (C1, C2):** Students experience literature as a reflection of their own lives and an entry into other cultures and experiences, a view the faculty corroborated.

2. **From Reading the Word to Reading the World (C3, C4):** Students described moving from emotional response to analysis and advocacy, using texts such as *Desaparecidos*, Rizal's works, and feminist literature to examine oppression, colonialism, and inequality; faculty framed this movement as continuity with a Filipino literary tradition of dissent.

3. **Language Growth Through Affective Engagement (C5, C6):** All students reported gains in vocabulary, comprehension, and writing, which faculty confirmed; these gains depended on an engagement that a widespread fear of reading can block and that peer discussion and creative work can restore.

4. **Classical and Contemporary Texts as Complementary Stances (C8):** Classical texts were valued for analytical rigor and historical depth and contemporary texts for immediacy and emotional connection; students preferred their combination to either alone.

5. **Institutional Limit-Situations (C7):** Heavy reading loads, high-stakes testing, limited time, inaccessible academic language, and scarce local materials constrain literature learning, and all students opposed the removal of literature from the curriculum.

CONCLUSIONS

First, students construct their experience of Literature in English as a living mirror of personal and social reality that moves them away from banking education toward critical engagement (RQ1). Second, they make sense of their challenges, namely cognitive overload, low initial comprehension, inaccessible academic language, limited time, scarce local materials, and the threatened removal of literature from GE, as largely structural rather than personal (RQ2). Third, their narratives reveal a firm belief that literature builds empathy, cross-cultural understanding, and critical judgment, and that classical and contemporary texts serve complementary purposes (RQ3). Fourth, students cope through active strategies such as questioning authorial intent, comparing interpretations, peer discussion, and creative writing, and as prospective teachers they would adopt context-based, creative, and less test-driven approaches (RQ4). Fifth, students and faculty agree that traditional institutional arrangements and limited support constrain literature teaching, and they call for accessible theory, local materials, active learning, and creative assessment (RQ5). Taken together, the findings indicate that the role of literature in ELT and higher education is integrative: it is a site where language proficiency, critical consciousness, and civic understanding develop together, provided that institutional conditions allow students to engage with texts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **For literature teachers:** Adopt the strategies in Table 4, particularly the stance-sequenced lesson cycle and classical–contemporary text pairing, and document their effects through classroom action research.

2. **For curriculum developers and department heads:** Organize literature courses around paired classical and contemporary texts, include Philippine and other non-Western literatures, and moderate reading loads so that depth of engagement takes priority over coverage.

3. **For university administrators:** Invest in accessible textbooks, digital collections, and a curated archive of local and regional literary materials, and support faculty with teaching loads and class sizes that allow genuine discussion.

4. **For teacher education institutions:** Include reader-response theory, critical pedagogy, and their integration in literature pedagogy courses, with supervised practice in facilitating discussion and designing creative assessment.

5. **For CHED and policymakers:** Retain a distinct space for literature in the reframed GE curriculum, recognizing that functional and critical literacy develop together through literary study, and consult students and literature faculty before implementation in 2028.

6. **For future researchers:** Test the transactional–critical model in other institutions and levels; use classroom observation and a uniform interview mode; include a larger faculty sample; and evaluate the strategies in Table 4 through design-based or action research.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

This study was reviewed and approved by the PUP-University Research Ethics Committee with UREC Code No. 2026-0422 on the 6th of April, 2026.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The interview transcripts are not publicly available to protect the confidentiality of the co-participants. De-identified data are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

REFERENCES

1. Abdalrahman, K. K. (2021). Teaching and learning writing skills through literature. Canadian Journal of Language and Literature Studies, 1(2). https://doi.org/10.53103/cjlls.v1i2.11
2. Adhikari, S. P. (2021). Revealing the story of an individual through narrative inquiry: A methodological review. Interdisciplinary Research in Education, 6(1), 71–80. https://doi.org/10.3126/ire.v6i1.43425
3. Al Roomy, M. A. (2022). Investigating the effects of critical reading skills on students' reading comprehension. Arab World English Journal, 13(1), 366–381. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol13no1.24
4. Al-Saeed, S. J., & Alenezi, A. A. (2021). Assessing the communicative use of literary texts in EFL coursebooks. English Language and Literature Studies, 11(2), 68. https://doi.org/10.5539/ells.v11n2p68
5. Alerta, H. (2021). Breaking the boundaries: Reimagining the comparative literary method and pedagogy in the Philippine literature classrooms. International Journal of English and Comparative Literary Studies, 2(6), 14–31. https://doi.org/10.47631/ijecls.v2i6.353
6. Altun, M. (2023). The use of literature in language teaching: An effective way to improve language skills. International Journal of Social Sciences and Educational Studies, 10(1). https://doi.org/10.23918/ijsses.v10i1p195
7. Anaktototy, K., & Lesnussa, I. (2022). Improving EFL students' reading comprehension and critical thinking skill through directed reading thinking activity. Eralingua: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Asing dan Sastra, 6(1), 244. https://doi.org/10.26858/eralingua.v6i1.27711
8. Asadi, A. R. (2023). The difficulties of teaching English through literature in the Israeli EFL classroom. Scientific Bulletin of the Politehnica University of Timişoara Transactions on Modern Languages, 18, 112–123. https://doi.org/10.59168/rxjn7577
9. Ateneo de Manila University. (2026, May 6). Ateneo de Manila University's comments on the CHEd draft PSG for General Education courses [Statement]. https://www.ateneo.edu/statement/2026/05/ched-reframed-ge-position-letter
10. Azarcon-Sanchez, I., Chua, L., & Saranza, C. (2024). Evaluating 21st-century skills in English language teaching (ELT) in Surigao del Norte, Philippines: A needs assessment for teachers' development. International Journal of Social Science and Human Research, 7(5). https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v7-i05-50
11. Bachtiar, B., Juhana, J., & Pratiwi, W. R. (2023). Indonesian English language teachers' conceptions of critical thinking: Challenge and strategy. International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education, 13(1), 617. https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v13i1.26467
12. Baddane, K., & Ennam, A. (2024). Measuring pedagogical transformation: A quantitative analysis of critical thinking integration in literary criticism for heightened student engagement and learning outcomes. International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation, 7(1), 39–50. https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2024.7.1.4

13. Benonguil, J. A., & Barnido, J. (2022). Teachers' instructional approaches in teaching literary texts in an ESL classroom: Learners' impressions at core. International Journal of Language and Literary Studies, 4(2), 243–264. https://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v4i2.948
14. Bustamante, J. A. (2022). The teaching of literature: Voices and lenses. International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 21(4), 205–219. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.21.4.12
15. Castro, M. N. T. (2021). Literature circle: A strategy in improving critical thinking skills. International Journal of English Language Studies, 3(2), 65–85. https://doi.org/10.32996/ijels.2021.3.2.9
16. Clandinin, D. J., & Caine, V. (2008). Narrative inquiry. In L. M. Given (Ed.), The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods. SAGE Publications.
17. Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
18. Davao Today. (2026, May 15). CHED shelves GE subjects reduction amidst pushback. https://davaotoday.com/headline/ched-shelves-ge-subjects-reduction-amidst-pushback/
19. de Jong, G. (2024). Effects of critical thinking in literature education. In Education and New Developments 2024 (pp. 569–571). https://doi.org/10.36315/2024v1end126
20. Del Rosario, V. (2024). Exploring literature teaching challenges among secondary level school teachers in a rural area of an English as a second language (L2) country. Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives, 2(7). https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2024.0234
21. DerKhachadourian, L. (2023). Traditional and contemporary English literature teaching methods in a Lebanese EFL academic context: A quasi-experimental study. International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences, 8(4), 33–47. https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.84.7
22. Diamante, M. D., & Calla, A. B. (2024). 21st century pedagogical skills and academic motivation of teachers in English subject. EPRA International Journal of Environmental Economics, Commerce and Educational Management, 58–64. https://doi.org/10.36713/epra16720
23. Durante, P. G. C. (2025). Advancing critical literacy through critical literature pedagogy-based principles of literary education. Problems of Education in the 21st Century, 83(2), 196–217. https://doi.org/10.33225/pec/25.83.196
24. Fernandes, R., Willison, J., & Boyle, C. (2024). Characteristics of facilitated critical thinking when students listen to and speak English as an additional language in Indonesia. Thinking Skills and Creativity, 52, 101513. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2024.101513
25. Fernandes, R., Willison, J., Boyle, C., & Muliasari, D. (2025). Teachers' perceptions of critical thinking facilitation in English language classes in an Indonesian high school. Educational Studies, 61(1), 22–39. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131946.2025.2467904
26. Freire, P. (1993). Pedagogy of the oppressed (M. B. Ramos, Trans.; New rev. 20th-anniversary ed.). Continuum.
27. G, F., & Pineda, J. (2024). Implications for teachers and students of appraising comprehension questions in literature teaching. International Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Science, 7(2), 75–82. https://doi.org/10.54922/ijehss.2024.0662
28. Galvez, R., Santos, R., Urian, L., Salonga, C. A., Jacinto, J. P., & Mag-Atas, J. (2023). Using the emic perspective in identifying the significance of teaching literature in the secondary level classrooms. Cognizance Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies, 3(7), 91–96. https://doi.org/10.47760/cognizance.2023.v03i07.009
29. Gandana, I., Nafisah, N., & Imperiani, E. (2021). Critical thinking, literature and teachers' instructional activities: An Indonesian case of community service program for English teachers. English Language Teaching Educational Journal, 4(2), 138. https://doi.org/10.12928/eltej.v4i2.4279
30. Geisler, M. C., & De Caetano, M. H. C. (2023). Black literature in the English language classroom: Teaching English and building the individual as a critical and sensitive social being with the short story "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid. Babel, 13, e18831. https://doi.org/10.69969/revistababel.v13i.18831
31. Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research. Aldine.
32. GMA News Online. (2026, May 6). CHED plan to cut college GE units sparks fears it could 'water down' ethics, humanities courses. https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/986645/ched-proposal-college-ge-units-courses/story/

33. Goh, J. M. A. (2023). "The old new critical": A retrospective view on Kritika, neoliberal education, and Philippine K to 12 curricula in 21st century literature for senior high school. Scientific Journal of Tan Trao University, 8(5). https://doi.org/10.51453/2354-1431/2022/860
34. Gong, X. (2021). Role of literature in teaching English as foreign language context. Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.211122.159
35. Gopalan, Y., & Hashim, H. (2021). Enhancing higher order thinking skills (HOTs) through literature components in ESL classrooms. International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development, 10(2). https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarped/v10-i2/9673
36. Gumarang, B. K., Jr., & Gumarang, B. K. (2021). Unraveling deterioration in the quality of Philippine education. International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research, 2(10), 914–917. https://doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.02.10.08
37. Hamza, H. A. (2021). Students' attitude towards the use of critical thinking methods in teaching English literature: A case study of Khartoum State, Khartoum North locality. English Language Institute Journal, 2. https://doi.org/10.53332/elij.v2i.78
38. Haneef, I., & Agrawal, M. (2024). Ethical issues in educational research. Asian Research Journal of Arts & Social Sciences, 22(5), 29–38. https://doi.org/10.9734/arjass/2024/v22i5535
39. Hassan, B., Rafiq-Uz-Zaman, M., & Khan, Z. A. (2025). Beyond memorization: Cultivating critical thinking skills through classic literature in secondary education for the 21st century learner. Review of Education, Administration and Law, 8(1), 115–124. https://doi.org/10.47067/real.v8i1.410
40. Heggernes, S. L. (2021). A critical review of the role of texts in fostering intercultural communicative competence in the English language classroom. Educational Research Review, 33, 100390. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2021.100390
41. Idulog, M. V. A., Gadiano, R. C., Toledo, E. G., Hermosada, M. L., Casaldon, H. V., Mariposa, M. R., Geron, C. R., Dequito, E. G., Genanda, J. A., Malipot, M. A. B., Pentang, J. T., & Bautista, R. M. (2023). Filipino students' reading abilities: A note on the challenges and potential areas for improvement. International Journal of Education and Teaching Zone, 2(2), 233–242.
42. Jalani, N. (2025). The struggle to teach critical thinking through literature. Education and Industry Review, 1(1). https://doi.org/10.62596/eir.dp981523
43. Julia, P., & Jeyanthi, B. (2024). Exploring the role of English literature in developing cultural competence among ESL students. World Journal of English Language, 14(6), 432. https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v14n6p432
44. Lewis, C. (2000). Critical issues: Limits of identification: The personal, pleasurable, and critical in reader response. Journal of Literacy Research, 32(2), 253–266. https://doi.org/10.1080/10862960009548076
45. List, A., & Sun, Y. (2023). To clarity and beyond: Situating higher-order, critical, and critical-analytic thinking in the literature on learning from multiple texts. Educational Psychology Review, 35(2), 40. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-023-09756-y
46. Lopez, M. Y. (2024). A mixed methods study on beliefs and practices pertaining to critical thinking among EFL teachers in Philippine public schools: Implications for policymaking. MEXTESOL Journal, 48(3), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.61871/mj.v48n3-15
47. Luo, Y., & Yang, S. (2024). The significance and path of developing students' critical thinking ability in English writing teaching. Educational Science Literature, 1(12). https://doi.org/10.62662/kxwxy0112002
48. Luukka, E. (2021). Meanings attributed to literature in language education. The Language Learning Journal, 51(1), 18–32. https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2021.1922491
49. Matmool, W., & Kaowiwattanakul, S. (2023). The effect of using literature circle activities on English-speaking skills and critical thinking skills of EFL learners. English Language Teaching, 16(7), 33. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v16n7p33
50. Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
51. Min, G. S., Albakri, I. S. M. A., Ismail, N., Mokhtar, M. M., Zulkepli, N., Tahir, M. H. M., & Khalid, P. Z. M. (2023). Fostering critical thinking using graphic organizers in English language reading class. Studies in English Language and Education, 10(3), 1309–1325. https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v10i3.29973

52. Moghadam, Z. B., Narafshan, M. H., & Tajadini, M. (2023). The effect of implementing a critical thinking intervention program on English language learners' critical thinking, reading comprehension, and classroom climate. Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education, 8(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-023-00188-3
53. Muxamedjanov, F. M., & Basirjonova, S. J. (2025). Developing critical thinking skills through literature. International Journal of Science and Technology, 2(6), 38–39. https://doi.org/10.70728/tech.v2.i06.014
54. Myren-Svelstad, P. E., & Grüters, R. (2022). Justifications for teaching literature. L1-Educational Studies in Language and Literature, 22, 1–26. https://doi.org/10.21248/l1esll.2022.22.1.494
55. Negoescu, A. G. (2023). The value of critical thinking in the language classroom. Revista Academiei Forţelor Terestre, 28(4), 303–308. https://doi.org/10.2478/raft-2023-0036
56. Nguyen, T. Q. H., Nguyen, D. T. C., & Nguyen, T. H. L. (2024). Teaching critical thinking to English-majored students through the Pathways coursebooks (2nd edition) at UFLS-UD: Challenges and solutions. Proceedings of the AsiaCALL International Conference, 4, 209–219. https://doi.org/10.54855/paic.23415
57. Omer, M. O. M., & Ali, E. A. M. (2025). The pedagogical benefits and challenges of incorporating literary texts into language teaching. International Journal of English and Studies, 7(4), 10–15. https://doi.org/10.47311/ijoes.2025.7.04.15
58. Patunob, G. B., & Ibojo, D. T. M. (2023). Best practices in teaching world literature: A phenomenological study. World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 19(1), 1310–1315. https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2023.19.1.1507
59. Philippine Daily Inquirer. (2026, May 13). Academic groups oppose CHEd overhaul of GE curriculum. https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2227596/academic-groups-oppose-ched-overhaul-of-ge-curriculum
60. Philippine Social Science Council. (2026, May 26). Official position of PSSC re: GE reform. https://pssc.org.ph/ge-reform-statement/
61. Philstar.com. (2026, May 14). CHED defers reframed GE curriculum to 2028. https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2026/05/14/2527831/ched-defers-reframed-ge-curriculum-2028
62. Pino Gavidia, L. A., & Adu, J. (2022). Critical narrative inquiry: An examination of a methodological approach. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 21. https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221081594
63. Portilla Quintero, B., & Herrera Molina, J. (2021). Critical pedagogy trends in English language teaching. Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal, 23(2), 155–165. https://doi.org/10.14483/22487085.16732
64. Quanqin, Y., & Cheong, L. K. (2023). Teacher questioning on students' critical thinking ability in high school English reading. International Journal of Education & Technology, 1(4). https://doi.org/10.59021/ijetech.v1i4.77
65. Quinquino, M., & Ong, C. (2025). Enhancing English learning outcomes through communicative language teaching (CLT): A targeted intervention in a private college in Northern Mindanao. International Journal of Social Science and Human Research, 8(2). https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v8-i2-35
66. Rappler. (2026, May 12). Fast facts: CHED's proposed reframed general education curriculum. https://www.rappler.com/philippines/things-to-know-ched-proposed-reframed-general-education-curriculum-may-2026/
67. Rifqi, M., Mujiyanto, J., Hartono, R., & Fitriati, S. W. (2022). Students' responses to "The Gift of the Magi" and imaginative re-creations. Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 12(2), 434–447. https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v12i2.35921
68. Rosenblatt, L. M. (1988). Writing and reading: The transactional theory (Technical Report No. 416). Center for the Study of Reading, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
69. Rosenblatt, L. M. (1995). Literature as exploration (5th ed.). Modern Language Association of America.
70. Second Congressional Commission on Education. (2025). Fixing the foundations: A matter of national survival — EDCOM II year two report. https://edcom2.gov.ph/media/2025/01/EDCOM-2-Year-2-Report-Fixing-the-Foundations-2025.pdf
71. Sembiring, E. M. B., Tarigan, N. W. P., Tarigan, M. S. B., & Kuanda, R. (2024). Analyzing EFL students' critical thinking through literary texts. ELT (English Language Teaching Prima Journal), 6(2). https://doi.org/10.34012/elt.v6i2.6385
72. Sharma, V. (2021). Motivational role of teaching English literature in language learning. International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences, 6(2), 147–150. https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.62.22

73. Siraji, A. D., & Paraja, I. (2023). The significance of using literature in the EFL classroom. Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal. https://scimatic.org/storage/journals/11/pdfs/1489.pdf
74. Suarez, G. W. A., & Diva, C. (2022). Using reader response strategy and affective learning domain in teaching literature to enhance critical thinking. International Journal of Educational Management and Development Studies, 3(4), 61–82. https://doi.org/10.53378/352938
75. Subedi, K. R. (2021). Determining the sample in qualitative research. Scholars' Journal, 4(1), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.3126/scholars.v4i1.42457
76. Sun, X. (2021). Literature in secondary EFL class: Case studies of four experienced teachers' reading programmes in China. The Language Learning Journal, 51(2), 145–160. https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2021.1958905
77. Tan, H. S. (2023). Critical reading skills in English of incoming Grade 10 learners: An analysis and interpretation. International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research, 4(10), 3766–3776. https://doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.04.10.27
78. Tarrayo, V. N., Hernandez, P. J. S., & Claustro, J. M. A. S. (2021). Research engagement by English language teachers in a Philippine university: Insights from a qualitative study. Asia-Pacific Social Science Review, 21(3). https://doi.org/10.59588/2350-8329.1387
79. Tojiboyeva, S. K. (2025). Methodology for the development of information analysis skills through classical and modern works in English lessons. European International Journal of Pedagogics, 5(4), 133–136. https://doi.org/10.55640/eijp-05-04-31
80. Tomas, M. J. L., Villaros, E. T., & Galman, S. M. A. (2021). The perceived challenges in reading of learners: Basis for school reading programs. Open Journal of Social Sciences, 9(5), 107–122. https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2021.95009
81. Toquero, S. C., & Capistrano, F. M. (2024). Pedagogy in the 21st century literature classroom: Teachers' teaching mechanisms, challenges, and coping mechanisms. International Journal of Research Studies in Education, 13(6). https://doi.org/10.5861/ijrse.2024.24046
82. Viado, A. L., & Espiritu, J. A. (2023). The collaborative-individual learning in improving the critical thinking skills of secondary students in the Philippines. International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research, 4(7), 2592–2600. https://doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.04.07.35
83. Wang, W. (2021). Evaluation principles' influence of critical thinking foreign language teaching on German literature classroom learning motivation. Revista de Cercetare si Interventie Sociala, 73, 81–94. https://doi.org/10.33788/rcis.73.6
84. Wei, L. (2023). Narrative inquiry: A research method in the education field. World Journal of Education, 13(6), 35. https://doi.org/10.5430/wje.v13n6p35
85. Wu, B. (2023). Research on the classroom application of English teaching method based on the cultivation of students' critical thinking. Journal of Education and Educational Research. https://drpress.org/ojs/index.php/jeer/article/view/11559/11256
86. Yamin, M., Setiawan, S., Anam, S., & Retnaningdyah, P. (2022). The teachers' perception about critical thinking skills in English language teaching methodologies. English Review: Journal of English Education, 10(2), 655–666. https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v10i2.6302
87. Yang, A. (2022). Young adult and canonical literature instruction in the high school classroom: Assessing students' reading interest. Binghamton University Undergraduate Journal, 8(1). https://doi.org/10.22191/buuj/8/1/6
88. Yulian, R. (2021). The flipped classroom: Improving critical thinking for critical reading of EFL learners in higher education. Studies in English Language and Education, 8(2), 508–522. https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v8i2.18366