

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

In considering the overall study conducted on the teaching and learning of *Julius Caesar* through the twelve observations and video recordings in both the schools, it has revealed undoubtedly, a host of interesting aspects pertaining to the teaching, learning, preparation, reading and types of questions and activities or tasks that could be analysed in this limited report. The study has also enabled the researcher to enter the realm of the classroom, to taste "slices of the classroom life" and discover and reveal the immense scope of studies that can be conducted from here on, through the analysis of the twelve classroom recordings. It is hoped that this study would enable other teachers and readers to understand the nature of drama lessons being conducted in teaching *Julius Caesar* as a text, rather than a play for the stage. It has been noted by some researchers that the study of a Shakespearean play is more fulfilling than watching a stage production of it. Thus, the experience of fulfilment in the students would not be measured in this study, but would certainly be one that would linger in them for years to come and they would have to thank their teachers for that memorable and indelible experience.

At the outset, it would be necessary to examine the Research Questions tabled earlier to provide some focus on the overall study. As for the first question on how the Form Five students are being taught the Literature elective, it has been substantially explored and analysed in the findings. In examining the second question pertaining to the salient features and structures of the lessons taught, here too the video recordings have successfully captured evidence of them. Finally, the third question calls for the

examination of effective teaching techniques and strategies that could aid the students in the study of drama - *Julius Caesar*. In this aspect too, there is ample evidence of the teaching techniques and strategies to aid and guide the students and teachers alike.

It would be appropriate to make certain conclusions based on the study conducted and provide some recommendations as well in order that other readers would be able to appreciate the teaching and learning of *Julius Caesar* as part of a Literature curriculum in Malaysian schools since there are some very experienced teachers and enthusiastic students available in several schools throughout the country. In addition, with English Literature having its roots in this country since 1891, it would be practical to nurture the study of this subject, not to venerate the English, but to enhance our own competence in the English language primarily and experience the aesthetic beauty and value in this genre.

5.2 TEACHING TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES

With close examination of the video tapes and the teaching strategies adopted by the teachers, it is obvious that they had planned their lessons according to the pace of receptivity of their students. Teacher A seemed more dynamic since her students too were more receptive and enthusiastic in the lessons planned. Her use of large computer sheets, large white paper to represent Caesar's blood-stained cloak, the quotation slips, group work, and the questioning technique through "hotseating", clearly demonstrate her careful lesson preparation. On the other hand, Teacher B was engaged in intensive reading of the text and other class activities with the students in order to prepare them for the challenges confronting them from the various aspects of the play to be examined later on. It can be deduced that Teacher A had students with a better proficiency in English, whereas Teacher B clearly had students who lacked confidence and seemed rather inhibited and quiet. It was observed that Teacher A could introduce more learner-centred

tasks and activities since the students were generally conscientious with their reading and preparation for their lessons which constituted numerous questions from the teacher to gauge their reading and understanding. The questioning techniques were indeed a significant and effective element in most of the lessons

5.2.1 QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

The questioning technique and its variety (and "Hotseating") adopted by Teacher A was indeed commendable as it enhanced the students' reading and understanding, the lesson and learning. In addition the students, knowing the nature of the lessons, had to read up and prepare for the barrage of probing questions. In analysing the impact of the questioning, it would be appropriate to mention that Teacher A asked her students a total of approximately 317 questions of recall, for information, for sequence, of higher order, "Yes-No" and single-word responses. Out of this total, about 174 were of the higher order, recall-type, and sequence; while approximately 143 questions were for "Yes-No" or single-word responses. One lesson (Lesson Six) had approximately 90 questions from the teacher and nine from the students since the task was "hotseating" which required students to ask questions as well.

On the other hand, Teacher B asked a total of approximately 89 questions ; out of these, 32 questions were higher order and recall-type, while 57 questions were of "Yes-No" and single-word responses. As could be observed, Teacher B had fewer opportunities for asking questions, since she was guiding the students with line-by-line reading, but when she conducted a learner-centred lesson (Lesson Two) to analyse characters, she had approximately 52 questions - 18 higher order and recall-type; and 34 "Yes-No" and single-word responses. This clearly demonstrated that where lessons were more student-

centred, there would be numerous questions of the categories mentioned to be asked in the classroom for an effective learning environment.

Despite the fact that Teacher B had fewer opportunities for questioning her students due to the slow pace of the line-by-line reading of the text, they were getting an ample amount of consolidation exercise by following the teacher's close reading. The students did their own reading, but they were confident as long as the teacher was guiding them with complete explanations on all textual difficulties. Thus, with the intensive reading that was conducted, it was not viable to ask many questions, since they were still grappling with the basic elements of *Julius Caesar*. Judging from the learner-centred task introduced by Teacher B in Lesson Two, it was obvious that they were coping well with their reading and understanding of the text. Therefore, the onus is on the teacher to formulate a host of questions to probe and prompt the learners to negotiate meaning from the complex text.

5.2.2 SET INDUCTION

When considering the aspect of Set Induction as a teaching strategy, it seemed appropriate that it was introduced into the lessons, especially by Teacher A in at least five of her lessons. While Teacher B only used set induction in two lessons and started the rest with a close examination and reading of the text. The merits of the set induction are well-established and it certainly could provide a stimulating opening to the lesson and focus the students' attention on the lesson for the day. This strategy could also inject some vigour and interest into the lesson especially when the students have had some other subject prior to the Literature class. Hence, with such a teaching strategy, it was certainly effective in captivating their attention and focussing on the lesson which dealt with several salient aspects of the play and the plot structure.

5.2.3 TEACHING AIDS

Also, in examining the lesson structures, a very important aspect was the use of Teaching Aids by both the teachers. In our current era of technological advancement, and with greater focus on classroom teaching, some teaching aids would be considered essential, if not, vital. Thus, it was observed that Teacher A had prepared some teaching aids for classroom lessons in order to engage the students in the lesson structure for the day. Teaching aids, besides the textbook, chalk and board, could enhance the focus and the learning of the students even in a drama class, especially since they only examine the play on an academic level, but do not stage it. Thus, Teacher A prepared teaching aids for three lessons - large white computer sheets for depicting feelings painted by Brutus and Antony; another large white paper to represent Caesar's cloak with holes alluding to the stab wounds; a chart with seven points and another chart to describe the transformation of the common people into a mob. All these were well-planned and incorporated into the lesson structures. In addition, they were ingenious, authentic and simple teaching aids which did not involve any technical complexities.

While, Teacher B only had teaching aids in the first lesson and this was followed by a "web" diagram in the second lesson depicting the characters and the relationships of the main characters. This too constituted an effective lesson design and the students were indeed captivated and engrossed by it since fifty-two questions were asked as well. The impact derived from teaching aids ought to be appreciated by the teachers, since they add a significant dimension to the teacher's presentation of the lesson and information. The other teaching aids used were the chalk and board, the *Julius Caesar* text and a reference book on the extent of the Roman Empire circulated by Teacher B among the students during the lesson to demonstrate the extent and impact of Caesar's prior military expedition and expansion in Europe.

5.2.4 TEACHER PERSONALITY

On examining the personalities of the two teachers, one can undoubtedly reach the conclusion that Teacher A created a more vibrant atmosphere in the class primarily because she possessed a more pleasant and cheerful disposition. She started her lessons briskly by directing the students' focus onto the topics informed in the earlier class. It is noteworthy that the teacher ought to inform the students of the topic to be discussed in the following lesson as this would enable them to do some degree of preparation and reading. Thus, it was observed that Teacher A had informed the students the topics to read on for the following lessons, while teacher B perhaps, only mentioned this aspect once in the six recordings. In fact, Teacher B's students obviously knew what to prepare, but it is certainly more advisable if the teacher told them to read up on a certain portion as it would indeed be an appropriate end to the lesson and would have a positive effect on their preparation for the next lesson.

Finally, it was necessary for the teacher to read a play with some dramatic inclination or dramatic fervour as was the case with Teacher A, who had a stronger voice and personality. The students were generally stimulated by her zest and earnestness in her lessons. While Teacher B generally lacked the volume and the zest necessary to radiate the richness of the experience of a play. Even the teacher's smile could be considered a necessary ingredient in the lesson as it could inject a pleasant and conducive mood in the lesson. The smile was an observable feature in Teacher A's personality as she was conducting her lessons. Another salient feature was that her students were accorded with appropriate compliments for their good answers, responses and participation. This aspect of complimenting too could be considered a necessary feature in a classroom teaching environment as it provides a source of motivation in learning. According to the video recording, Teacher A was observed to have complimented the students nineteen

times in the six lessons ! While teacher B it appeared, paid compliments to her students only three times for their responses.

Thus, these were some of the essential personality traits that had been observed and recorded of the two teachers which ought to be mentioned. It would be fair to stress that some of the necessary ingredients are essential for teachers, especially in a drama or Literature class. It must be pointed out here that both the teachers were observed to be very experienced in the teaching of Literature in English, judging from their depth and breadth of knowledge of Shakespeare.

5.3 ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRES

Based on the questionnaire administered to the students from both the schools, certain conclusions could be drawn from the eleven responses from School A and thirteen from School B. Some of the responses were well expressed while others seemed rather vague and incomplete. However, due credit ought to be accorded to the respondents for their effort in providing some invaluable information on their learning of the *Julius Caesar* text, which indeed was challenging, if not formidable, for them considering the current L2 status of the English language in the country.

Based on the findings of the responses, the respondents were unanimous in their view that *Julius Caesar* was very difficult a text and they all found it a considerable challenge reading and understanding the old Elizabethan English of Shakespeare. Some stated that it was too much of a "political" play with some very difficult and strange speeches, images and obscure references. However, some more proficient respondents viewed the text in a positive light and mentioned that despite the difficulties, they enjoyed the universal themes and the remarkable characters who seemed to have motives which could be

identified with even today. A student even added that she could identify herself with some of the characters and that their motives were very current in people today. Some students found difficulties in imagining some of the scenes and the characters of the play. However, after viewing the movie *Julius Caesar*, they were certainly more confident understanding and studying the play. One respondent stated that the play was wonderful and the themes were even contemporary and relevant in our world today.

With regard to the teaching, the respondents were unanimous in their response that their teachers were absolutely important in teaching and guiding them towards the learning and understanding of *Julius Caesar*. They were very satisfied with the close reading of the text which included reading and explaining -line-by-line. They were of the opinion that the teacher's dramatic reading prompted them to imagine, visualise and understand certain difficult scenes and characters. In addition, they appreciated the teaching techniques and strategies employed by the respective teachers; both groups of respondents were satisfied with the video tape of *Julius Caesar*, since that stimulated their interest in reading the text with more commitment and enthusiasm. A respondent even stated that upon watching the video tape, it had helped her to understand the facial features of the characters better after following their dialogues ! A few students expressed their appreciation for their teachers who even provided them an opportunity to listen to the play on audio cassettes; this helped them to follow the language and imagine the action in the play better even without visual images.

The respondents in School A were appreciative of the nature of lessons conducted by the teacher who provided them with very effective class discussions, group work, activities and did dramatic reading. They were able to follow the discussions on characterization, plot, events and motives well; they even managed to perceive the themes solely due to the teacher's teaching strategies and close reading done in class. Most of them could write out

up to five themes, while a few could mention up to seven; this did indicate that despite their brief exposure to the play, they were able to identify some of the major themes. While most of them managed easily to identify up to four characters, some went up to six names to show their familiarity of the main players involved in the overall plot structure.

When considering the teaching techniques and strategies, a few respondents did mention that the close reading of the text was "boring" for them and preferred more acting out scenes or doing more role play. These could be responses from the more competent and advanced readers who perhaps preferred more challenging tasks, rather than mere reading.

In considering Teacher B's lessons, the respondents were all satisfied with her teaching techniques and strategies which included dramatic reading, group discussion, providing summaries, character sketches in the form of "map" or "web" diagrams and on-the-spot direct explanations which to them were effective in helping them to get a good grasp of the text. They were comfortable with her explanations of all the difficult elements in the play and "her translations into modern English". Several respondents mentioned that their main problem with the text was in understanding Act Five which to them was confusing and complex as the language was rather "difficult and flowery".

Finally, most of the respondents were in favour of the intensive and dramatic class reading as they were assured that their teachers would clarify all their doubts and difficulties during the lesson. They also responded that the video movie was very essential in their study and that more than one viewing was necessary. This boosted their confidence in their own preparation later since they could understand and perceive the drama and the characters in more concrete terms.

5.4 ANALYSIS OF THE TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRES

It must be admitted that at the time of observation and recording, both classes in the two schools were coincidentally handling the *Julius Caesar* text, and this made the study less problematic. In analysing the responses of Teacher A and Teacher B, both were teaching and discussing the similar aspects of character analyses, plot development and certain major themes. However, Teacher A was further ahead with the text and covering Act 3 with the death of Julius Caesar. Therefore, she pointed out that more learner-centred tasks, exercises and discussions could be conducted to gauge the students' progress with their reading and understanding. While Teacher B was primarily doing line-by-line reading and explaining all the difficult elements in the text to help them grasp the language, the obscure references and characterization.

According to their responses, they were primarily concerned with getting their students to read earnestly in order to gain a strong footing with the text. Teacher A could design tasks, group work and question them extensively to gauge the depth of their reading, while Teacher B only conducted two lessons on character analyses and mainly focussed on close reading of the text and gave direct explanations and summary notes to clarify difficulties.

Both of them were confident that their students were coping well with their reading and participation in the lessons. They also knew that once the language barrier was overcome, the students would enjoy and participate better. In addition, they felt that the themes and characters would be easily understood since they were more realistic and concrete for the students to imagine. Thus, teacher A could not ascertain if the students could "experience" or feel emotionally about the play, as it was still too early in their study. Teacher B felt that once they could read and understand the play, they would be more

“sensitized” by the text. Therefore, in order to assist the students to learn the play well, Teacher A relied on her strategies, namely, student-centred activities, group discussions, character study and an analyses of various quotations. Her range of questions were primarily to recall information and to gauge their reading, their grasp of the characters and the plot development. While Teacher B used class reading, group activities, summaries and questions to ensure that they were coping with and understanding the text.

According to Teacher A, her group activities were effective in handling certain difficult speeches, events and aspects of plot development. When direct explanations became tedious, then some of these planned activities motivated them to read more closely in order to participate in the group. Hence, some doubts too could be clarified by themselves gradually, otherwise she would provide all the necessary explanations.

On the other hand, Teacher B pointed out that her students had a “mediocre level of proficiency” and were not ready to handle certain learner-centred tasks which would be conducted later when they had a better grasp of the play. Finally, both the teachers were of the opinion that the primary problem their students had was their difficulties with the Elizabethan language of Shakespeare, so they had to provide all the assistance for their students at this early stage of their reading.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

In considering certain recommendations, it would be necessary to base them on the twelve video recordings and observations conducted in both the schools in Petaling Jaya. The primary focus of the recommendations would be on the following aspects - the set induction; the teaching aids; the teaching techniques and strategies; the question types; the personality of the teachers and the responses based on the questionnaires administered to the students and the respective teachers.

In considering the recommendations for the various aspects of teaching techniques and strategies, it would be appropriate to examine the classroom observations and the video recordings for the necessary evidence. It is hoped that this study would benefit other Literature and Shakespeare teachers and teacher trainees who wish to get an insight into the realm (slices of classroom life) of classroom teaching of *Julius Caesar* in a current Literature class.

5.5.1 TEACHING TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES - SET INDUCTION

With the aspect of Set Induction as part of the teaching techniques and strategies, it is noteworthy that this well-established practice seems to still play an essential role in the opening of a lesson. A set induction is primarily meant to initiate a lesson with some planned strategy to capture the attention of students to a particular topic, lesson or theme. It is evidently to provide a proper focus to the students at the start of a lesson, perhaps, because it would enable to engage their minds to think about some concrete teaching or learning points. Thus, knowing its effective impact on the students and the learning process, it would be a necessary strategy to cultivate in an English literature class, more so, in a drama class. If a set induction functions as an effective and good "first

impression" of the topic or lesson for the day, then it ought to be encouraged as part of the lesson structure.

Thus, Teacher A effectively utilised set induction to commence her lessons in an organized fashion and introduced the lesson rather gradually which linked well with the beginning. Thus, the lesson development was gradual and structured, and obviously the ingenious teacher had put some thought into this aspect before her lessons. Teacher B too introduced this strategy only once, and it was developed into a well-planned lesson on character sketches. Thus, it would be appropriate to stress here that if such a strategy would enhance learning and teaching, then it ought to be maintained as an essential feature of the opening of a well-planned lesson .

5.5.2 TEACHING AIDS

Another essential feature observed from the six lessons in each school was the use of Teaching Aids to supplement the process of teaching and learning. In this particular aspect , it was clear that Teacher A appeared to have introduced a few effective teaching aids in order to add supplementary resources for the successful teaching of a planned topic or subject. She introduced large white computer sheets for the groups to write their responses, another large white sheet with a lesson structure, again another large white paper to represent Caesar's cloak with holes to allude to the stab wounds and finally a plastic bag of quotations on slips of paper. These were the supplementary resources which were introduced to complement the use of the textbook and the chalk and board. It was clear that these teaching aids added a positive dimension to the classroom learning environment and enhanced the lesson structure as well.

Teacher B presented foolscap sheets for the students to write their responses on character analyses in the first lesson and this was followed up by the writing of those points on the board in the following class. Thus, the second, as was observed, turned out to be a fruitful lesson as it generated approximately 52 questions! This proved that a mere reading of the text, would not constitute a conducive learning environment. Hence, it would be an asset to introduce more variety to the teaching aids in order to supplement the textbook and the "chalk and board" medium. Besides, in this age of advanced technology and resources, it would generate more enthusiasm and focus into the lesson proper if the teacher was to introduce some authentic teaching aids into a Shakespeare lesson. Moreover, the movie *Julius Caesar* was vital for the students to generate ample discussions in order to understand the difficulties in staging a Shakespearean play.

5.5.3 QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

When considering Questioning Techniques, these too form an important facet of teaching techniques and strategies, especially during class reading, group work and learner-centred task. The various question types and the awarding of compliments to students for good responses, they all essentially have certain merits as can be noted from the observations conducted. The variety of questions constituted an important facet of the lessons conducted by Teacher A; while Teacher B too had an interesting lesson interspersed with 52 questions of various kinds. On the other hand, Teacher A had a total of approximately 317 questions, and where the new questioning strategy -"hotseating", was used to investigate character traits and motives, there were 90 questions from Teacher A and nine from the students. This indeed was a challenging lesson for the students as they had to formulate questions for the "interrogation", however, not all questions could be answered by the students.

Ideally, for a Shakespeare lesson there should be a good variety of questions especially for recall of events, for sequencing and higher order questions to promote thinking, for inferring, evaluating, comparing and providing reasons.

Questions are only as good as the answers that they get. So it is important to consider not only the types of questions that we ask but also the tactics of asking those questions. (Brown and Wragg, 1993,p. 18)

Finally, it would be a necessary part of lesson preparation for the teachers to think and prepare a variety of questions in order to stimulate the teaching and the learning process in the classroom. Usually, teachers merely introduced questions spontaneously to gauge the students' overall understanding if the occasion warranted it. Undeniably, literature teachers ought to exploit this fascinating sphere of questioning technique in order to enhance the classroom learning process.

5.5.4 TEACHER PERSONALITY AND OTHER FACTORS

Since there are various other factors involved in the study of *Julius Caesar* purely for examination purposes and not for staging, the teacher has to be enterprising with various lesson designs and structures in order to sustain the enthusiasm and motivation levels of the learners. Thus, both Teacher A and Teacher B had presented a variety of tasks and activities for the students to attempt in class to consolidate their reading of the various facets of the play. It would be necessary to provide opportunities for the students to work in groups as well, since they would be able to negotiate among themselves several doubts, difficulties and meaning on their own before they got clarifications from the teacher.

It was apparent that both teachers referred to the text very closely in order to read the lines as well as to elicit facts and other vital evidence. Maley (1989) and Carter and Long

(1987, p.23) have stressed the need for reading aloud especially for drama and poetry in order to practise and imagine certain effects from the meanings derived. So, with practice, certain key words and phrases, such as, "And Brutus is an honourable man" or "Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look" get embedded in the "inward ear". This way students would be able to build on their language and develop a feeling for the richness of literary work. Therefore, some degree of classroom acting out of roles, role play and dramatic reading could be encouraged to allow them to bring alive the language and the characters from the lines.

5.5.5 TEACHER PERSONALITY

With regard to the aspect of Teacher Personality, it was observed that Teacher A had a rather radiant personality and a better audience in her classroom, as compared to Teacher B, who had a very quiet and composed group of students. Teacher A virtually utilised her voice and volume to a level which captivated the attention of the learners; her pitch and tone of voice were maintained at a satisfactory level in order to communicate to the students with a pleasant disposition and rapport. These were essential as was observed from the classroom management of the lesson and the overall proceedings. While Teacher B was not utilising her voice to maximum advantage in getting their attention. Thus, it can be stressed that a certain degree of impact can be derived from a strong and pleasant voice of a teacher. For drama teaching and dramatic reading especially, a reasonably strong voice would be essential in order to dramatise the lesson and enhance the general classroom atmosphere and create a conducive mood for a literary work like *Julius Caesar*.

Another minor observable aspect of the lessons was the nature of the closing remarks of the teachers at the end of their lessons. It was clearly observed that Teacher A ended all her six classes with specific instructions on what to prepare for the next lesson, while

Teacher B only stated this on one occasion regarding the topic to prepare. Informing the students at the end of each lesson to prepare for the next lesson can be considered an essential part of preparation for the students, as well as the teacher. This gives a necessary focus on the coming lesson and students should benefit from such direction to their own learning and preparation. It is hoped that despite its minor role in the lesson structure, it is given some thought by teachers who wish to guide their students' learning according to a prescribed syllabus and scheme of work. This way, the students would cultivate an overall reading habit which in the first place, was included as one of the objectives of the Literature programme.

5.6 STUDENTS' RESPONSES

In providing certain recommendations based on the students' feedback, it would be appropriate to begin with the teaching techniques and strategies first before analysing the other responses.

The students unanimously responded that they depended upon their respective teachers for the satisfactory teaching techniques and strategies with regard to class reading, group work, explaining, paraphrasing, character and plot analysis. However, a few students were not in favour of the long and tedious reading sessions in the class, as they felt bored with such a routine. Thus, it would be necessary for the teachers to consider class reading when the need arose, but it ought not to take a substantial portion of the lesson. Also this close reading of the text could be done by the students themselves prior to the lesson as preparation for the particular aspects or topics are specified by the teacher.

With regard to tasks and activities, both the teachers had interesting group activities which the students enjoyed with satisfaction. Teacher A's notes, discussions, explanations on character, themes and plot development were appreciated by the students who relied on these a great deal. Teacher B's summaries, line-by-line reading, character sketches, "maps" and "web" diagrams for character analysis, notes and direct explanations were considered indispensable for the students' learning and understanding of the play. Thus, it can be concluded that more classroom tasks, group activities and learner-centred strategies ought to be encouraged to enhance the students' personal experiences and interaction with the text.

Judging from the observations of Teacher B's students, it was obvious that they were dependent on her for total guidance since they conscientiously and diligently followed her class with full concentration. They were very comfortable with the teaching strategies employed by Teacher B, as they were still seen to be struggling with *Julius Caesar*, a difficult text indeed for them. While teacher A was conducting learner-centred activities and tasks to engage the students in familiarizing themselves with the text on a deeper level. Thus, it was clear that Teacher A had already groomed her students to be confident readers, and ready to manage their learning rather independently; while teacher B was spending considerable time reading the text and explaining details line-by-line. However, her students were confident with this dramatic reading, as they followed the lessons studiously. In addition, Teacher B stated that her students were rather "mediocre" in their English language proficiency"; therefore, she had to do this intensive reading with them and prepare them for other more complex activities later on when they had a better grasp of the text. Finally, it must be stated that the teacher should plan her lessons in such a way that over-dependence on her should be reduced, so that the students would be able to cultivate some degree of independent reading and learning as well, since this is also a vital ingredient in the study of literature.

In their study of *Julius Caesar*, both the groups unanimously admitted that the language was very difficult, however, with regular reading and getting all the explanations from their teachers, they had been able to cope with the text. In fact, it was their genuine comment that the language was difficult and beyond them. However, with the viewing of the movie on video, they were able to enjoy the text better. Thus, the video could be viewed after every Act in the text in order to clarify all doubts stage-by-stage, if the need arose. Another strategy could be to let them listen to the recording on audio cassettes which would help them to imagine the characters, the scenes, the moods of the characters as they speak, the rhythm of the language and the plot development. The use of the electronic media would certainly enhance the teaching and their learning to a considerable degree with the variety of resources available for the study of *Julius Caesar*.

5.7 TEACHERS' RESPONSES

Based on the teachers' responses, some salient points could be drawn from them pertaining to the students' reading, the teaching techniques, the class lessons and language difficulties confronting their learners while studying *Julius Caesar*.

The teachers' responses had provided some invaluable evidence on their perceptions on the teaching of the text and the students' difficulties. Both teachers seem to stress that close reading of the text by the students would be beneficial to them in their understanding and appreciation of the play. They had shown the video tape to their students and that had certainly boosted their enthusiasm in reading the text. Besides, the intensive and dramatic reading too had helped them to grasp the essence of the play. Both the teachers had been successful in explaining, paraphrasing and handling all language difficulties for the benefit of their students. They emphasised that without the reading by

the students themselves, they would not be able to enjoy the richness of Shakespeare. The teachers too were not overly anxious about the students' difficulties since it was still the initial stages of their discovery of the world of Shakespeare.

The teachers' group work, tasks, sequencing of events and questioning techniques were essential in "sensitizing" the students and helping them to enjoy the plot, characters and the themes in the play. The themes and the characters were relatively easier for the students to understand as they were universal and still contemporary in our own society. Therefore, some elements of the play were easier for them to grasp, except for the old and strange language of Shakespeare. Both the teachers stated that a variety of questions were used to gauge the students' understanding, their in-depth reading and the sequencing of events. Thus, without their close reading their participation in class would be passive and subdued. So the class activities, group work and the learner-centred tasks were essential for boosting their confidence in their learning process.

According to Teacher A, it was not necessary for the students to be emotionally involved in the play yet, since they were still groping with the text. However, she stated that her students were active and participating in class and that was sufficient for the moment. While Teacher B stated that the learner-centred tasks and activities could not be utilised yet, since her students were still struggling with Shakespearean language. Thus, each class ought to work at its own pace depending on the learning capacity of the students. However, where the students were doing adequate reading and preparation, then a more dynamic set of activities could be introduced in order to engage them in more complex tasks, as in the case of Teacher A's students where they were able to cope with the massive dose of questions and their varieties asked during the course of her six lessons.

In the final analysis, it can be observed that Teacher A was indeed a more "literary" person who had a sense of pride for things literary and had a profound appreciation for Literature. From her teaching and personality, she evoked in her students a sense of appreciation for Shakespeare and *Julius Caesar* through her extensive knowledge in literature and assisted them towards achieving an inclination towards an aesthetic response through their reading and activities. A student even responded rather convincingly that her readings had helped her to feel the spirit of *Julius Caesar* in the text.

Teacher B too has extensive experience in teaching literature and there was no doubt about her deep sense of commitment in her teaching. However, there was some dramatic quality missing in her lessons; perhaps she had other school chores bogging down her enthusiasm in class. However, her pleasant personality was an asset in class since the students needed an approachable, sympathetic and patient teacher who would guide them towards a better understanding of the *Julius Caesar* text despite their moderate language competence.

Inevitably, it must be stressed that for ideal literature classes, teachers need to "simply create the conditions for successful learning", as Brumfit puts it. Therefore, it would certainly augur well for the students if the teacher possessed a reasonably radiant personality and a breadth of knowledge which could enlighten the classroom learning atmosphere and create a conducive environment for a literary experience. In addition, the twelve video recordings could function as an invaluable resource for experienced and budding Literature teachers not just to imitate the teachers featured, but to evaluate and adapt certain practical and viable aspects for their respective literature lessons.

Another point worth noting is that the teachers' reliance on the video movie of *Julius Caesar* to enhance the students appreciation of the play, underscores a vital objective of

the Literature programme - to promote and inculcate the reading habit among our students. In fact, once the learners have viewed the movie, they would obviously be stimulated to read and critically appreciate the original text. As a matter of fact, the learners could read for pleasure, for personal improvement and for broadening their language awareness. Finally, according to (Ross, 1991) their prolonged critical reading of the text would be a “springboard towards fluency practice” and eventually enhance their proficiency and aesthetic appreciation of literature.