



# Integrating Genre-Based and Collaborative Approaches to Foster Reading Literacy in Vocational High School

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Received: 2026-06-01 Revised: 2026-06-18 Accepted: 2026-06-30</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Literature Circles, Teaching and Learning Cycle, Expository Text, Reading Comprehension, Vocational Education, Collaborative Learning, Scaffolding</p> <p><b>DOI:</b> 10.24256/ideasv14i1.8747</p> <p><b>Corresponding Author:</b> Jasmine Emerald Haque 2010631060089@student.unsika.ac.id University of Singaperbangsa Karawang</p>	<p><i>This study explored the integration of Literature Circles within the Teaching and Learning Cycle framework to enhance reading comprehension of expository texts among vocational high school students. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were gathered through classroom observations, reflective journals, and semi-structured interviews with thirty-two students and analyzed using thematic analysis. The results revealed that each stage of the Teaching and Learning Cycle: Building Knowledge of the Field, Modeling of the Text, Joint Construction, and Independent Construction, played a distinctive role in supporting comprehension development, while Literature Circles provided collaborative opportunities for discussion, critical engagement, and shared meaning-making. The integration of both frameworks fostered cognitive, linguistic, and affective growth, transforming reading into a more engaging and student-centered process. Challenges such as limited technical vocabulary and initial communication anxiety were progressively mitigated through teacher scaffolding and peer collaboration. Overall, the findings highlight that this hybrid approach offers a powerful pedagogical model for vocational EFL contexts by combining structure with learner autonomy, enhancing comprehension, motivation, and communicative confidence. The study contributes to the growing body of genre-based and collaborative learning research, offering practical implications for teachers aiming to implement integrative literacy instruction in vocational education.</i></p>

## 1. Introduction

Reading comprehension constitutes one of the essential skills underpinning students' academic success and lifelong learning. It enables learners to construct

meaning, critically process information, and integrate new knowledge into existing cognitive frameworks. Within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, reading comprehension is not merely a linguistic exercise but also an intellectual endeavor that shapes learners' capacity for analytical and reflective thinking (Setiyorini et al., 2022). Previous research underscores that effective reading instruction should transcend the mechanical decoding of texts, focusing instead on cognitive engagement and social interaction that facilitate deeper understanding (Snow, 2002). As the demands of the 21st-century workforce evolve, vocational education increasingly emphasizes literacy as a foundation for technical competency, problem-solving, and professional communication.

In vocational high schools, reading comprehension holds particular importance because students encounter expository texts that are often technical, discipline-specific, and densely informative. Expository reading in vocational programs such as Software Engineering, Mechatronics, or Business Administration requires learners to grasp factual, conceptual, and procedural information presented in manuals, user guides, and documentation.

Studies have shown that vocational students frequently struggle to comprehend these materials due to limited vocabulary mastery, low motivation, and inadequate exposure to interactive literacy practices (Foss et al., 2025; Septia et al., 2022). Expository texts, which demand critical thinking and analytical reasoning, are often perceived as difficult and disengaging. Consequently, learners may experience cognitive overload or disengagement when teachers rely on traditional, lecture-based reading approaches. This pedagogical challenge highlights the urgent need for more interactive and scaffolded learning methods that integrate cognitive, linguistic, and social dimensions of reading comprehension.

Several scholars have proposed that interactive learning models can address these challenges by emphasizing student-centered collaboration and guided scaffolding. Among these models, Literature Circles (LCs) have gained significant attention for their capacity to foster collaborative reading practices. In an LC setting, learners engage in small-group discussions where each participant assumes a specific role, such as Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, or Vocabulary Enricher (Farikah & Al Firdaus, 2020).

This structure encourages shared accountability, deepens comprehension, and enhances learners' capacity to interpret texts through multiple perspectives. Empirical studies support the efficacy of LCs in promoting motivation, autonomy, and comprehension across various EFL contexts. For instance, Turk (2023) found that students involved in literature circles exhibited higher engagement levels than those taught through conventional methods. Similarly, Thomas & Kim, (2019) reported that peer-led discussions not only increased students' enjoyment of reading but also improved their interpretive and analytical skills. Chou (2022) further emphasized that LCs enhance learner motivation and facilitate active

participation in meaning-making processes, leading to more profound textual understanding.

While Literature Circles promote student interaction and engagement, their success depends largely on effective scaffolding from the teacher. The Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC) framework offers a complementary structure that supports systematic scaffolding of literacy development. Grounded in genre-based pedagogy, TLC involves four progressive stages: Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF), Modeling of the Text (MOT), Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT), and Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT) that guide students from assisted learning to independent performance (Feez, 1999; Ueasiriphan & Tangkiengsirisin, 2019).

This cyclical process aligns closely with Vygotsky et al., (1978) Sociocultural Theory, which posits that learning occurs within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) through interaction and mediation. The teacher, therefore, acts not as a sole transmitter of knowledge but as a facilitator who provides contextual support, gradually transferring responsibility to learners as their proficiency increases.

The integration of Literature Circles with the TLC framework presents an innovative pedagogical synergy that balances structure and freedom in reading instruction. TLC's explicit scaffolding ensures that learners understand genre conventions and textual organization, while Literature Circles promote ownership and collaborative dialogue. Together, they create an environment conducive to critical reading and reflective interaction.

Recent studies highlight the potential of combining structured scaffolding with collaborative learning to improve reading outcomes. Anggraini & Yanto (2025) demonstrated that TLC-based instruction effectively enhances learners' analytical engagement and comprehension of complex texts. Similarly, Dewi & Saefullah (2022) found that structured role assignments within Literature Circles sustain student motivation and improve reading comprehension, even in online or blended learning contexts. These studies suggest that integrating both approaches may amplify their individual benefits where TLC provides cognitive scaffolding and Literature Circles stimulate affective and social engagement.

Despite their respective strengths, few empirical studies have explored the intersection of these two pedagogical models within the context of vocational EFL education. Most research has examined LC or TLC in isolation, focusing either on collaborative discussion or on genre-based scaffolding. Moreover, studies conducted in general secondary or higher education settings rarely address the unique literacy demands of vocational learners, who require both technical reading skills and communicative competence for workplace applications.

As a result, there remains a significant research gap in understanding how the integration of Literature Circles and the Teaching and Learning Cycle can jointly enhance reading comprehension in vocational contexts. The lack of contextualized models limits the potential for pedagogical innovation that aligns with vocational education's practical and linguistic objectives.

This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the integration of Literature Circles within the Teaching and Learning Cycle framework to enhance students' comprehension of expository texts in a vocational high school setting. It explores how the combination of these two approaches can cultivate a supportive, interactive learning environment that promotes vocabulary development, critical reading, and student confidence.

The study also examines students' perceptions of the integrated model, offering insights into how they experience collaboration and teacher scaffolding during the learning process. By doing so, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on genre-based and collaborative literacy instruction, offering both theoretical and pedagogical implications.

The novelty of this study lies in its contextualization within vocational English learning, where it bridges two established yet previously uncombine approaches Literature Circles and the Teaching and Learning Cycle to create a comprehensive model for fostering reading comprehension and learner engagement. The findings are expected to inform EFL practitioners and curriculum designers seeking to design context-sensitive, student-centered strategies that support literacy development in vocational education.

## **2. Method**

### ***Research Design***

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore how the integration of Literature Circles (LC) within the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC) framework enhances students' reading comprehension of expository texts in a vocational high school context. The qualitative case study was chosen because it allows for an in-depth, contextualized understanding of complex classroom phenomena, focusing on participants' experiences, behaviors, and interactions ((Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2018). This design was particularly suited for examining the implementation process of an instructional model that emphasizes both cognitive and social dimensions of learning. By adopting this design, the researcher aimed to capture rich, descriptive data that illustrate how the TLC-LC integration unfolds in authentic classroom settings and how students respond to this pedagogical approach.

### ***Research Setting and Participants***

The research was conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Bojong, Purwakarta, Indonesia, specifically within the Software Engineering program. This setting was selected because vocational students in technical disciplines often engage with expository texts such as manuals, user guides, and documentation, yet typically struggle with comprehension and motivation. The study focused on one class consisting of 32 tenth-grade students enrolled in the English course. These students were chosen as the research participants because they represented diverse levels of English

proficiency, thus providing a broad perspective on how the integrated model could support varied learners.

For in-depth data collection, six students were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews. Selection was based on teacher recommendations, considering students' participation levels, reading ability, and engagement during classroom activities. The inclusion of multiple proficiency levels enabled the researcher to obtain a nuanced understanding of students' experiences with both challenges and benefits of the integrated model.

### ***Researchers' Role***

The first author functioned as both the facilitator and observer throughout the intervention. In alignment with qualitative research principles, the researcher actively participated in classroom activities to support and guide students during the implementation of the TLC-LC model. Reflexivity was maintained throughout the process by documenting observations, reflections, and potential biases to ensure the credibility and authenticity of the findings. The dual role allowed the researcher to capture both the pedagogical process and the emergent dynamics among students while maintaining objectivity in data interpretation.

### ***Instructional Design and Implementation Procedures***

The instructional procedure was structured around the four stages of the Teaching and Learning Cycle (Feez, 1999; Ueasiriphan & Tangkiengsirisin, 2019): Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF), Modeling of the Text (MOT), Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT), and Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT). Each stage was aligned with specific Literature Circle activities to encourage collaborative discussion and scaffolded comprehension. The instructional intervention was implemented over several sessions within a regular English class period.

### ***Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF)***

At this initial stage, the teacher introduced the topic and activated students' prior knowledge related to the expository text. Pre-reading discussions, vocabulary exercises, and brainstorming activities were conducted to build conceptual and linguistic readiness. This stage aimed to prepare students to engage critically with the text by connecting it to real-world and vocational contexts.

### ***Modeling of the Text (MOT)***

During this phase, the teacher presented an example of an expository text and explicitly demonstrated how to analyze its structure, main ideas, and supporting details. Modeling also included explanations of typical text features and language forms. Additionally, students were introduced to Literature Circle roles—Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, and Vocabulary Enricher—and were guided on how to perform these roles effectively during group discussions.

**Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT)**

This collaborative stage represented the integration of Literature Circles within the TLC framework. Students were divided into small groups of four, with each member assigned a specific LC role. Each group was given a different expository text chosen from teacher-provided materials. Under teacher supervision, students discussed the text, shared insights, asked questions, and clarified vocabulary. The teacher monitored discussions, provided guidance when necessary, and encouraged critical questioning. This stage emphasized peer learning, negotiation of meaning, and the co-construction of understanding.

**Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT)**

Following group discussions, students were assigned to write short opinion texts summarizing and responding to the reading material. This stage aimed to assess individual comprehension and to encourage independent text production. Students were later invited to present their written work to the class, fostering confidence and communication skills. The ICOT stage concluded with a review session where the teacher provided feedback and students completed reflective journals.

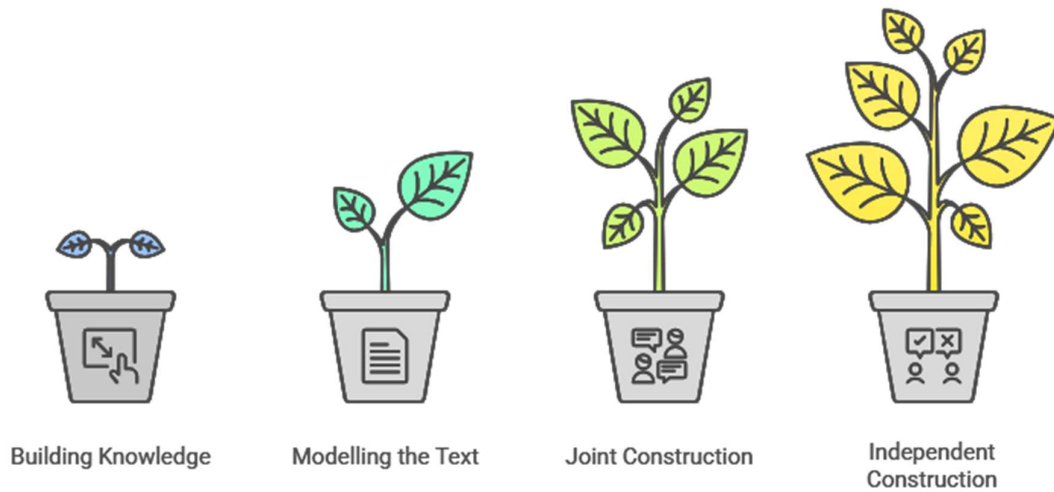


Figure 1. Teaching Learning Cycle of Literature Circles

**Data Collection Techniques**

Multiple data collection techniques were employed to ensure triangulation and data credibility. The instruments included classroom observation, reflective journals, and semi-structured interviews.

**Classroom Observation and Video Recording**

Classroom observations were conducted throughout all TLC stages to

record students' engagement, interaction patterns, and behavioral responses to the integrated model. Observations were supported by video recordings and detailed field notes to enhance accuracy and allow for post-observation review. The observation checklist, adapted from Widodo (2016) focused on indicators such as participation level, collaboration quality, responsiveness to teacher guidance, and performance in LC roles.

### ***Reflective Journals***

Students completed reflective journals after each session to document their learning experiences, perceived progress, and encountered challenges. The reflective journal template was adapted from Elsa Diego-Medrano (2013) and contained open-ended prompts such as "What did you learn from today's activity?" and "How did your group help you understand the text better?" These reflections provided insights into students' cognitive and affective engagement during the intervention.

### ***Semi-Structured Interviews***

After the completion of the instructional cycle, six students participated in semi-structured interviews to gain deeper insights into their perceptions and experiences. The interview guide comprised open-ended questions covering three dimensions: (1) engagement and collaboration in Literature Circles, (2) perceptions of TLC stages, and (3) perceived benefits and challenges. Interviews were conducted in Indonesian to allow natural expression and later translated into English for analysis.

### ***Research Instruments***

Three main instruments supported data collection: (1) observation checklist and field notes, (2) reflective journal template, and (3) interview guide.

- **Observation Checklist:** Adapted from Widodo (2016), it measured engagement, collaboration, responsiveness, and role performance.
- **Reflective Journal Template:** Based on Diego-Medrano (2013), it explored students' reflections on learning experiences, difficulties, and progress.
- **Interview Guide:** Contained eight open-ended questions to elicit student perspectives and clarify observations from other data sources.

### ***Data Analysis***

Data were analyzed using Braun & Clarke (2006) six-phase **thematic analysis** approach: (1) familiarization with data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the final report. Transcripts from interviews, observation notes, and journal entries were manually coded and cross-checked to identify recurring patterns. Triangulation among data sources enhanced validity, ensuring that

findings represented consistent themes across different perspectives.

Throughout the analysis, inductive reasoning guided the identification of emergent patterns related to students' engagement, comprehension strategies, and perceptions of the integrated model. Patterns were categorized into overarching themes, such as (a) the effectiveness of integrating LC and TLC, (b) collaborative and affective outcomes, and (c) encountered challenges. Representative quotes and vignettes from participants were used to illustrate findings, preserving the authenticity of student voices.

### ***Trustworthiness of the Study***

To ensure the study's credibility, reliability, and ethical integrity, several strategies were implemented. **Credibility** was achieved through data triangulation, member checking, and prolonged engagement in the classroom. **Transferability** was supported by providing rich contextual descriptions of the instructional process and participant background. **Dependability** was maintained through systematic documentation of procedures, while **confirmability** was achieved through reflective journaling by the researcher to minimize bias.

### ***Ethical Considerations***

Ethical approval was obtained from the institution, and informed consent was secured from all participants prior to data collection. Students were informed of the study's purpose, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Confidentiality was upheld by anonymizing participants' names and ensuring that data were used solely for academic purposes.

In summary, this methodological framework was designed to capture the multifaceted nature of integrating Literature Circles within the Teaching and Learning Cycle framework. Through a qualitative case study approach, systematic data collection, and rigorous thematic analysis, the study sought to provide an authentic representation of how this integrated pedagogical model supports reading comprehension, fosters collaboration, and enhances student engagement in vocational English classrooms.

## **3. Result**

### ***Overview of Data Analysis***

The qualitative data obtained from classroom observations, reflective journals, and semi-structured interviews were analyzed thematically following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach. Three major themes emerged from the data analysis: (1) the efficacy of integrating Literature Circles (LC) and the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC) in improving students' reading comprehension, (2) the enhancement of student engagement and collaborative learning, and (3) the linguistic and affective challenges encountered during implementation. Each theme is supported by triangulated evidence from multiple sources and illustrated

with excerpts from student journals and interview transcripts.

### ***The Efficacy of Integrating Literature Circles and the Teaching and Learning Cycle***

The integration of LC and TLC was found to have a substantial positive impact on students' comprehension of expository texts. The thematic analysis revealed that each TLC stage contributed uniquely to developing comprehension skills and fostering student independence. Students demonstrated a gradual shift from teacher-dependent learning to autonomous meaning-making, reflecting the scaffolded nature of the TLC framework.

#### ***Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF)***

At the beginning of the learning process, the BKOF stage played a vital role in activating students' prior knowledge and contextual understanding. Through discussions, brainstorming, and vocabulary-building exercises, students reported a greater readiness to engage with expository texts. Observational data indicated that learners actively participated in teacher-guided pre-reading discussions. Vocabulary enrichment activities, in particular, supported students' understanding of technical terms.

One student reflected, "I gain a better understanding of the expository text about AI after it is explained because I don't understand it before." (Reflective Journal, Student S). This sentiment was common across journals, indicating that the pre-reading scaffolding provided the necessary foundation for comprehension. By establishing conceptual and linguistic readiness, the BKOF stage reduced cognitive load and encouraged students to interact with the text more effectively.

#### ***Modeling of the Text (MOT)***

During the MOT stage, the teacher modeled the process of identifying text structure, main ideas, and supporting details in expository texts. Observations showed that explicit instruction in genre structure helped students recognize the organization of information, thereby improving comprehension accuracy. In addition, this stage introduced the LC roles, giving students a clear understanding of their tasks during subsequent group discussions.

Students expressed that the modeling activities provided them with clear strategies for text analysis. One participant noted, "After the teacher showed how to find the main idea and how to summarize, I could follow the example when reading on my own." (Interview, Student 2). The modeling phase bridged the gap between teacher guidance and student-led exploration, ensuring that learners had concrete analytical tools before participating in peer discussions.

#### ***Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT)***

The JCOT stage, which integrated Literature Circles, emerged as the most

interactive and dynamic part of the instructional cycle. Students worked collaboratively in groups of four, assuming different roles such as Summarizer, Discussion Leader, Connector, and Vocabulary Enricher. This structure promoted shared responsibility and peer teaching, as learners supported one another in interpreting complex texts.

Observations revealed high engagement levels during discussions, with students exchanging viewpoints and clarifying meaning collaboratively. The reflective journals showed that this stage encouraged active learning and increased comprehension. A student wrote, "Discussing with my friends helps me understand the text better because everyone gives different perspectives. I also improve my vocabulary and critical thinking by asking and answering questions." (Reflective Journal, Student 3). These findings support Dillenbourg's (1999) collaborative learning theory, highlighting how peer interaction enhances comprehension through negotiation of meaning.

Teachers' field notes indicated that students exhibited growing confidence as discussions progressed. Learners became more willing to express opinions and ask questions, demonstrating the social and cognitive benefits of collaborative dialogue. This interaction fostered both linguistic development and metacognitive awareness, as students reflected on how their peers' interpretations influenced their own understanding.

### ***Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT)***

In the final TLC stage, students demonstrated their independent comprehension skills by composing short opinion texts and presenting them to the class. Observations indicated that most students completed this task successfully, applying strategies learned in previous stages. The ICOT phase not only reinforced comprehension but also cultivated self-expression and critical thinking.

Students' reflective journals revealed a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence at this stage. As one student commented, "Through Literature Circles, I learned new vocabulary and gained experience presenting my ideas in front of the class." (Reflective Journal, Student 7). These reflections indicate a transition from guided learning to self-regulated performance, consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) principle of internalization, where social learning becomes individualized understanding.

### ***Enhancement of Student Engagement and Collaboration***

Another key finding of the study was the significant improvement in student engagement and collaborative learning. The integration of LCs within TLC stages fostered an inclusive learning atmosphere that encouraged participation, accountability, and mutual respect among peers.

### ***Active Participation and Motivation***

Students consistently reported that the LC-TLC model made reading activities more engaging and enjoyable. Data from reflective journals and interviews indicated that students appreciated the interactive nature of group work. They described the lessons as “fun,” “easier to understand,” and “motivating.” One student remarked, “This method is helpful and makes learning easier to understand.” (Interview, Student 1). Such positive feedback suggests that integrating collaborative discussion with structured scaffolding can transform reading lessons into active learning experiences.

Observations corroborated these findings: students were consistently engaged in discussions, asked relevant questions, and participated in peer feedback. The combination of teacher guidance during TLC stages and student-led dialogue in LCs created a balanced environment where learners felt both supported and empowered.

### ***Peer Collaboration and Communicative Growth***

Collaborative learning was evident throughout the implementation. Students displayed increased interaction, turn-taking, and cooperative behavior during group discussions. They learned to listen, respond, and build upon each other’s ideas. This collaborative culture not only strengthened comprehension but also developed interpersonal and communicative skills.

Several journal entries highlighted the importance of teamwork. As one student wrote, “Working in a group helps me understand the text because my friends explain things I don’t know.” (Reflective Journal, Student 4). Teachers’ field notes confirmed that group roles helped maintain focus and accountability. The Summarizer role encouraged synthesis, while the Vocabulary Enricher prompted lexical awareness. Through these role-based tasks, students learned to assume responsibility for their learning and that of their peers.

This finding resonates with Vygotsky’s (1978) Sociocultural Theory, emphasizing that learning occurs through interaction and co-construction of knowledge. The LC-TLC model effectively operationalized this principle, as students’ learning became a shared social process rather than an individual endeavor.

### ***Linguistic and Affective Challenges Encountered***

Despite the overall positive outcomes, several challenges emerged during the implementation of the integrated model. These challenges were primarily linguistic and affective in nature, relating to vocabulary limitations and anxiety about language performance.

#### ***Vocabulary Difficulty***

A recurring issue reported by students was the difficulty of understanding

technical or unfamiliar vocabulary in expository texts. Many participants expressed frustration when encountering complex English terminology related to their vocational field. As one student noted, "I don't fully understand the topic before discussing it because I'm not familiar with the technical vocabulary." (Interview, Student 1). Another added, "I struggle to understand technical terms and also find it hard to express my opinions." (Reflective Journal, Student 4).

Observations supported these statements, as students often paused to consult dictionaries or asked for teacher assistance. The teacher's scaffolding, especially during the BKOF and JCOT stages, played a crucial role in addressing these issues. Pre-teaching vocabulary and encouraging peer explanation proved effective in mitigating comprehension barriers. These findings align with Grabe and Stoller (2011), who emphasize that vocabulary knowledge significantly influences reading comprehension outcomes.

### ***Affective Factors: Nervousness and Confidence***

Affective challenges were also evident in students' accounts. Several participants reported feeling nervous when expressing ideas in English, particularly during group discussions or presentations. This apprehension was linked to limited linguistic confidence and fear of making mistakes. One student admitted, "I feel nervous about presenting the result of our discussion. I have never discussed this topic before and feel confused at the beginning of the lesson." (Interview, Student 2). Such anxiety corresponds with Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which suggests that emotional barriers like fear and low confidence can impede language acquisition.

However, data from later sessions indicated that these affective barriers diminished over time as students gained familiarity with the process and support from peers. Teachers' observations and students' journals both documented increased confidence and participation. Peer collaboration and positive reinforcement contributed to lowering anxiety levels, creating a more relaxed learning atmosphere conducive to language development.

The results of this study demonstrate that integrating Literature Circles within the Teaching and Learning Cycle significantly enhances vocational students' reading comprehension of expository texts. Each TLC stage contributed systematically to scaffolding learners' understanding, while LC roles facilitated engagement and peer collaboration. Students exhibited notable progress in vocabulary mastery, analytical reading, and confidence in expressing ideas.

Furthermore, the integrated model fostered a balance between teacher guidance and student autonomy. The scaffolding provided in TLC stages ensured structured learning progression, while the LC component empowered students to take ownership of their learning. Although challenges such as limited vocabulary and performance anxiety persisted, these were mitigated through continuous teacher support and collaborative interaction.

Overall, the findings affirm that the TLC-LC integration offers a pedagogically sound and contextually relevant approach for enhancing reading comprehension in vocational English classrooms. It not only strengthens cognitive and linguistic competence but also cultivates affective and social dimensions of learning, promoting students' overall engagement and confidence in using English for academic and professional purposes.

#### **4. Discussion**

##### ***The Pedagogical Impact of Integrating Literature Circles and the Teaching and Learning Cycle***

The findings of this study demonstrate that the integration of Literature Circles (LC) within the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC) framework significantly enhanced vocational students' reading comprehension, engagement, and confidence in learning expository texts. The effectiveness of this integration can be explained through the synergy between the structured scaffolding of TLC and the collaborative, student-centered nature of LCs. Each framework addresses complementary dimensions of literacy development, TLC provides systematic guidance for understanding genre structures, while LCs foster social interaction and learner autonomy. Together, they create a balanced pedagogical model that operationalizes the principles of sociocultural learning, scaffolding, and collaborative construction of knowledge.

In the TLC stages, students were gradually guided from explicit modeling to independent application, aligning with Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory. The *Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF)* and *Modeling of the Text (MOT)* stages provided necessary scaffolds to activate background knowledge and model comprehension strategies, while *Joint Construction (JCOT)* and *Independent Construction (ICOT)* enabled learners to internalize these strategies through practice and reflection. When combined with LC roles such as Summarizer, Discussion Leader, Connector, and Vocabulary Enricher, students actively engaged in peer dialogue, transforming passive reading into active knowledge negotiation. This interaction strengthened both comprehension and metacognitive awareness, confirming previous research that structured collaboration enhances reading comprehension and critical thinking (Dillenbourg, 1999; Anggraini & Yanto, 2025).

The data revealed that students became increasingly autonomous and confident as they moved through the TLC stages. This progression exemplifies the gradual release of responsibility model Pearson & Gallagher (1983), where control shifts from teacher guidance to learner independence. The integration of LC roles within this framework reinforced accountability and engagement, ensuring that each student contributed meaningfully to the learning process. As a result, the classroom environment evolved from teacher-centered instruction to a collaborative learning community, consistent with Daniels' (2002) view of Literature Circles as democratic spaces for shared inquiry and reflection.

### ***Cognitive and Linguistic Development Through the Integrated Model***

The integrated LC-TLC model effectively supported both the cognitive and linguistic aspects of reading comprehension. Cognitively, students developed higher-order thinking skills by analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating textual information. Linguistically, they gained exposure to technical vocabulary and genre-specific structures essential in vocational education. The findings indicated that explicit scaffolding in TLC stages, especially during *Modeling of the Text*, provided students with analytical frameworks for recognizing textual organization and identifying main ideas. Simultaneously, LC discussions required students to articulate their understanding, paraphrase content, and negotiate meaning all of which deepened their comprehension and lexical awareness.

This aligns with the perspectives of Grabe & Stoller (2011), who emphasized the interdependence between vocabulary knowledge and comprehension. The LC role of Vocabulary Enricher proved particularly beneficial in addressing lexical challenges noted in the findings. By collectively discussing difficult terms, students constructed shared meaning and improved retention of new vocabulary. This supports Nation (2001) claim that collaborative word exploration reinforces lexical acquisition through context-based repetition and peer scaffolding.

Moreover, students' reflections revealed that the integration of modeling and discussion enhanced their critical awareness of how ideas are developed in expository texts. Through teacher modeling, learners gained exposure to the rhetorical and logical structures typical of informational genres, while LC discussions encouraged them to apply and extend these insights. The iterative process of observation, collaboration, and reflection fostered metacognitive growth students learned not only *what* to understand but *how* to approach comprehension strategically. This combination of explicit instruction and dialogic engagement represents a key advancement over traditional lecture-based approaches, which often neglect learner agency.

### ***Affective and Social Dimensions of Learning***

Beyond cognitive gains, the integration of LC and TLC positively influenced students' affective engagement and social interaction. The study revealed that students experienced heightened motivation, enjoyment, and confidence, consistent with findings from Furr (2004) and Huang & Reynolds (2022). The LC component introduced an element of autonomy and choice that empowered students to take ownership of their learning. The social aspect of peer-led discussions reduced anxiety, creating a low-pressure environment that encouraged participation even among less confident learners.

These outcomes can be interpreted through Krashen' (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which posits that emotional factors such as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence influence language acquisition. In this study, the peer support inherent in LC activities effectively lowered the affective filter, enabling students to

engage more freely with the text. As learners gained confidence through repeated practice and positive feedback, their participation increased, and hesitation decreased. By the later stages of the TLC cycle, most students demonstrated greater willingness to present ideas publicly and interact in English.

The collaborative framework also contributed to the development of interpersonal and communicative competencies, which are essential for vocational contexts. Students practiced turn-taking, active listening, and constructive feedback skills that parallel real-world communication demands in professional environments. Thus, the LC-TLC integration not only enhanced reading comprehension but also cultivated soft skills such as teamwork, empathy, and communicative clarity.

### ***Overcoming Linguistic and Affective Challenges***

While the integrated approach was effective overall, several challenges emerged, primarily related to vocabulary limitations and initial communication anxiety. These difficulties, however, were mitigated through systematic scaffolding and peer collaboration. The teacher's role during the BKOF and MOT stages was crucial in pre-teaching technical terms and modeling contextual interpretation strategies. This proactive scaffolding helped students navigate complex texts and reduced dependency on translation.

Peer interaction within LC discussions further supported this process. When faced with unfamiliar vocabulary, students often collaborated to infer meanings from context or relied on explanations from peers. Such exchanges exemplify the principle of socially mediated learning, where knowledge construction occurs through shared reasoning (Vygotsky, 1978). Over time, this cooperative dynamic transformed vocabulary learning from an isolated struggle into a collaborative discovery process.

Affective barriers, such as nervousness in expressing ideas, were also gradually overcome through repeated exposure and reinforcement. Initially, students hesitated to speak in English, but the non-evaluative nature of LC discussions encouraged risk-taking and experimentation. This shift mirrors findings by Widodo (2016), who argued that reflective and dialogic classrooms can transform anxiety into confidence through social validation. The integration of LC roles and TLC scaffolding thus functioned as a dual support system: cognitive scaffolds addressed linguistic complexity, while social scaffolds alleviated affective tension.

### ***Pedagogical Implications***

The outcomes of this study carry significant implications for EFL pedagogy, particularly in vocational education. First, the integration of LC within TLC demonstrates that genre-based instruction need not be rigid or teacher-dominated; when complemented by student-led discussion, it becomes a dynamic,

interactive process. Teachers can use the TLC framework to structure literacy development while allowing flexibility for collaborative learning through LC roles. This hybrid approach aligns with Widodo's (2016) call for dialogic pedagogy that merges explicit instruction with learner-centered exploration.

Second, the findings underscore the importance of scaffolding both cognitive and affective dimensions of learning. Teachers should explicitly teach reading strategies, vocabulary, and text structures, but also provide space for peer interaction and reflection. The LC roles ensure equal participation and accountability, which are crucial for maintaining engagement in mixed-ability classrooms. Furthermore, integrating reflective journals as formative assessment tools can help students monitor their own progress and articulate learning insights, reinforcing metacognitive growth.

Finally, the LC-TLC model offers a replicable framework adaptable to various EFL contexts beyond vocational education. Its strength lies in balancing structure and autonomy, teacher guidance and peer collaboration, linguistic focus and affective support. By merging genre-based pedagogy with collaborative reading, educators can cultivate not only proficient readers but also reflective, communicative learners prepared for academic and professional literacy demands.

In summary, the discussion highlights that integrating Literature Circles into the Teaching and Learning Cycle fosters a comprehensive form of literacy development encompassing cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional growth. The study confirmed that scaffolding and collaboration are mutually reinforcing mechanisms that enable learners to transition from guided understanding to independent interpretation. This integrated model aligns with sociocultural and constructivist theories, illustrating that comprehension emerges from both explicit instruction and social interaction.

Although challenges such as vocabulary difficulty and anxiety were present, they were effectively mitigated through teacher facilitation and peer support. The overall findings advocate for the adoption of LC-TLC integration as a pedagogically sound, contextually adaptable, and empirically supported approach for enhancing reading comprehension in vocational English classrooms. It represents a balanced instructional model that not only improves textual understanding but also nurtures confidence, cooperation, and learner autonomy qualities essential for lifelong learning.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study concludes that integrating Literature Circles within the Teaching and Learning Cycle framework creates a powerful and synergistic model for teaching reading comprehension in vocational English classrooms. The findings demonstrate that the structured scaffolding of the Teaching and Learning Cycle, when combined with the interactive and collaborative nature of Literature Circles, effectively enhances students' cognitive, linguistic, and affective engagement.

The TLC's sequential stages provided explicit guidance that developed students' understanding of text structure, vocabulary, and meaning construction, while the Literature Circle roles encouraged active participation, peer interaction, and reflective thinking. Together, these frameworks facilitated students' transition from guided learning to independent interpretation, fostering not only reading proficiency but also communication, collaboration, and self-confidence.

The study's results highlight the significance of integrating structured instruction with collaborative learning to achieve deeper comprehension and learner autonomy in EFL vocational settings. Pedagogically, this research contributes to the body of genre-based and sociocultural learning theories by demonstrating how scaffolding and interaction jointly promote literacy development.

It further provides a replicable instructional framework that can be adapted across educational contexts where students require both linguistic support and meaningful engagement. Future studies are encouraged to expand this model across different genres, proficiency levels, and institutional contexts, incorporating quantitative analyses to measure its long-term impact on academic and professional literacy development.

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