

7. CRITICAL LITERACY

©LITERACIES FOR THE DIGITAL AGE TO TEACH IN THE K-12 CLASSROOM

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A SIMPLE DEFINITION OF CRITICAL LITERACY

http://www.bridgew.edu/library/cags_projects/lthomson/web%20page/literacy%20definition.htm

The purpose of Critical Literacy in real-life situations is to effectively

Interact
Construct meaning
Communicate

Critical Literacy is an ongoing learning process that enables one to use

Reading
Writing
Thinking
Listening
Speaking
Evaluating

CRITICAL LITERACY ACCORDING TO PAOLO FREIRE, 1970

- **What Is Critical Literacy?**
- “Critical literacy views **readers as active** participants in the reading process and invites them to **move beyond passively accepting** the text’s message to question, examine, or dispute the power relations that exist between readers and authors. It **focuses on issues of power** and promotes reflection, transformation, and action.”
- http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/scholasticprofessional/authors/pdfs/Sample_pages_Critical_literacy.pdf

Definition of Critical Literacy; Rationale for its Use

<https://sites.google.com/site/criticalliteracyeduc5765/definition-of-critical-literacy-rationale-for-its-use>

- **Allows students to ask questions, provide informed opinions, argue and get the answers to a range and variety of texts to support their learning**
- An approach to teachingwhich should challenge relationships between language and social practices
- Part of a balanced program using texts in context that bring meaning to students
-It should 'raise the bar' for students on intellectual quality
- A classroom practice for students of all ages and learning styles
- Promoted using multi-media and multi-modality literacy in the classroom (variety is the key)

CRITICAL LITERACY APPROACHES

<https://sites.google.com/site/criticalliteracyeduc5765/approaches-to-critical-literacy>

- 1. Deconstruct the structures and features of texts.
- 2. Ask questions of the text.
- 3. Examine the underlying values and consider the ways readers view the world
- 4. Develop opposing interpretations.
- 5. Explore alternative readings; what has been included; what has been left out.
- 6. Which aspects of life does the author value?
- 7. Does the text present unequal positions of power?
- 8. Consider the time and culture of text's creation.
- 9. How are text's views similar to or different from contemporary views?
- 10. Work for social equity and change.

CRITICAL LITERACY QUESTIONS TO ASK OF TEXTS

<https://sites.google.com/site/criticalliteracyeduc5765/approaches-to-critical-literacy>

- 1. CRITICAL LITERACY QUESTIONS FOR TEXTUAL PURPOSES
 - WHAT IS THIS TEXT ABOUT? HOW DO WE KNOW?
 - WHO WOULD BE MOST LIKELY TO READ AND/OR VIEW THIS TEXT AND WHY?
 - WHY ARE WE READING AND/OR VIEWING THIS TEXT?
 - WHAT DOES THE COMPOSER OF THE TEXT WANT US TO KNOW?
- 2. CRITICAL LITERACY QUESTIONS FOR TEXTUAL STRUCTURES AND FEATURES
 - WHAT ARE THE STRUCTURES AND FEATURES OF THE TEXT?
 - WHAT SORT OF GENRE DOES THE TEXT BELONG TO?
 - WHAT DO THE IMAGES SUGGEST?
 - WHAT DO THE WORDS SUGGEST?
 - WHAT KIND OF LANGUAGE IS USED IN THE TEXT?

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- 3. CRITICAL LITERACY QUESTIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF CHARACTERS
 - HOW ARE CHILDREN, TEENS, YOUNG ADULTS CONSTRUCTED IN THE TEXT?
 - HOW ARE ADULTS CONSTRUCTED IN THIS TEXT?
 - WHY ARE THE CHARACTERS REPRESENTED IN A PARTICULAR WAY?
- 4. CRITICAL LITERACY QUESTIONS FOR GAPS AND SILENCES
 - ARE THERE 'GAPS' AND 'SILENCES' IN THE TEXT?
 - WHO IS MISSING FROM THE TEXT?
 - WHAT QUESTIONS ABOUT ITSELF DOES THE TEXT NOT RAISE?
- 5. CRITICAL LITERACY QUESTIONS FOR POWER AND INTEREST
 - IN WHOSE INTEREST IS THE TEXT?
 - WHO BENEFITS FROM THE TEXT?
 - IS THE TEXT FAIR?

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6. WHOSE VIEW; WHOSE REALITY?

WHAT VIEW OF THE WORLD IS THE TEXT PRESENTING?

WHAT KINDS OF SOCIAL REALITIES DOES THE TEXT PRESENT?

WHAT IS REAL IN THE TEXT?

7. INTERROGATING THE COMPOSER

WHAT KIND OF PERSON COMPOSED THE TEXT?

WHAT VIEW OF THE WORLD DOES THE COMPOSER ASSUME?

8. MULTIPLE MEANINGS

WHAT DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF THE TEXT ARE POSSIBLE?

HOW ELSE COULD THE TEXT HAVE BEEN WRITTEN?

HOW DOES THE TEXT RELY ON INTER-TEXTUALITY TO CREATE ITS MEANING?

7 CRITICAL READING STRATEGIES

http://www.salisbury.edu/counseling/new/7_critical_reading_strategies.html

- 1. **PREVIEWING**-learning about a text before reading it
- 2. **CONTEXTUALIZING**-placing a text in historical, biographical, cultural contexts
- 3. **QUESTIONING TO UNDERSTAND/REMEMBER**-asking questions about the content
- 4. **REFLECTING ON CHALLENGES TO BELIEFS/ VALUES**-examining personal responses
- 5. **OUTLINING and SUMMARIZING**-identifying main ideas and restating in your own words
- 6. **EVALUATING AN ARGUMENT**-testing logic of a text
- 7. **COMPARING and CONTRASTING RELATED READING**-exploring likenesses and differences

SAMPLE CRITICAL LITERACY LESSON PLANS

- CLICK ON THE FOLLOWING URLs FOR SAMPLE LESSON PLANS THAT DEMONSTRATE THE USE OF CRITICAL LITERACY IN THE CLASSROOM:
- <http://thinkcritically.weebly.com/critical-literacy.html> **Critical Literacy in the 21st Century: What is Critical Literacy?**
- <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/critical-reading-stories-authors-213.html> **Lesson Plan Critical Reading: Two Stories, Two Authors, Same Plot?**
- <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/critical-literacy-women-19th-1009.html> **Lesson Plan Critical Literacy: Women in 19th-Century Literature**

CRITICAL LITERACY SOURCES

- http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/scholasticprofessional/authors/pdfs/Sample_pages_Critical_literacy.pdf **Demystifying Critical Literacy**
- <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/4437?ref=popular> **Critical literacy**
By [Heather Coffey](#) This article outlines the history and theory of critical literacy and details its application in the classroom.
- <http://thinkcritically.weebly.com/critical-literacy.html> **Critical Literacy in the 21st Century: What is Critical Literacy?**
- <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/critical-reading-stories-authors-213.html> **Lesson Plan Critical Reading: Two Stories, Two Authors, Same Plot?**

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- http://www.salisbury.edu/counseling/new/7_critical_reading_strategies.html **7 CRITICAL READING STRATEGIES Salisbury University**, A Maryland University of National Distinction
- Freire, P. (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum; Giroux, H. (1987). "Literacy and the pedagogy of empowerment." In P. Freire & D. Macedo (Eds.), *Literacy: Reading the word and the world*, pp. 1-29. Westport, CT: Heinemann; and McLaren, P. (1988). *Life in schools: An introduction to critical pedagogy and the politics of literacy*. New York: Longman.