Critical Literacy: Implications for Teaching and Learning within Education

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Organization of the presentation

- Research Context
  Justification of doing the research
- Research Focus
- Literature reviewed
- Theoretical Framework
- Methodology
- Presentation of findings
- Conclusion
Introduction

My position on literacy

Critical Literacy
Justification of doing the research and Context of the research.

- My educational Journey
- Critical Encounters
- Need for knowledge
- Exploration of literacy issues in education.
This presentation focuses on:

• The impact of critical literacy intervention on students’ motivation and attitudes toward critical literacy in England.

• Highlights some of the barriers to critical literacy curriculum.
Defining Critical Literacy

Social, political and cultural practices employed in the reading.

Writing and communication process in relation to different forms of media.

Power relations

Identification of ideologies within text.

Reading the ‘word and the world’.

Addressing issues of inequality and injustice and critical reflection on one’s position in relation to text.

It can also be argued that past and present policies continue to use literacy as a form of control (Hannon, 2000 and Gee, 1996).

Curtis (2007) commented that ‘levels of literacy remained almost static since 1950’s’.

Street (1995), who suggests that models of literacy need to take into account the social, cultural, economic and political context in the acquisition of literacy.

According to Vasquez (2013): A critical literacy curriculum needs to be live. It arises from the social and political conditions that unfold in communities in which we live.

The review of literature revealed that many academics who write about critical literacy have avoided issues of the use of grammar, phonics and structure of language. One academic who has tried to deal with these issues is Vasquez
Methodology

- Research Design: Case Study
- Theoretical Framework
- Data collection tools:
  a. Interviews
  b. Questionnaires
  c. Limitations
Implementation of critical literacy leads to active participation and discussion

These themes could be likened to:
• poverty:
• the boy’s industriousness;
• physical description of place;
• community and family;
• the contented boy;
• description of the picture

Teachers’ Role

• scaffold critical literacy skills
• critical thinking
• independent thinking among students.
Dear XX,  Hi I’m....and I live in..... and that’s in England. I can see on the picture that your place isn’t very rich and very cold. In England we sometimes have sun out and sometimes it is raining like two days ago we had lots of snow. I go to school everyday and its cold in the morning when I’m biking to school. I’m writing this letter to tell you how England is like. We have lots of cars and lots of houses. I play football everyday because I want to be a good football player. I live in a house and I have lots of games that I can play with. I’ve got my own room but anyway I play football everyday. I hope you enjoyed my letter.

Dear XXX,

It was very good to receive a letter from you. I showed the letter to all my friends because our lifestyle is very different from yours. Our country is very hot and very natural. I don’t go to school most days because I have to work for money so me and my family can survive. I play football too but I don’t think I am good enough to be a football player. I play football with my friends sometimes after school. I got to bed at 9:00 p.m. so I won’t be tried in the morning. I walk to school in the mornings with my friends ... I hope you will write a letter to me again so we can talk to each other.
For homelessness | Against homelessness
---|---
Might have problems at home and there is nowhere to live. | Homeless people are the main cause of street fights and robbery on the streets.
They have as much rights on the earth as anyone else. | Homeless people smell and look ‘scruffy’.
Some homeless people might be a victim of physical abuse and mental stress at home. | They allow streets to look untidy.
They are not getting enough benefits so they have to live on the street. | They should get jobs like anyone else.
They need help with their drug addiction. | 
Sometimes you are forced into that situation. | 
Teachers’ perspectives on the impact of critical literacy.

- Increased motivation
- Challenges the status quo
- Connect lessons to the social and cultural experiences of children.
- Address issues of social justice and equity within our society.
- Improved class participation.
- Provides opportunities for development of reading and writing skills

Critical Literacy in Action.

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Summary of findings: Impact

Implications

- Students' Voice: Connection to social and cultural issues
- Demonstration of positive attitude to literacy by students.
- Increased active participation
- Exploration of social justice and inequality issues
- Goes beyond the remit of the National Curriculum
- Allows for a student centered curriculum
- Exploration of teachers' and students' postionality

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Summary of findings: Barriers

Barriers to Critical Literacy

- Cultural assumptions
- Censorship
- Resistance to Critical Literacy Pedagogy
- Cultural Barriers
- Ideological Beliefs

Lack of preparation
Curriculum mandate
Management of critical literacy
Conclusion: A Framework for Critical Literacy
Jowallah (2010)

Seven Features of Critical Literacy Pedagogy

1. Validation of Critical Literacy
2. Motivation and Participation
3. Students’ voice
4. Social Justice and Equality
5. Environment
6. Transformation through reflection
7. Power Dynamic
Barton and Hamilton (1998:3) state: Literacy is primarily something people do; it is an activity, located in the space between thought and text. Literacy does not reside in people’s head as a set of skills to be learned, and it does not just reside on paper, captured as texts to be analysed. Like all human activity, literacy is essentially social, and it is located in the interaction between people.

‘I’m starting with the man in the mirror. I’m asking him to change his ways. And no message could have been clearer, if you wanna make the world a better place, take a look at yourself and then make a change’ (Michael Jackson, 1988).
References


Dr. Rohan Jowallah has worked in education for over twenty years. He has taught at various levels: elementary school, middle school, high school and university. Prior to joining UCF’s Instructional Design Team, Rohan was employed as an Academic Program Planner by The University of The West Indies Open Campus.

Rohan Jowallah holds an Ed.D. in Language and Literacy in Education from the University of Sheffield in England; ME.d. in Special Needs and Inclusion Studies from The Open University in England; BSc in Psychology from The Open University in England; PGC in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education from the University of Wolverhampton in England and Asc. in Secondary Education from Bethlehem Moravian College from Jamaica.

Rohan has presented at several international conferences and has published in several peer reviewed papers and a book chapter he continues to develop work for publication. Rohan has also served as a reviewer of several international journals.

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