

## **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **Introduction**

Gathering a common position from the articles, the significance of Critical Literacy (CL) has been confirmed by many. However, it's correct understanding and application has become more crucial, that otherwise drifts away from it's importance. There is collective emphasis on the correct, vast and unbounded application of CL pedagogies in student and teacher education. The studies in these articles are based in U.S.A, therefore, the issue is framed in this country's context.

### **ARTICLE 1**

Lee, C. J. (2011). Myths about Critical Literacy : What teachers need to unlearn. Journal of Language and Literacy Education [Online], 7 (1), 95-102.

### **SUMMARY**

Using Friere's (1984) pedagogy as the base of the understanding of CL, the author has claimed that there are four myths of practicing CL, all stemming from misconception, misinterpretation and unawareness. As a literacy teacher educator, his work involved placing pre-service teachers in teacher education programs that provided insight into the situation through the means of personal observations. This led to recognising the urgent need to implement CL in the right manner in and beyond classrooms.

The author's version of a thorough distinction between critical thinking and CL is explained in the first Myth. The second covers the audience it is appropriately designed for and the third about CL as only an instructional strategy restricting the necessary flow of processes is discussed. The fourth tries to bust a common myth about CL being only about Reading and Writing.

### **CRITICAL DISCUSSION**

The author's teacher-educator perspective gives the reader an internal perspective of the reality in classrooms. The example given to support the contention in the second myth of the teacher's unjust act of selecting high ability students for the experiment portrays her misunderstanding of the purpose of CL. This negated the theory of empowering the oppressed by Friere (1984). At the same time, there could be a possibility that the teacher's intention of choosing these students was to ensure responsibility towards the tasks allocated

to them during the study. Nevertheless, a cautious effort could have been made to select lower ability students for realistic results.

With regards to the third myth, evidence supporting the position is not clearly understandable in the example of the pre-service teacher's experience with the stations. Only a brief explanation is presented about the underlying reasons of the occurrences at the event. However, the opinion is confirmed when the incident is related to Friere's views and referred to Van Sluys's (2005, p.2) thoughts about CL being a belief system in literacy education for students to be users of language instead of mere recipients.

The fourth myth gives a perfect example that depicts the importance of regarding every skill paramount for developing CL practice. Mastering critical reading and writing skills are simple but isolating the rest is not practicing CL wholly (Lee, C. J. 2011). The first myth is discussed in a better context in other articles.

## **ARTICLE 2**

Johnson, E., & Vasudevan, L. (2012). Seeing and hearing students' lived and embodied CL practices. *Theory into Practice*, 51(1), 34-41.

### **SUMMARY**

This article sheds light on unconventional ways of expressing CL. The authors argue that means do not matter as long as it is practiced for better decision making and can be applied in the world beyond school. The focus is on the effects of critical media literacy on critical literacies embedded in self-expressions going unnoticed. Instances of three tenth graders (Rukiya, Santo and Jessica) from a high school in U.S.A. from an ethnographic study of teacher-student negotiations based on the topic of pop culture have been provided.

The observations primarily include witnessing discourse embodied in students' way of being and this building their personality as the outcome. Furthermore, conceptualising CL as performed (Blackburn, 20013), positioned (Bomer and Loman, 2004) and produced (Youdell, 2006).

### **CRITICAL DISCUSSION**

There is a strong depiction of embodied texts like clothing, hair and accessories termed as texts for CL, in relation, these fundamental to identity work. Similar texts framed Rukiya's identity for her photo-ethnography assignment on popular culture. The inclusion of snapshots of clothes and shoes as texts were important for her identity development. Rukiya terming herself as a wise spender for her choice of lip gloss irrespective of other's actions of going for the new trend based on the latest song popular among the students is mentioned in an instance. Her expression of CL is making a conscious effort of not hiding the ninety nine cent lip gloss. However, the accusation made by Jessica of her materialistic motivation to attend school is difficult to ignore.

The second instance with Santo and Jessica includes their self-expression of being critically literate by means of discussing evidently prevalent issues such as racism through humor presented on media regardless of adult presence. It exhibits physicality involved in acting against discursive practices of classroom and social etiquette. The audience, both recognises and fails to recognise these youths' embodied performances that are always occurring as CL (Johnson, E., & Vasudevan, L. 2012).

### **ARTICLE 3**

Stribling, S. M. (2014). Creating a CL milieu in a kindergarten classroom. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education* [Online], 10(1), 45-64. Retrieved from <http://jolle.coe.uga.edu>

### **SUMMARY**

The author has spent six months (2.5 hours a day, 2 times a week) studying a kindergarten classroom with children from dual-income middle-class families with diverse nationalities. The primary motive was to understand the pupils' thought process behind applying CL and process concepts such as social justice, considering this was their first time engaging in formal literacy education. Moreover, the stigma concerning children that age should not, because they are not meant to be exposed to such knowledge was taken into account. Hence, the significance of CL for young children in order to create justice oriented citizens to tackle the Discourse of a larger discourse called Education for a democratic economy is discussed in the initial part of the article (Stribling, S. M. 2014).

Before the start and end of the project the teachers and students were interviewed along with audio-recording of some class discussions. Research was conducted with the help of particularistic, heuristic and descriptive case studies to explore the interactions and development of practice even further. Data gathered was open, axial and selective by coding to deepen her understanding of CL framework.

The article gives examples of instances with students in class, where power was shared in decision-making, students' opinions were respected and collaboration towards achieving justice, etc. The class teacher's personal socio-cultural experiences since childhood influence her practice.

### **CRITICAL DISCUSSION**

A suitable method of preparing 'case studies' enables to do more than just describe the events in the classroom. It has promoted analysing, interpreting and theorising the practice of CL for young children (Stribling, S. M. 2014). In addition, the author's expectations of exploring the stigma of practicing CL at such a young age was met with. The rare situations of the impossibility of practicing CL one hundred percent are mentioned followed by claims of it, nevertheless, creating a solid path for their future experiences.

The key observations derive from activities that include children reading books and having discussions about issues related to social injustice and exploring each others' and their own skin colors along with characters through art activities.

Under the topic of social injustice, the class read texts followed by discussions about skin color, gender, segregation, etc. The texts comprised of world leaders known for their commendable work that changed lives of many. Her positive approaches included hands-on exploration through art projects making it more personal while generating new knowledge about their own and others' identity (Stribling, S.M. 2014).

The benefits of young children understanding the concept of discourse involved in CL in order to create their unique social identity that is based on how they react to difference has been affirmed. This also leading to children's understanding of power in the context of a society is a good point of view.

The author's understanding of CL is built upon thinking of it as an 'aura' rather than as a 'practice'. Hence, creating a safe atmosphere through positive affirmations and valuing students' empowerment is crucial in creating a CL milieu (Stribling, S.M. 2014).

The data is quantitative but not exactly qualitative. Some instances and information mentioned are unnecessary, irrelevant to the practice of CL- for example, Crystal being mean to others and known for that. She was not known for that, it was a self-inflicting act.

#### **ARTICLE 4**

Hyesun Cho (2015). "I Love this Approach, But Find it Difficult to Jump in with Two Feet!" Teachers' Perceived Challenges of Employing CL. English Language Teaching; Volume 8, No. 6; 2015 (pp. 69-79)

#### **SUMMARY**

The authors' study focuses on the perspectives of TESOL teachers of CL and the challenges faced in employing it. One study based in Hawaii includes twenty in-service teachers who take online professional development courses with the help of WebCT. The other comprises of forty graduate university students from Kansas. They were taught TESOL instructional methods on campus for two semesters in Fall 2011 and 2012. Weekly online reflective practices such as reading and writing as part of the curriculum in order to support them in framing their ongoing practice were implemented. Towards the end, these were compiled into a portfolio along with their final reflection on the course.

Varying data involved weekly reflections, e-portfolios and field notes and these were categorised into sub-categories using coding methodology. The challenges they faced

based on her observations were threefold- freedom to practice CL restricted due to standardisation of curriculum and testing methods, opposition from the parents and community, inadequate understanding of the concept of CL.

### **CRITICAL DISCUSSION**

Action research to support observations is a reliable way to do an action-oriented comparative study for reflective practice to transform teaching practice into a learning practice (Schön, 1983). Teachers' expression of their discomfort and disagreement with the state driven standardised procedures exhibits their willingness but at the same time reluctance driven by fear of losing their own job depicts helplessness according to the author.

Unsupportive response from the community for questioning values believed at home lead to them resisting this change. However, a suggestion from an ESL college instructor who was also a Master's student from Kansas to design teaching practice carefully around that could help avert the situation. Nevertheless, my personal opinion regarding parents' disapproval of discussing contemporary real-world issues in class is to not let it hold them back. A way of overcoming this challenge would be getting parents involved through showcasing the benefits of such practice. Cannot be considered to be the easiest or the most practical approach but a possible long-term solution.

Additionally, the writer has given accounts of the teachers' intertextual understanding of CL confined to only text analysis. These instances depict the varied ways of individual interpretation of CL leading to alterations to fulfill personal agendas.

### **REFLECTION**

All the chosen articles provide different exemplifications of CL directed towards the same stance- analysing the World through the Word (Freire & Macedo, 1987).

The writer gives an objective opinion of the practical reality of CL in the first article. Terming them as myths gives a very clear message to the reader that the ideas are false but still believed by many. This confirms that efforts need to be put into busting these myths in everyday lives in order to be part of a historical evolution guided by human beings rather than it being a natural phenomenon (Lee, C. J. 2011). These false beliefs would not be formed overnight. There is a probability of them being an effect of years of committing the same mistakes without critical analysis of CL and not correcting the incorrect.

My understanding of CL being restricted in many environments as a result of it revealing the grim reality is given attention to and other similar ideas about the clarity of CL in article one are mentioned in article four as well.

The need for stressing relevance of physical embodiment of CL by it's supporters form the writer's arguments primarily in the second article and the third as well of. There is emphasis on multimodal expression of criticality across space and time, hence, pedagogy needs to be created in a way that acknowledges these actions. (Johnson, E., & Vasudevan, L. (2012). These ideas validate my thought process.

In order to create a CL milieu for her kindergarten classroom, a critical stance was taken by Emma. It therefore, became a way of being for the students as they continually questioned power structures, challenged dominant discourses, and engaged in critical questioning with their peers and teacher. This milieu could be vital for their upbringing in my opinion.

The concept of personal identities part of CL in articles two and three build my argument of it's value in tackling socio-cultural power relations.

All the articles stress the importance of being critically literate in order for humans to not fall prey to the society's politically charged D/discourses (Lankshear, 1994). Conversely, they all fail to answer questions such as the dire need of a critical literate in all blocks of the society, all the time. Overcoming the challenges discussed in article four by looking beyond at the positive impact of CL in the lives of the people who make use of it constructively is a sound advice. But the binding situational realities of the oppressed and illiterate restrict them from moving forward in this as well as other contexts.

Advantages and disadvantages of privatisation of education in U.S.A. can be studied from the articles.