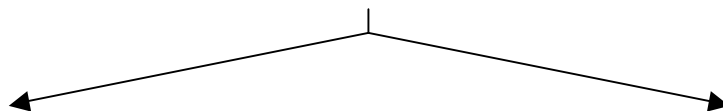


A Theoretical Framework for Critical Literacy

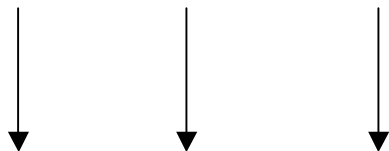
Human Relations are at the heart of schooling
Cummins (1996/2001) p.1



To name
To reflect critically
To act
Paulo Freire

Descriptive Phase
Personal Interpretive phase
Critical Analysis Phase
Creative Action Phase
Alma Flor Ada

This theoretical
framework informs the
methods which follow.



The methods which
follow inform this
theoretical framework.

Praxis: The Union of Theory and Practice

We believe that no **one** activity necessarily has all aspects of the critical literacy framework for all activities. Rather, we think teachers choose various methods for the varying objectives of differing lessons, depending on the unique needs of students and demands of curriculum.

It is also our suspicion that *many* teachers have *many* activities, which have *many* critical aspects, even if they don't realize it. Perhaps, if teachers understood a theoretical framework of critical literacy, they would be able to extend and or adapt their own methods to make them more critically-grounded.

Based on this, in what follows are various methods and/or activities, which are theoretically grounded in various aspects of critical literacy. The activities here are not meant to be grade-specific, but we have chosen activities which were used from primary to higher education. We are assuming that you can adapt them to your own context.

1. Big Books: One Way
2. Big Books: Dawn's Way
3. Big Books: Sharon's Way, 5 Pictures from Home
4. Big Books: Sharon's 2nd way, *The Daily News*
5. Library Mapping
6. Oral History Project
7. Utopia Project
 - Utopia Overview for Teachers
 - Utopia Overview for Students
8. Who I Am/Who I Want To Be, Overview for Students
 - Who I Am/Who I Want to Be: Overview for Teachers
 - Who I Am/Who I Want to Be: Overview for Students
9. Reading Café
10. A Mess
11. The Creative Reading Methodology

I wish to thank the following friends for their contributions:

Dawn Wink, Sharon Whitehead Van Loben Sels, Le Putney, Ana Floriani, Dee Hawksworth-Lutzow; and Laura Toscano.

Portions of this handout have been adapted from *Critical Pedagogy: Notes from the Real World*, (author, Joan Wink); *A Vision of Vygotsky*, (authors, Joan Wink and Le Putney); and *Learning to Teach/Teaching to Learn: Passionate Pedagogy*, in process, (authors Joan Wink and Dawn Wink). All are available from Allyn & Bacon of Pearson Publishing.

Big Books: One Way

*All the “Big Books have been adapted from: Wink, J., & Putney, L. (2000). Turning transformative principles into practice: Strategies for English dominant teachers in a multilingual context. In R. DeVillar & J. Tinajero, (eds.), The Power of Two Languages 2000: Effective Dual Language Use Across the Curriculum for Academic Success Millenium ed., pp. (175-186). NY: McGraw-Hill.

Authentic, student-generated literacy can be created in multiple ways with students and families. No ONE perfect way exists; rather there are many meaningful ways. We chose to use the words, BIG BOOKS, because in our own experience, the books that teachers, students, and families create together often are written and illustrated on large pieces of paper.

If you would like to do this in your own context, we offer first the most basic, generic, simplified instructions we can articulate. We have reduced, what can be a very complex process, to the following simple process.

- First** Teacher and students find something interesting to discuss. This can be based on a story; on anything interesting which happens in class or in the world; on a question planned by the teacher; or, by a spontaneous question that suddenly emerges in class and captures the students.
- Second** Teacher writes the language of the students on the chalkboard.
- Third** They transfer this story to a large piece of paper so that all students in the room can see the book.
- Fourth** Teacher asks students to copy the story from the chalkboard to their own paper so they can read at home with their families.

Big Books: Dawn’s Way

- First** Dawn generated a dialogue with the students about content, which they were preparing to learn. She did this to focus the students on the ideas and language. It also provided an opportunity for her to assess and to build on the prior knowledge of the group.
- Second** As the students talked, Dawn wrote their ideas on the chalkboard.
- Third** Together the students and Dawn chose which sentences will go into the book-of-the-day.
- Fourth** The students copied the new story onto their individual paper, as Dawn quickly copied the story on to large tag board. She used markers to decorate and/or illustrate the individual pages and quickly stapled ribbons to bind the book together. She discovered that she could make a book-of-the-day in about the same time that it takes the students to write the same story on smaller sheets of paper at their desks.
- Fifth** When finished, Dawn read the story with the students as she held up the BIG BOOK for all to see. In the afternoon the students took their smaller copies home to read with families. The next day when the students entered the classroom, the larger book-of-the-day hung on a wooden clothes drying rack for students to read together on the floor during free reading time.

Big Books: Sharon's 5 Pictures from Home

On Day One

she sent the five cameras home with five students and asked the families to take five pictures of people or things, which were important to the child. In her letter, Sharon asked these five families to return the camera on Day Two. All five cameras were returned successfully and safely.

On Day Two

she sent these same 5 cameras home with 5 other students. This process continued for 4 days, as she has 20 students in her class. Within this 4 day period 100% of the students returned the cameras, as instructed, the following day. Many of Sharon's colleagues told her that the cameras would *never* be returned.

Days Three, Four, and Five

cameras continue to rotate through students and their families.

The first weekend after the students' camera rotation

She developed the pictures and pasted them in composite collages on large pieces of paper. Below and around the collages, Sharon wrote the student's sentences about their family. In this book each student did not have a separate page; rather, each student's family was represented as a part of the larger community.

Big Books: Sharon's Daily News

1. Students talk and Sharon writes what they say on a large piece of paper.
2. Students write (copy) the language from this page to an 8x11 paper to make their own copy of *The Daily News*. In this smaller, individual book, the students copy, not only their individual story (sentence), but also all of the stories of the day.
3. Students illustrate their own page in the BIG BOOK.
4. Sharon quickly binds the BIG BOOK and the individual smaller books with staples during the day so that *The Daily News* is written and published daily.
5. Students take their own book home to read with families.
6. Sharon and students together read *The Daily News* from the BIG BOOK each day with the class while the students look at the BIG BOOK or follow along in their smaller books.
7. Students come to school and have access to yesterday's *The Daily News* during free voluntary reading.

Library Mapping

*Adapted from: Wink, J., & Putney, L. (2002). *A Vision of Vygotsky*. NY: Allyn & Bacon.

Purpose: to introduce preservice and inservice teachers to the libraries which are available for the students in their own neighborhoods. This activity is designed specifically for teachers and future teachers to experience a community library from the perspective of a student who is still in the process of acquiring English. This activity could easily be adapted for other target groups of students.

Introduction in the Pre/Inservice Class

The instructor begins by preparing a map of the community. This can be done on an overhead transparency, the chalkboard, large paper, a handout, etc. However, the point is to begin with the something very concrete, a map, so the students (pre and/or inservice teachers) can visualize as the lesson is introduced. During the introduction, the instructor marks the libraries, the various communities, and the public transportation routes. During the week, the students/teachers are asked to visit the libraries with the following instructions.

Assignment for Pre/Inservice Teachers

- * Find the library in the neighborhood of the students in your school.
- * Use public transportation to go to this library.
- * Before entering the library, sit outside alone for 10 – 15 minutes. Takes notes to capture your experiences with public transportation. In your field notes, write anything which captures your 5 senses as you sit in front of the library.
- * Before entering the library, visualize yourself as a 10-year-old who has recently moved to this country from Mexico. You are an avid reader and want to find a good book for the weekend. Spanish is your dominant language; you are still very uncomfortable using any of your emerging oral English.
- * Enter the library alone.
- * Do not use English while in the library.
- * Map the inside of the library; locate the books in your language.
- * Sit at a table near these books.
- * Describe the library in one paragraph from this vantage point.
- * Describe the quality and quantity of books in your language.
- * Check out two books.

Reflection in the following Pre/Inservice class

The instructor graphs the range of findings into the following categories:

- * The availability of the books (quality and quantity)
- * The availability of transportation to the libraries
- * Personal interactions within the library

Oral History Project: Mexican American Migrant Farmworkers

*Adapted from Ana Floriani of:

Educational Studies Department Illinois Wesleyan University
Bloomington, IL 61702-2900 (309) 556-3105 aflorian@iwu.edu

Together as a class we will be engaging in an inquiry project on the lives of Mexican American migrant farmworkers. By reading biographies, oral histories, and children's books and viewing documentary films, we will gain firsthand accounts of the issues and struggles farmworkers and their families have had to overcome. Oral histories are taped interviews or conversations that provide a firsthand account of history. They also provide us with rich perspectives and a clearer understanding and appreciation of the lives lived. You will be asked to interview a family member.

Gathering Data

Your first task is to explain the purpose and nature of your study (your inquiry unit project) to your interviewee, and to assure him/her that you will protect their anonymity in your written report if he/she chooses to participate. Let them know that there are no right or wrong responses and that you are just interested in her/his personal opinions on their experiences having lived during that time. Make sure they understand that they can choose not to respond to a question and be sensitive to provide clarifications if they are unsure about what you are asking. Ask them for their permission to tape record the interview and explain why you wish to do this. Also offer to share with them your written report of what you learned from their experience once you have collated the information and reflected on the content. If the person is not comfortable being taped think of a way to take good notes and write down as much as you can word-for-word. Make sure that you have captured some key quotes verbatim by asking your interviewee for verification.

Second, discuss with your group what it is you would like to know and learn. When asking questions it will be helpful to have them written out and also important for you to be flexible. The emphasis should be on obtaining narratives or accounts in the person's own terms. View your questions as a guide, but be prepared to follow the conversation where your interviewee takes it and note what is mentioned as well as what is not. Begin with questions like "Describe what it was like to...", "How did that make you feel?", or "Tell me what you remember (or think) about...?" To find out more about something you might ask, "You mentioned _____, could you tell me more about that?" Regarding things not mentioned you might ask, "I understand that _____ was going on, what can you tell me about that?" or "I have read that _____, what was your experience?"

Analyzing, Writing and Making Connections

The written record of your research will include summaries and notes of what the interviewee said, verbatim transcription of important responses, and analysis of connections made to what you have been reading and learning while conducting your research. Your written report should address the following areas: introduction, discussion, and connections. Your **Introduction** section should include personal information about your interviewee. Think of providing the reader with a short biographical profile. The **Discussion** section is where you will discuss what you learned from your interviewee's experience. As you review your notes, look for patterns or themes that came up in your conversation. Then think about what you can conclude about the personal, social, political, cultural, and/or economic influences that affected your interviewee's life and how they dealt with the situations and decisions they faced at the time. Use direct quotes to support your discussion of patterns and themes as much as possible. Do this to the best of your ability as I realize not everyone will be able to tape record. Finally, the **Connections** section is where you are to highlight what you learned from your interview and how it correlates with what you learned from your group's research and are learning from the class's research. Remember to note interesting similarities as well as differences in findings.

UTOPIA PROJECT:

*Adapted from Dee Hawkworth-Lutzow of:

Oakdale Junior High School dhLutzow@oakdale.k12.ca.us

8th grade language arts and Title I teacher (209) 847-2294 (school phone)

Overview for Teachers

First students read *The Giver*. We do a lot of thinking about ideal communities. As we read the novel, we discuss the community that Jonas lives in and compare it to our own. We also write journals on aspects of our government, educational system, environment, etc. that we would like to change in some way. After reading, discussing, reflecting, and writing, students are placed into groups to work on creating their own utopias. The end product is a presentation to the class (with flags, models, charts, etc.) that tries to convince us to move to their colony. In addition, the students compile a magazine with articles about their government, pictures of their colony, lists of supplies, a calendar of recreational activities, advertisements, etc. From the start of *The Giver* to the last presentation, this project takes about six weeks.

Overview for Students

1. Ask yourself, what would the perfect society be like? What do you like about our world, our country, our city? What would you like to change?
2. Read *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. As we are reading, think about what Jonas' society is like, compare it to ours, and try to determine why the founders of his community set it up the way they did. For every rule, there was probably a good reason originally
3. In your journal, work on the following tasks:
 - a. List the rules or laws think a new community would need.
 - b. Write a paragraph about the educational system you would design if you were in charge of education for a new community.
 - c. List the essential jobs that would be needed in a small colony of one hundred people.
 - d. Write a paragraph about your beliefs and what is important to you.
 - e. Explain what the perfect community (utopia) would have. Also, explain what it would not have.
4. What exactly is a utopia? Define "utopia" and discuss it with family and friends. Is it possible, in your opinion, to create a utopia?
5. Listen to the song "Imagine" by John Lennon. Read through the lyrics and then participate in our class discussion. What did John Lennon think a better world would and would not have?
6. Listen to the song "Higher" performed by Creed. Read through the lyrics and then jot down some notes in your journal. What place is the songwriter talking about? How is it like a utopia? Do you agree or disagree with the songwriter's vision of a perfect place?
7. Once you are placed in groups, you need to brainstorm together the most important elements of your community. Make sure that your group's philosophy is embedded in your constitution and other documents.
8. Work together and work well! Most of the important stuff will have to be decided as a group. You can research and write on your own, but you should all make the decisions and plans together. Do your best to get along, and it will pay off with a fantastic project you can all be proud of!
9. Compile a complete magazine. Serious points will be deducted for errors, so please proofread each other's work. Make sure your magazine is colorful, interesting, and neat. Be sure to include the following:
 - a. your colony's name, displayed in several places throughout
 - b. pictures or illustrations
 - c. an article about the supplies need from Earth
 - d. a copy of your new Constitution
 - e. a diagram of your chosen governing system
 - f. a report that shows you have created an ecologically self-sustaining and self-governing community for 100 people on Mars in the year 2030
 - g. a new monetary system
 - h. a comparison of the new monetary system with the current one in America
 - i. a picture or sample of your new flag with an explanation of the symbolism of the colors and elements you chose
 - j. your colony's motto

-
-
- k. a schedule of upcoming arts and entertainment opportunities.
 - l. If your group has time, feel free to incorporate extras (advertisements, job descriptions, etc.) into your magazine!
 10. Make and bring a flag. Use cloth, paper, cardboard, felt, iron-ons, etc.
 11. Make a complete model of the colony. Show all buildings. Make sure you have covered the essentials (eating, sleeping, recreation, work, garbage/ recycling, greenhouses or gardens, water treatment, etc.)!
 12. Present your utopia to the class. Plan an agenda of who will speak first, second, third, etc. Make sure everyone speaks about at least one aspect of the colony. Practice your presentations ahead of time!
 13. Your individual contributions will be graded as well. You will get a lower grade if you have clearly done less than your group members. To evaluate this, I will be looking at your magazine, reading your self-evaluation, and listening to your presentation.
 14. Your final project is a self-evaluation of yourself and your group. I will provide a form to use for this purpose.

“WHO I AM / WHO I WANT TO BE” SCRAPBOOK PAGE:

We begin the year with this activity, and we revisit it at the end of the school year.

I begin with the great poem about Spiderman by James Hall. It's called "Maybe Dats Youwr Pwoblem Too." In this poem, Spiderman complains that he can never burn his suit, and he's tired of doing the same old thing. He would like to race cars, but that is not an option for him.

After sharing this poem, the students and I discuss how people see us, and how we would like to be seen. We talk about our strengths and our flaws. Finally, we end this discussion by linking to the poem with the hope that we're not really stuck in our suits. We talk about the option we have to be who we want to be.

After this discussion, the students write two paragraphs about who they are now, and who they would like to be. After responding to, revising, and editing their paragraphs in groups, they use these paragraphs to create scrapbook/journal pages that commemorate the start of their eighth grade year.

I demonstrate and model various journaling and scrapbooking techniques. The project turn out to be creations, which the students treasure. In May, we revisit these projects. The students add to their journals/scrapbooks to reflect who they have become.

Reading Café: A Text-to-Life Activity

*Adapted from Laura Toscano of:
Grayson Elementary, Patterson, CA
lauratoscano@msn.com 2nd - 3rd grade

The Reading Cafe involves discussions of facts, perceptions, and personal connections from text to personal life. This activity is designed to encourage students to bring in their ideas from home, books, and/or life's experiences. It is designed to encourage students to explore the questions they bring to class. It is particularly effective for bringing in the curiosity the students have about the world.

For example, Laura and the student in her class are very focused on social issues and science questions this semester. During the Reading Cafe, the teacher is as much a participant as are the students. Student-generated questions are answered in five different ways: (a) by their classmates; (b) with other books students find in class; (c) with books from home; (d) with interviews of their parents; or (e) from the Internet. Students report back to the class the next day.

As an example, last year the second grade bilingual students learned that there was power in writing. They worked on a five-paragraph essay in Spanish to explain to Ronald McDonald why the school should serve McDonald's food for lunch. Ronald McDonald brought the entire class happy meals.

In what follows are the instructions, which Laura uses to guide this activity.

Please sit in a circle.

You must be able to look at every person in your group.

One person will share at a time.

The person that has the book with the most pages will present first.

The person that has the book with the most pictures will be the Timekeeper.

When one person is sharing, everyone else will have their books closed, feet crossed, and hands together.

Each person will share the title of the book and the author's name.

Then, they must state their intent:

"I have a fact to share" or

"I have an opinion to share" or

"I have a text to text connection" or

"I have a text to life connection."

Please speak clearly.

Each student may only share one fact, perception, or connection. If someone has a question to ask this person, they may do so when the person is finished sharing the fact, perception, or connection. If that person cannot answer the question, it is opened up to the rest of the group for other opinions or connections. The timekeeper allows a maximum of 3 minutes.

A Mess

Adapted from: Wink, J. (2000,2/e). *Critical pedagogy: Notes from the real world*. NY: Allyn & Bacon

First, you start with a mess. In this case, a mess is any situation within an educational space that needs attention. It is something that is not working for someone.

First, You Start with a Mess

Start with a mess (problem, contradiction, difficult situation).

Define it. Name it.

Learn more about it.

How can we learn more about this?

Who knows what about this?

How will we share information with the group?

Alternative approaches.

List all of the ideas that might work. Think wildly and passionately.

Dream. Think up utopias.

Collectively, choose an approach.

Preparation.

What are the roadblocks? How can we prepare for them?

What new problems might this approach create? What are possible solutions for these new problems? What could go wrong? What role might others play if we decide to try to change this?

Action plan and evaluation.

Create a timeline and plan of action.

Do it; fix it. Do it; fix it.

Write a commitment statement.

We commit to . . .

I commit to . . .

Members of the group share personal commitment statements and agree to use their own expertise to help fix the mess.

Begin again.

Redefine and rename the new mess.

Or, A Smaller Mess

Find a mess.

Learn more about it.

What could be some alternative approaches?

Action plan and evaluation.

Write a commitment statement.

Name a new mess.

The Creative Reading Methodology

Alma Flor Ada

The following four phases are a part of what Alma Flor Ada refers to as the creative reading act. The curriculum can come from any content area, and the methodology is applicable for any age group. Each phase of the process is linked through interaction, which leads to critical reflection, and finally, action.

- * **Descriptive Phase:** information is shared by teacher, text, media, etc.
- * **Personal Interpretation Phase:** students grapple with new information based on their lived experiences.
- * **Critical Phase:** invites reflection and critical analysis.
- * **Creative Phase:** theory to practice connects learning from class to the real world of the student.

Descriptive Phase: During this phase of reading/learning, the content or information is shared by teacher, text, media, etc. This is the initial phase and focuses on the content to be learned. Comprehension of new knowledge is the goal. This phase serves only as a springboard to students' interaction with new knowledge.

Personal Interpretation Phase: Students grapple with new information based on their lived experiences. This phase moves us beyond what, where, when, how, who questions to questions which invite reflection of the new knowledge. For example, students are asked: Have you ever experienced this? Does this relate to your family? How do you feel about your new understandings? During this phase the new knowledge is linked to the lives of the students.

Critical Analysis Phase: After comprehension of knowledge and the creation of linkages to the students' lives, the students are now encouraged to reflect critically, draw inferences, seek implications, and analyze. Is the knowledge valid? For whom? Always? Why? Is it applicable for all cultures, classes, ethnicities? Is it gender-free?

Creative Action Phase: This is the action phase of learning. How can students take the theory or new knowledge and use it to improve the life of the community? How can learning move from the classroom to the real world of the students?

When using this method, Ada encourages teachers to recognize that the phases appear to be very separate; however, the reality is that they often are interwoven and happen concurrently.

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