A Challenging and Rewarding Process: Implementing Critical Literacy Instruction in a Middle School Classroom

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Abstract
This action research study focuses on a teacher’s experiences while implementing critical literacy instruction in a seventh grade language arts class. Throughout the unit, a tension between teacher control and student autonomy emerged in three areas: discussion (teacher-directed and student-directed), curriculum (teacher choices and student choices), and student text comprehension (surface and critical). Finding the balance between teacher control and student autonomy was difficult. When these two elements were not balanced, the classroom experience for everyone was mediocre. When they were balanced correctly the entire classroom community had positive experiences that advanced student learning. Critical literacy instruction, though difficult to implement, was useful in helping students become literate, critical thinkers who can successfully participate in democratic society.

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However, methods for implementing media literacy know a considerable variation from one place to the other. The literature confirms that among the most intriguing issues related to media literacy education was the way media should be taught in educational settings. In a similar study, Yates (1997) found that more than half of secondary school teachers adapt media literacy into their teaching through spontaneous discussion of general TV-viewing, analysis of advertisements, and use of print media. Teachers confirm that including media literacy in an EFL classroom helps in motivating students and engaging students in learning. Teachers believe that students need new approaches of teaching and learning different from the classical methods they are familiar with.

Gwen Babcock Classroom Teacher Limestone District School Board. Élaine Constant Directrice adjointe Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario. Martine Leclerc Professeure, Département des sciences de l'éducation, Université du Québec en Outaouais. Literacy instruction in the junior grades takes students another giant leap forward by engaging them purposefully with a wide variety of texts and technologies that will help them develop as active, critical, responsible, and creative communicators for the twenty-first century. As literate learners, students continually explore new texts and new ways of understanding familiar texts. Critical-literacy skills give students the tools they need to think more deeply about the texts they meet and the texts they create.
exploring an anti-bias curriculum. Research shows that students need to feel both physically and emotionally safe to learn. This includes safety from stereotype threat, harassment and exclusion.