

CLAE

Critical Literacy in L1/literature teaching

Reflections, attitudes and questions

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What are the characteristics of L1/literature teaching when it comes to literacy?

- In the L1 classroom we are dealing with reading and interpretation: creative meaning-making through filling in the textual gaps, to which the readers contribute with their own experiences and imaginations
- literary reading
 - has no stable point of reference (as non-fiction texts in the other disciplines has)
 - involves the reader's individual imagination and emotions
 - is to explore different horizons of possibilities
 - is known by openness, uncertainties, changes, lack of final answers

(Langer 1995)

How we can make use of the student's creative and imaginative reading when fostering critical awareness?

On the way towards critical awareness the teacher may take on rationalist assumptions ...

- ... when it comes to guiding the students and showing them how to do critique
- ... when it comes to logical, rational, critical analysis
 - (Lather, 2009, Luke 1997, Lau, 2015)

- Critical literacy could – despite the teacher’s best intention – turn into a ”game” where students try to guess or mirror the ”right” response that help establish the positions as ”good students”
- When the students conceal their authentic responses, this may reinforce the social hierarchies instead of inducing an authentic critical reflection through reading the word – and the world

- critical scholars argues for a more dialogic, fluid and open-ended approach to critical literacy in literature teaching
- Luke (1997) and Lau (2015): The teacher is not any objective knower and interpreter with the ability to unveil the ideological myths embedded in different cultural forms, liberating children from ideological falsity

Lau (2015) is stressing the emotionality involved in critical education, that is: how personal and collective emotions, desires and longings are played out in the making of and the responses to texts

In a multicultural, diverse classroom, it is essential to acknowledge and value the multitude of perspectives, emotionalities and imaginations present

Allowing the students to react authentically to texts – from their real point of views, with empathy, fear, rejection, new understanding...

- ... in dialogue with other, different perspectives..

- And: without conclusion and closure!

What may critical reading of literature take as starting points?

What is this text trying to do to me?

How does this text make me feel, think, believe?

Which positions, voices and interests are at play?

But also: Which are silent and absent?

- Letting go of "the ultimate text meaning"..
 - Asking authentic questions...
 - Exploring how the text is relevant for us as human beings...
 - Giving value to different voices and readings in the classroom...
 - Staying in the text for a longer period, re-reading it, giving it different voices and expressions, giving room for silence...
 - Stressing the text's actual effects instead of its "meaning"...