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The Effects of Critical Literacy Theory on Listening Comprehension and Student Engagement

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Introduction

Background and Context

The Critical Literacy Theory (Mclaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) is a practice used by educators to help students enhance comprehension and articulate abstract meanings that go beyond the author’s purpose for publication. The Critical Literacy Theory focuses on issues of power relations and prompts readers to take action (Mclaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). Likewise, this strategy enhances reading comprehension because it allows students to examine social issues and extract relationships between characters present or not present in a story (Mclaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). Using critical literacy strategies, students will be able to configure new meanings that are otherwise reflected by the imbalances of select literature.

There are four principles included in Critical Literacy Theory: (1) examine power relations and sociopolitical issues that occur between readers and authors (2) seeking to understand complex problems (3) adapt and apply patterns of the Critical Literacy Theory appropriately in different situations, and (4) acknowledge multiple perspectives (Mclaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). Characterizations or adaptations of people, cultures, and behaviors are reflections of the author's attitudes and lived experiences; it's important for students to understand that they have the power to actively examine these attitudes and accept or reject them. Passive recipients of text accept these characterizations without questioning language, power, and morality (Mclaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004).

Finally, the Critical Literacy Theory (Mclaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) prompts students to take action in the world around them. The relationship between the Critical Literacy Theory (Mclaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) and issues regarding social justice synthesize quite nicely because they both refer to marginalized groups and instituting proactive responses. A response to
reading is a meaningful way for students to create a dialogue, demonstrate their awareness of such topics, and make changes in their personal lives. Promoting social justice through the Critical Literacy Theory (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) can be prompted by the following questions: How will my attitudes and actions change about such topics? How will I treat others differently after critically analyzing such topics? And How can I support individuals who are treated in an unjust manner? (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, pg. 65, 2004). These questions demonstrate the many ways in which students are able to examine the political and social inequalities that are addressed in literature. Answers to these questions are multifaceted and require supplemental text, discussion, and outreach.

**Importance of Studying the Topic**

The importance of studying Critical Literacy Theory applied during an interactive read aloud is important to understanding the motivational benefits and comprehension benefits of using the theory with students while discussing social justice issues. The Critical Literacy Theory has been shown to increase reading comprehension. Much research suggests that passive readers who accept the author's attitudes on a topic limit their complete understanding. The Critical Literacy Theory will supplement learning outcomes and objectives, by exploring critical literacy strategies that are most effective at increasing engagement and comprehension of a text, during a read aloud. The importance of being able to recognize the author’s attitude, ask questions, and advocate for change are skills that extend beyond reading, and it's important to express that awareness in life.

**Practical Value of the Study**

The Critical Literacy Theory emphasizes the importance of taking action in the world. This study aims to equip teachers with the appropriate resources and content knowledge to aid
elementary-aged students in their understanding of various literary works. This can be achieved by a multitude of critical literacy strategies and exposure to new literary works that address social issues.

As outlined by the principles of critical literacy theory, teachers are encouraged to help readers question the text in appropriate ways. Examining issues such as gender, ethnic group, and philosophies are a few ways that the author may exclude or marginalize characters mentioned in the story (Mclaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). A strategy known as “Problem Posing" is used in conjunction with the critical literacy theory, so that readers may ask the following questions:

What viewpoint is being expressed? What perspectives are missing or being silenced? What does the author want the reader to know or believe about the character? What actions could the reader take to change what is going on in the world? (Mclaughlin & DeVoogd, pg. 62-63, 2004)

Challenging the text is a skill that is crucial for reading comprehension. Using the problem posing critical literacy strategy and the principles of the critical literacy theory, this study will hopefully make readers more aware of the information brought before them.

Research Problem

There are three research questions that will be examined throughout the study: (1) What critical literacy strategies are teachers currently using in their classrooms? (2) What effects do critical literacy strategies have on student engagement and during interactive read alouds? (3) What effects do critical literacy strategies have on listening comprehension during and after an interactive read aloud?

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of conducting this study is to better understand and assess the current critical literacy practices of classroom teachers and to gain a better understanding of how well these strategies increase engagement and reading comprehension of texts, especially those that address social justice issues.

As outlined by the principles of critical literacy theory, teachers are encouraged to help readers understand the author’s intent. By comparing read alouds not-using critical literacy strategies and others with the preferred approach, researchers will be able to examine the differences in both student engagement and listening comprehension. Alongside anecdotal records and post reading comprehension quizzes, careful observations will be made to see these practices in full effect. The purpose of this study is to determine the effects of critical literacy strategies on student engagement and reading comprehension, while using text that incorporates social justice topics.

**Definitions and Related Constructs**

Critical Literacy Theory: a theory by which readers explore meanings, messages, and power relations that go beyond the text.

Action Research: teachers who take on the role of the researcher by studying their personal practices in their own classrooms and schools.

Anecdotal Records: notes or records that detail an account of demonstrated actions and behaviors.

Literacy: the ability to effectively read and write.

Pedagogy: a practice or method of teaching.

Read Aloud: an instructional practice, commonly used by teachers, caregivers, and parents, by which short stories are read aloud to a class or small group of children.

Motivation: a desire or willingness to do something or act in a particular way.
Engagement: the degree of attention, interest, and curiosity demonstrated by students, as they are being taught.

Comprehension: the degree at which a student is capable or able to understand something.

**Limitations of the Study**

There are a few limitations of the study to consider. Researchers have to account for teacher and student absences. Since this study will cover the span of two months, the brevity could suggest a partial review of the effects of critical literacy strategies used in the classroom. Reactance, a concept used in research methods, refers to a change in behavior when participants are aware of their observers, could potentially alter the patterns and engagement levels in the classroom.

**Literature Review**

**Critical Literacy Theory**

The Critical Literacy Theory (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) is a practice commonly used in educational settings, by which readers go beyond the words of a text. It forces them to think differently about problems in the world and prompts them to take action. The Critical Literacy Theory (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) underscores the importance of power relationships that exist between the author(s) and those reviewing the literature. Classrooms are oftentimes composed of diverse individuals with different lived experiences and such strategies of questioning, considering, and debating are highly encouraged. The Critical Literacy Theory (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) is based on four principles, including (1) the examination of power relations and sociopolitical issues that are present between the author and the reader, (2) a desire to understand complex problems, (3) the application of appropriate critical literacy
strategies in different situations, and (4) the recognition of marginalized perspectives (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004).

**Power/ Taking Action**

At face value, power dynamics showcase tension between two or more characters in a story, yet, the Critical Literacy Theory (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) allows readers to question the author's position and analyze the origins of this adaptation. This ties nicely into the concept of situated discourse, which is the idea that words, sentences, illustrations, and gestures have different meanings across various contexts (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). Situated discourse will help readers identify cultural or social differences in characterizations of diverse identities.

The Critical Literacy Theory (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) influences students to analyze power relations and utilize proactive measures that contribute to positive and appropriate societal changes. Additionally, the many strategies and techniques underscored by the Critical Literacy Theory (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) involves investigatory measures. Students must analyze and differentiate the author's intent and how it is reflected in the world. These narratives may be similar by accounts of shared experiences or different by means of diversity and equity.

**Problem & Complexity**

In part of selecting texts that are used in conjunction with critical literacy strategies, teachers must think about the dynamic plot. These are plots that include marginalized groups, alternate or absent perspectives, and promote reflection (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). Challenging the text or problems that arise during the plot are underscored by the principles of the Critical Literacy Theory (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). Of course, individual differences can account for the variations of background knowledge and exposure to a topic, and the extent
to which a student wants to assert their focus on a text selection (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004).

From challenging identities using problem posing techniques that disrupt the commonplace to questioning symbolic messages: the methods of understanding the author’s intent are not as explicit as one may believe. Students must consider the identities presented to them in the text and figure out what contributes to their state of being—what these characters feel, what they say, and what they do (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). All of these traits that contribute to the sense-of-self are ones being communicated by the author. It is the responsibility of the reader to justify or refute the personalities and characterizations depicted in the selected text, as most of which will include diverse identities and problem-solving through narrative writing.

Another point to consider is the role of the practitioner in their quest to help students navigate complex or dynamic plots. Engaging students into the realm of narrative and expository writing may seem to be overwhelming for many teachers, yet critical literacy strategies make it easier and more inviting for students to participate. When introducing a story, teachers activate background knowledge by doing a picture walk and afterwards having students write down questions about what they saw in their initial preview of the text (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). As a class, they would examine themes or trends, and solidify a comforting environment, by which students feel encouraged to question themes as they explore the text (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). Guiding students’ thinking throughout and prior to their review of the selected text can supplement a both positive and informational discourse (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004).
To build off the idea previously mentioned, reflection is one of the final steps in thinking critically about text. If a concept may seem too complex for students, it may take time to extrapolate key understandings, and this is the reason why reflection is vital in thinking about correctness and truthfulness (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). A discourse that addresses the themes and purposes of the author’s intent to publish such writings, will ultimately allow students to go beyond the text.

**Unique Strategies**

One of the many admirable qualities of the Critical Literacy Theory (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) is that it is not subject to homogenous situations, there are a multitude of ways that it may be appropriately used in elementary classrooms. Critical literacy strategies are used to prompt reflection, encourage discussion, and promote action (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). A few techniques are as follows:

**Juxtaposition**

A strategy that involves comparing and contrasting two pictures, text sets, poems, and songs (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). This is a strategy that ties nicely into thinking about perspectives with individual differences making up new ways of thinking, prioritizing, organizing, and experiencing the world (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004).

**Problem Posing**

A strategy that includes a series of questions that go beyond what is explicitly outlined in the text. Questions include: 1. *What perspectives are missing from the story?* 2. *What message is being communicated by the author?* And 3. *How can readers use the information from the story to advocate for equity in social settings?* (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004).

**Bookmark technique**
A strategy that allows students to monitor comprehension by making evaluative judgements about the text (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). Four bookmarks are created that include a set of 4 instructions: 1. write/sketch about a part of the story in which the reader finds to be the most interesting, 2. write/sketch something that the reader finds to be the most confusing, 3. Select a word that the whole class needs to hear and discuss, and 4. Select an illustration/graphic that helped the reader understand the text (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004).

**Say something**

A strategy by which students work in partner pairs to monitor their reading of texts by pausing and conversing at important parts of the story (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). This strategy is applicable to narrative and informational texts (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). Stopping points may include subheadings, but it may also be randomized or in accordance with emotional/ cognitive/ behavioral shifts between characters (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004).

**Connection Stems**

A strategy that includes prompts that allow students a framework to make connections while reading narrative and informational texts (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). Examples of connection stems include: (1) *This reminds me of...* (2) *A similar experience I have had like this...* and (3) *Another book I have read about this includes...* (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004).

**Switching**

A strategy by which problem posing is used as a catalyst to think objectively about what is mentioned in the plot; examples of this technique include gender switch, theme switch, setting switch, emotional switch, ethnic/race switch, language switch, and so much more (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004).

**Thinking Hats**
a strategy that involves a student's ability to critically evaluate a story through the perspectives of different characters in a story.

**Perspectives**

An important concept of the Critical Literacy Theory (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) is acknowledging and understanding multiple perspectives. Authors allow their readers to visualize their characters by the words in which they choose to describe them, but the questions regarding their mental and emotional states may appear to be more implicit. By using critical literacy strategies, readers can go beyond semantic processing to fully understand how a character views the world, and what life is like through their point of view.

Although decoding, background knowledge, linguistic ability, vocabulary, reading fluency, inference-making, and working memory are components of understanding a story or narrative; they contribute to only part of the reader’s all-encompassing comprehension (Dore et al., 2018). Dore and colleagues argue that narrative processing is both a skill that is used to understand a story either spontaneously or whilst reading, and it is one that matures in later years. Narrative processing is measured by reaction and recall ability, and it is oftentimes used to outline more explicit variables of comprehension (Dore et al., 2018). Adult readers will regularly monitor the mental, emotional, and motivational states of the protagonists by using narrative processing (Dore et al., 2018).

The bridge between narrative processing and interpreting different perspectives is best explained by the Theory of Mind (Dore et al., 2018). The Theory of Mind explains the different mental states among the characters in a text and how their mental states influence their actions and behaviors (Dore et al., 2018). Dore and colleagues had mentioned that our understanding of human life relies on implicit behaviors, such as intention, purpose, and motivation; all of which
create a response in the way in which we behave. The Theory of Mind can also be used to recognize a character's desires, wants, and belief (Dore et al., 2018). If readers can use the Theory of Mind successfully, they may also be able internalize a character’s perspective.

**Social Justice/Issues in Literature**

Creating a critical consciousness is a key step in transformative education and promoting equity for all students. Culturally relevant pedagogy addresses the concerns of individuals of diverse ethnic backgrounds and extrapolates the context in which they are marginalized (Camangian, 2013). A textural synthesis of culturally sensitive material is achieved by five levels of analysis, which include explicit, implicit, theoretical, interpretive, and applicable (Camangian, 2013). Studies show that engaging with culturally relevant texts fosters improved critical thinking and academic writing, by means of the five levels of analysis (Camangian, 2013).

Explicit refers to the unarguable reading of factual information: This may also be summarized by seeking information directly from the reading (Camangian, 2013). Implicit refers to the utilization of context clues to make inferences about the reading (Camangian, 2013). A theoretical level implies a more sophisticated understanding or response to the information presented in the text; more arguments are constructed to explain the meaning of the text (Camangian, 2013). The interpretive level suggests a visceral response to the reader’s emotional-being; questions about how the material is relevant and how the reader feels about the topic are those deemed appropriate at the interpretive level (Camangain, 2013). Finally, the applicable level enacts a responsive implication: after reviewing the material and following the five levels of analysis, the reader must think about what should be done (Camangain, 2013).

**Interactive Read Alouds**
Interactive read alouds are selected with a purpose and help to formulate a fruitful discussion. A careful selection of culturally diverse literature can make all the difference in the way a child engages with the material. This is mentioned as part of the criterion for determining quality texts and administering interactive read alouds (Cox et al., 2017).

Topics that are considered appropriate for selection include problems in our social world: racism, gender inequalities, homelessness, nature, and dynamic power relationships (Cox et al., 2017). Teachers are then prompted to preview the literature and identify places that may act as a catalyst for whole-group discussions (Cox et al., 2017). This could also be demonstrated by introducing new vocabulary or asking students to reflect on their own experiences and compare those to that of characters mentioned in the story (Cox et al., 2017). When administering the interactive read aloud, teachers may do a picture walk (an initial review of the literature without reading the text) to activate prior/background knowledge and help students infer what problems or concepts may be addressed in the story (Cox et al., 2017). Stopping at different points during the story to ask the prerecorded questions will allow for a focused review of the issues and problems that arise in the story (Cox et al., 2017). As always, teachers are encouraged to motivate students to go beyond classroom discussions and cue students into the many connections they can make using critical literacy strategies in their future readings (Cox et al., 2017).

**Listening Comprehension**

Individual differences in reading comprehension stem from two key ideas: word recognition and listening comprehension (Hogan et al., 2014). Since the primary goals of reading comprehension is placed on word recognition and decoding texts in the elementary grades, less attention is placed on listening comprehension; although a recent meta-analysis provides support
for their influence on one another (Hogan et al., 2014). A longitudinal study conducted by Hugh Catts, Tiffany Hogan, and Suzanne Adolf, in 2005, showcases the differences in word recognition and listening comprehension. Out of 500 students enrolled in second, fourth, and eighth-grade classrooms, the researchers found that word recognition decreases as students approach more advanced levels, while listening comprehension increases (Hogan et al., 2014).

Listening comprehension is defined not only as the ability to understand a text read aloud, but it is a conceptualization of how a person understands a dialogue through methods of auditory processing (Hogan et al., 2014). Hogan and colleagues stated (2014) that when an individual listens to a verbal story, they create what is known as a mental model (as cited in Kintsch & Kintsch, 2005), which is described as a synthesis of background knowledge and sentences to construct a cohesive understanding. Listening comprehension utilizes the same strategies of constructing a mental model, yet, it does not require the additional efforts of decoding text.

Vocabulary is another important factor of listening comprehension: it is the expectation that teachers select texts that are developmentally appropriate and interesting to all students. The parallels between listening and vocabulary comprehension may seem apparent, but it is often overlooked; In order to construct a rich mental model, a reader must understand the words and sentences prescribed by the text (Hogan et al., 2014).

**Reading Motivation and Engagement**

Research suggests that reading motivation and engagement amongst elementary-aged school children varies widely. To completely understand these patterns and practices, inductive research has been conducted to assess a child’s intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to read. McGeown and colleagues (2020) explained that across different cultures and contexts, a
“motivation to read” questionnaire has been developed to account for 11 dimensions of intrinsic motivation- efficacy, curiosity, involvement, challenge, and importance, as well as extrinsic motivation- recognition, grades, competition, compliance, and avoidance (as cited in Schiefele & Loweke, 2018). The Motivation to Read Questionnaire, otherwise known as the MRQ (as cited in Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997) is a tool of measurement that draws upon both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to read across different contexts (McGeown et al., 2020). This variable-based questionnaire examines the constructs that influence children in their choosing to read and engage with literature (McGeown et al., 2020). This was a direct result of student interviews, classroom observations, and throughout review of the motivation theory (as cited in Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). The MRQ has received many criticisms, one being its limiting approach to understand the person and individual reading motivation profiles (McGeown et al., 2020). Despite its criticisms, the MRQ provides a necessary framework that clues researchers into the minds of the most reluctant readers and their motivation to read.

Consequently, reading motivation is not a uniform approach that meets the needs of all students, especially at the lower grade levels. Reading comprehension and short-term memory are more fluid than once believed. Early theories about short-term memory suggested that individuals with more content knowledge displayed a larger recall threshold, thus indicating a stronger comprehension performance (as cited in Perfetti & Lesgold, 1977; Rizzo, 1939). These early theories have been disproven by theories that illustrated a positive relationship between reading comprehension and complex span measures, which are dynamic measures of working memory (as cited in Daneman & Carpenter, 1980; Turner & Engle, 1989). A study conducted by Martin and colleagues focused on individual differences of reading comprehension and second language learning, using measures of working memory. Such research has displayed that
working memory and memory updating are techniques that are used to create representations of important information and replace information that is deemed irrelevant or unimportant (Martin et al., 2020). This prescribes a real need for teachers as they help students articulate what may or may not be important in the story.

A drive to read is closely related to emotional experiences; a range of feelings were vocalized during a set of regularly scheduled interviews, conducted by McGeown and colleagues (2020). Children have reported feelings of increased happiness and reluctance to put down their favorite books, because it allows them to relax after a long day at school and drain their emotions into a piece of text (McGeown et al., 2020). A term used to describe how children draw out their emotions in text, is called *escapism*—and this allows readers to let go from whatever may be happening around them and transport themselves into the setting that the author has created.

While reading is used to entertain, the differing accounts of what motivates children to read may not be more implicit, rather extrinsic values provide researchers with supplemental information. Some children have said that they read because it is assigned as part of their homework requirements (McGeown et al., 2020). McGeown and colleagues have also noticed that extrinsic factors that influence a child’s motivation to read depends on positive reinforcement. Children have reported that reading for a half-hour each day grants them time to watch television or engage in other fun activities (McGeown et al., 2020). The MRQ and its acknowledgement of the 11 dimensions help researchers to quantify justifications of reading motivation.

Teachers may engage students through a series of literacy tasks that have demonstrated improvement in areas of reading, writing, self-regulation, and other goals of literacy (Turner & Paris, 1995). Research suggests that choice is a positive motivator for children to select texts
with personal value: it allows them to allocate more time using learning strategies, such as summarizing (Turner & Paris, 1995). Challenging students is another way in which teachers engage students into reading motivation, because it allows them to see what their students are doing and how they can improve (Turner & Paris, 1995). Text scrambles are often used as ways for students to reconstruct words and sentences in meaningful ways- this also requires skills of decoding, sequencing, rehearsal, and grammar usage (Turner & Paris, 1995). All of these techniques combined are both multifaceted and require the usage of different skills- by engaging in these activities, students become invested into the challenges presented by literature.

**Methods**

**Description of Research Setting**

The Billington School* system includes 24 schools, 10 being at the elementary level. This study will be conducted at the Glendale Elementary School*. 2021 English Language Arts MCAS scores indicates lower scores compared to the district and state average (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2021). The Glendale Elementary Schools services about 450 students, from grades K-5. The student population is 75.3% African American with 57.1% of students being identified as ESL (English as a second language) learners, 91.6% being high needs, and 86.7% being economically disadvantaged.

**Description of Sample**

The sample group for this research study will consist of second and third-grade classrooms. Those willing to participate are based upon voluntary status. Class A was composed of nine students, with seven of them being female and the other two were male. Class B was also composed of nine students, with seven of them being female and the other two were male.

**Description of the Research Project**
The plan for this research study is to observe, implement, and assess critical literacy strategies during interactive read alouds in 2nd and 3rd grade classrooms. The classroom is made up of those willing to participate. The classrooms selected are ones that have a diverse population, which is key to the purpose of the study. A tool developed by Jennifer Serravallo (2014) has been modified to accurately assess the engagement and participation levels of students during interactive read alouds. Additionally, an anecdotal tool will be designed to track critical literacy strategies that are observed as being used during interactive read alouds. These include juxtaposition, problem posing, bookmark technique, connection stems, say something, and switching (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). Another tool that will be used during this study includes a reading quiz to assess listening comprehension. This tool will be used before and after the implementation of critical literacy strategies to see whether or not comprehension is improved.

- Weeks 1-2: Two stories are scheduled to be read, they include: “Keb Needs a Home,” and “Lola the Llama.” Observing interactive read aloud lessons to identify critical literacy strategies that were implemented or utilized by the classroom teacher. A tool, otherwise known as the engagement inventory assessment, has been designed to measure student engagement during the read alouds. Afterwards, listening comprehension data will be collected to see how well the students understood the concepts addressed in the literature. Two lessons will be observed in each classroom room.

- Weeks 3-5: With the assistance of Dr. Brieske-Ulenski, professional development material will be created to familiarize teachers with the Critical Literacy Theory and its
many strategies. The modes of distribution include PowerPoint presentations and a
workshop.

- Weeks 6-7: Lesson planning will occur in collaboration with the classroom teachers.
Lesson plans will be text sets that feature diverse identities and confront social justice
issues. The texts that have been selected for the remaining read alouds include: “The
Drum,” and “Picture Day.” For “The Drum,” teachers and the researchers have planned
to implement the problem posing strategy. For “Picture Day,” the teachers and
researchers have planned to implement the thinking hats strategy.

- Weeks 8-9: Observations with the read alouds that feature multicultural text with critical
literacy strategies will occur. The data collection tools used during this week include a
student engagement tool and listening comprehension tool.

- Weeks 9-11: Researcher will analyze the observation data for teachers to accurately
describe the critical literacy strategies that teachers used during interactive read alouds
before the implementation of the study. Researchers will analyze the observation data
among students, and answer research questions 2 and 3.

Description of Assessments

Three tools of assessment have been either identified and modified to supplement the
research in this study. The first tool (Appendix A) is used to assess qualitative data and it is used
to examine the current critical literacy strategies that are used prior to the implementation of
critical literacy strategies. It has a column to denote what strategy is being used, the definition of the strategy, and additional comments from the observer.

The second tool (Appendix B) that is used is one that has been modified from its original format. Jennifer Serravallo (2014), the original creator has detailed a tool of measurement that tracks student participation and engagement, otherwise referred to as the engagement inventory. The criterion at the bottom of the record sheet needed to be adjusted to better fit the needs of the study; it includes raising hands, discussing the text, silent and listening, off task, zoning out, and looking out the window. The record sheet will detail an allotted time of 30 minutes, with five minutes increments to note changes in engagement and participation.

The final tool (Appendix C) will be used to measure listening comprehension. It is a multiple-choice test with 8-10 questions referring to the plot, characters, themes, and setting mentioned in the story. This tool has already been created using the Reading A-Z website and made readily available to educators. Questions related to vocabulary have been removed by the researchers as it assesses another reading skills outside the scope of this study. The hope for this tool is to compare the average scores of the tests before and after the implementation of critical literacy strategies.

Description of Data Analysis

This research study adopts a mixed-methods design, meaning it includes both quantitative and qualitative data. A meta-analysis of quantitative and qualitative data will be compared before and after the implementation of critical literacy strategies to see whether or not student engagement and listening comprehension had increased.

Quantitative data is based on the modified engagement inventory, to which the researchers assigned symbols and abbreviations for active listening and disruptive behavior.
These symbols and abbreviations will be counted and turned into percentages that reflect the frequency of student engagement. Researchers will compare the averages from before and after the implementation of critical literacy strategies to look for differences in engagement. The class averages of listening comprehension assessments will be compared before and after the implementation of critical literacy strategies, to look for changes in listening comprehension.

Qualitative data is used to examine and assess which critical literacy strategies are being used in the classroom and how they are used at the start of the study. Critical literacy strategies are not meant to be homogeneous, they are to be used appropriately and in versatile situations; the aim for assessing qualitative data is to see how these strategies are used in the current classrooms before the start of the study. The purpose is to describe which strategies, if any, the classroom teachers were already using with their students.

**Results**

This study is focused on determining the impacts of the Critical Literacy Theory on reading listening comprehension and student engagement. This study features a mixed methods approach of data collection, meaning qualitative and quantitative data is used to determine the reach questions. There are three research questions that will be examined throughout the study:

1. What critical literacy strategies are teachers currently using in their classrooms?
2. What effects do critical literacy strategies have on student engagement and during interactive read alouds?
3. What effects do critical literacy strategies have on listening comprehension during and after an interactive read aloud?

The tools used in this study include an engagement inventory spreadsheet, comprehension quizzes, and an observational sheet that tracks critical literacy strategies and anecdotal notes.
Critical Literacy Strategies Used by Teachers

Teacher A

In the first observation of Teacher A, she used many strategies in her first read aloud to reinforce main concepts of the selected text, “Keb Needs a Home.” She started out with a pre-focusing technique of looking at the cover of the story and asking students what they noticed and what they believed the story to be about. She would gesture key vocabulary words to ensure her students understood their meanings, and even had a student demonstrate the movement of a word. For example, the teacher asked about the word “strutt,” and had a student act it out. Teacher A used two critical literacy strategies that include the say something technique and problem posing in her read aloud. For example, the teacher used the say something technique when she asked students to discuss with a partner whether or not Keb’s (a hermit crab that searches for different objects and tinkers with materials to become his new shell) home is reliable. As stated previously, the teachers used the problem posing technique to address some of the implications of messages being communicated by the author. The teacher ended the read aloud by having students think critically about the story and what problems were being addressed, to which she then had students discuss with partners. For example, teacher A asked the class how many times Keb had attempted to create or find a new home.

In the second observation of Teacher A, she opened up the read aloud, “Lola the Llama,” by discussing the genre of the story and then went on to explain why characters are perceived as more comedic. Throughout the read aloud, Teacher A would use several problem posing questions to have students think beyond the text. She had students to either agree or disagree with the stubborn nature of Llola, throughout her reading. She asked students to think about who is telling the story, which is a principle of critical literacy, in that it focuses on alternative
perspectives. She finished the story by using the switching technique and asking students how the story would be different if Llola’s perspective was acknowledged throughout the story.

**Teacher B**

In the first observation of Teacher B, she used many strategies in her first read aloud to reinforce main concepts of the selected text, “The Drum.” She started out by asking the class about the crustacean on the cover of the book, and what they believed it to be. She then went on to ask students if they have seen a hermit crab before, to which students voluntarily raised their hands to share their sightings and experiences on the beach. Teacher B used the problem posing technique to have the students think deeply about the new kinds of shells that the hermit crab has made for himself. For example, Teacher A asked students whether or not Keb’s new shell would be reliable enough to withstand his environment. Teacher B would often have students monitor the emotions of the characters presented in the story but asking how they are feeling. Teacher B had the students share out to their partners, using the say something technique and converse about problems in the story. For example, she had students think about Keb and what types of homes he had created for himself, and how his emotions had changed throughout the story. She went back to the cover of the story to really think about what they had read.

In the second observation of Teacher B, she adopted a similar approach to her read aloud, where she had students look at the cover of the book and ask them if they have ever seen a llama, read books about llamas, or previewed videos of llamas. She used a pre-focusing technique to have students monitor who is telling the story, to which she later asked the students if it would have been different, if told through Lola’s point of view, which is an example of the switching technique. During her reading she had students put a thumbs-up or thumbs-down if they agree with the characters in the story. This allowed students to quickly monitor the choices being made
by Lola in the story. After Teacher B wrapped up her reading, she used a critical literacy strategy, known as connection stems, and asked students if they had similar experiences with making hard choices, by which students shared their answers.

**Student Engagement During a Read Aloud**

The data collected in Classrooms A and B in observations 1 and 2 occurred before the teachers attended professional development about critical literacy strategies by the investigators of the study. The data collected in each classroom in observations 3 and 4 occurred after the teachers attended professional development and lesson planning on incorporating critical literacy strategies in their read alouds.

**Class A: Observation 1**

The first observation accounts for 36 recorded behaviors of the nine students that participated in the study. The length of the observation was 20 minutes. During the 20 minutes, it was observed that the nine students spent 78% of the time silent and listening, 14% of the time discussing the text, 3% of the time raising their hands, 3% of the time zoned out, and 2% of the time they were off task.

**Class A: Observation 2**

The second observation accounts for 21 recorded behaviors of the seven students that participated in the study. The length of the observation was 15 minutes. During the 15 minutes, it was observed that the seven students spent 80% of the time silent and listening, 10% of the time zoned out, and 10% of the time raising their hands.
Class A: Observation 3

The third observation accounts for 54 recorded behaviors for the nine students that participated in the study. The length of the observation was 25 minutes. During the 25 minutes, it was observed that the nine students spent 72% of the time silent and listening, 22% of the time raising their hands, 4% of the time discussing the text, and 2% of the time zoned out.

Class A: Observation 4

The fourth observation accounts for 40 recorded behaviors for the eight students that participated in the study. The length of the observation was 20 minutes. During the 20 minutes, it was observed that the eight students spent 23% of the time discussing the text, 25% of the time raising their hands, 50% of the time silent and listening, and 2% of the time zoned out.

Class B: Observation 1

The first observation accounts for 32 recorded behaviors for the eight students that participated in the study. The length of the observation was 15 minutes. During the 15 minutes, it was observed that the eight students spent 78% of the time silent and listening, 10% of the time raising their hands, 10% of the time off task, 1% of the time looking out the window, and 1% of the time discussing the text.

Class B: Observation 2

The second observation accounts for 24 recorded behaviors for the eight students that participated in the study. The length of the observation was 11 minutes. During the 11 minutes, it
was observed that the eight students spent 79% of the time silent and listening, 9% of the time looking out the window, 4% of the time raising their hands, 4% of the time off task, and 4% of the time zoned out.

**Class B: Observation 3**

The third observation accounts for 48 recorded behaviors for the eight students that participated in the study. The length of the observation was 35 minutes. During the 35 minutes, it was observed that the eight students spent 27% of the time raising their hands, 60% of the time silent and listening, 10% of the time discussing the text, and 3% of the time zoned out.

**Class B: Observation 4**

The fourth observation accounts for 45 recorded behaviors for the nine students that participated in the study. The length of the observation was 20 minutes. During the 20 minutes, it was observed that the nine students spent 64% of the time silent and listening, 16% of the time discussing the text, 16% of the time raising their hands, 2% of the time zoned out, and 2% of the time off task.

**Student Listening Comprehension Scores**

Each classroom’s listening comprehension was assessed twice before the teachers implemented critical literacy strategies during an interactive read aloud. The data collected in Classrooms A and B in assessments 1 and 2 occurred before their teachers attended professional development about critical literacy strategies. The data collected in each classroom in observations 3 and 4 occurred after the teachers attended professional development and lesson planning on incorporating critical literacy strategies in their read alouds.
Class A Assessment 1:

Nine students participated in class A, their scores on the first listening comprehension assessment are as follows: 63, 100, 63, 38, 50, 63, 100, 100, and 75. The mean score of the first assessment was 72%.

Class A Assessment 2:

Seven students participated in class A, their scores on the second listening comprehension assessment are as follows: 11, 44, 67, 56, 78, 78, 78. The mean score of the second assessment was 59%.

Class A Assessment 3:

Nine students participated in class A, their scores on the third listening comprehension assessment are as follows: 88, 100, 75, 88, 88, 100, 100, 100, 100. The mean score of the third assessment was 93%.

Class A Assessment 4:

Eight students participated in class A. Their scores on the fourth listening comprehension assessment are as follows: 88, 88, 75, 75, 75, 75, 88, 100. The mean score of the fourth assessment was 83%.

Class B Assessment 1:
Eight students participated in class B. Their scores on the fourth listening comprehension assessments are as follows: 75, 50, 88, 75, 75, 88, 88, 13. The mean score of the first assessment was 69%.

**Class B Assessment 2:**

Eight students participated in class B. Their scores on the second listening comprehension assessment are as follows: 89, 67, 67, 33, 78, 78, 67, 11. The mean score of the second assessment was 61%.

**Class B Assessment 3:**

Eight students participated in class B. Their scores on the third listening comprehension assessment are as follows: 100, 88, 100, 88, 100, 100, 100, 50. The mean score of the third assessment was 91%.

**Class B Assessment 4:**

Nine students participated in class B. Their scores on the fourth listening comprehension assessment are as follows: 88, 75, 63, 88, 88, 100, 75, 63, 75. The mean score of the fourth assessment was 79%.

**Conclusion**

Improvements in student engagement was demonstrated by participants in the study. Likewise, increased scores for listening comprehension were also demonstrated by participants in the study. Before the teachers were trained in critical literacy, students spent the majority of the time during the read aloud silent and listening. About 10-20% of the time students were
raising their hands and or discussing the text. After the implementation of critical literacy strategies, an increase in student engagement was observed; about 20-30% of the time students were either raising their hands or discussing the text. Deflecting behaviors, such as being off task, zoned out, looking at the window, or simply talking with a friend during the read aloud, had decreased. Initially these behaviors were recorded about 3-10% of the time, whereas afterwards these behaviors had dwindled to about 2-3%.

While these behaviors during read alouds are important for students to focus on the text, assessment tools such as the comprehension quizzes were used to determine the scope of understanding, which initially represented a relatively low mean score. Most importantly, student listening comprehension in both classrooms after the implementation of critical literacy strategies had increased: the initial mean scores for class A was 65.5% and in Class B, the mean score was 65%, while afterwards the mean score was 88% for class A and 85% for class B.

**Discussion**

This study was focused on the Critical Literacy theory: a practice used by teachers to help students go beyond passive reading. The findings have been supported by instruments that have been either identified or created by the researchers. These instruments feature both anecdotal and numerical data to accurately assess the entire scope of the Critical Literacy Theory, as it unfolds in an educational setting. The information below details information about the current practices utilized by teachers during read alouds, student engagement, and listening comprehension.

**Research Question 1: What critical literacy strategies are teachers currently using in their classrooms?**
During the first four read alouds, the researchers examined which critical literacy strategies teachers were already incorporating into their lessons. It came as no surprise that teachers used a handful of basic strategies that were already identified as critical literacy strategies. These strategies include: *connection stems, problem posing, switching, and say something.*

At the beginning of each read aloud, teachers A and B used a pre-focusing technique such as a picture walk and pointing out the illustrations on the cover of the story to draw in their students. The connection stems technique was quite popular amongst the pre-focusing period and was used to complement the story. Connection stems are typically used when teachers are doing picture walks of the book and this type of pre focusing technique, motivates students to visualize what is happening and share out similar experiences (Cox et al., 2017). Students would share out their sightings of hermit crabs. This procedure helps to activate prior knowledge, stimulates experiential dialogue, and requires students to make predictions about the plot.

Teachers A and B used a modified approach to problem posing. Both teachers would pause their readings to address the class and check for understanding. This clued the students into what the author is telling them about the situation presented in the story. Problem posing calls for a focused review of the literature and allows students a space to articulate abstract meanings (Cox et al., 2017).

Another technique that was observed during the read alouds was the incorporation of the switching technique. Both teachers had their students think about how the story *Lola the Llama* would be different if told through another perspective. This requires students to consider all aspects of the text and devise new sequences that relate to the meanings and messages being communicated by the author. Switching allows students to think differently about the text and in
order to articulate alternative ways of thinking, students must deduce what is going in the story or what is accurate about the story to formulate new conclusions. This goes along with how and why texts are selected for purposes of whole group read alouds (Cox et al., 2017), and this increases comprehension and understanding.

The say something technique was also witnessed during the read alouds. This allowed students the opportunity to address the material and converse with their peers. While these interactions were brief, the motions of pausing and vocalizing their ideas, students were able to interact with the story.

The techniques that were observed by the researchers include connection stems, problem posing, switching, and say something. The strategies that were used in the classrooms reflect those that align well with Critical Literacy Theory. These teachers used these strategies interchangeably to cater to the needs of their students. These teachers used these strategies to engage students and make them think differently about the text, and they were successful at doing so.

**Research Question 2: What effects do critical literacy strategies have on student engagement and during interactive read alouds?**

Student engagement was assessed before and after the implementation of critical literacy strategies. The researchers are confident in the improvements made by students, as described by the data.

Before the implementation of critical literacy strategies, student engagement was assessed using an engagement inventory spreadsheet, created by the researchers. This form denoted common behaviors of students during read alouds, whether it was silent and listening or
off task and looking out the windows. This is a good way to assess what stories improve a child’s willingness to learn and participate in fruitful conversations.

Before the implementation of critical literacy, a common trend witnessed by the researchers was students were most often silent and listening. This was recorded about 79% of the time in Class A and about 78.5% of the time in Class B. This does not detail enough information to determine whether or not students enjoyed the story or wanted to share their commentary. Reading disengagement is positively correlated with the inability to replace or substituent important information (Martin et al., 2020). As these stories try to capture the focus of elementary-aged students, this could be explained by a disinterest in information that is not crucial in understanding the author’s messages.

Although listening starts with being quiet and staying focused, true motivation and engagement is brought about in more interactive ways and this may be described by the percentages of text discussion and hand-raising in read alouds 3 and 4. Reading motivation is both intrinsic and extrinsic; there are many explanations for why children choose to engage with text. An explanation for increased performance can be summarized by a genuine curiosity in the text or knowing that a comprehension quiz will be used to assess their understanding, so they use methods of self-regulation to really focus on the story (McGeown et al., 2020). The amount of time students were discussing the text in class A had increased to an average of 13.5% and in class B to about 13%. The amount of time students had their hands raised had also increased significantly during read alouds 3 and 4 that incorporated critical literacy strategies. In class A students raised their hands on average of 23.5% of the time and in class B students raised their hands about 21.5% of the time.
Research Question 3: What effects do critical literacy strategies have on listening comprehension during and after an interactive read aloud?

Listening comprehension was primarily assessed after the read alouds had been conducted. Checks for understanding were oftentimes witnessed at various parts of the story, however the numerical data supports the fact that listening comprehension increases with focused critical literacy strategies.

Before the implementation of critical literacy strategies comprehension assessments revealed moderate understanding with scores in Class A being about 65.5% and Class B being about 65%. This signaled a need for more detailed lessons and strategies that help boost listening comprehension.

As expected, listening comprehension had increased in Class A to about 88% and Class B to about 87%. Listening comprehension is not only defined as the ability to comprehend, but it goes to show how students conceptualize the story using auditory processing (Hogan et al., 2014). In conjunction with critical literacy strategies, students were able to create strong mental models- a synthesis of background knowledge and sentences to construct a cohesive understanding (Hogan et al., 2014). While the teachers were instituting critical literacy strategies, students were able to build better background knowledge that incorporated important information, used to build a satisfactory mental model. This has led researchers to believe that the professional development sessions, lesson planning, and methods of instruction are worth the investment.

Recommendations

There are plenty of ways this study can be modified for future research. Although improvements were made in student engagement and listening comprehension, more time could
be allotted to adjust the methods of this research study. Some aspects of the study that go beyond the researcher’s capability made it more difficult to prescribe the appropriate course of delivery. Student and teacher absences are inevitable, but it disrupts the consistency and scoring of data. Completing this study with a cohort of students that ensure perfect attendance would be ideal.

Although the researchers decided to focus on two critical literacy strategies, the credibility of the study would be improved if future research assesses even more critical literacy strategies. By doing this, it would suggest that the practice in its entirety is worth the time of educators. This could also be used to determine which strategies are better suited for specific classrooms and which strategies are developmentally appropriate.
References


## Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Literacy Strategy</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Observer notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Juxtaposition</strong></td>
<td>A strategy used to compare two or more pictures, text sets, poems, and songs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Problem Posing</strong></td>
<td>A strategy that involved questions that go beyond the text. I.e., 1. What perspectives are missing from the story? 2. What message is being communicated by the author? 3. How can the reader use the information from the story to advocate for equality in a social setting?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bookmark Technique</strong></td>
<td>A strategy that allows students to subsection their paper to identify four levels of learning. I.e., 1. write/sketch about a part of the story in which the reader finds to be the most interesting, 2. write/sketch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Say Something</td>
<td>A strategy that allows students to monitor their reading of texts by pausing and conversing at important parts of the story.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connection Stems</td>
<td>A strategy that includes prompts that allow students a framework to make connections while reading narrative and informational texts (McLaughlin &amp; DeVoogd, 2004). Examples of connection stems include: (1) <em>This reminds me of...</em> (2) <em>A similar experience I have had like this...</em> and (3) <em>Another book I have read about this includes...</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Switching</td>
<td>A strategy by which problem posing is used as a catalyst to think objectively about what is mentioned in the plot; examples of this technique include</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thinking Hats</td>
<td>a strategy that involves a student's ability to critically evaluate a story through the perspectives of different characters in a story.</td>
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Appendix B

Engagement Inventory

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<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Time</th>
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R = Raised Hand; D = Discusses Text; S&L = Silent and Listening; O = Off Task; W = looking out window; Z = Zoning Out
Appendix C

Reading A-Z

Quick Check

Keb Needs a Home

Name ___________________________ Date ___________

Instructions: Read each question carefully and choose the best answer.

1. What is Keb’s biggest problem?
   A. All of the shells are too big.
   B. He is lonely.
   C. He can’t find a big enough home.
   D. The gulls ignore him.

2. What is the setting of the story?
   A. the seashore
   B. the ocean
   C. a river bank
   D. a lake

3. What is Keb’s problem with living in the hole in a rock?
   A. The rock isn’t blue.
   B. The hole is too small.
   C. He feels naked outside it.
   D. He is far from the shore.

4. How do you know that this story is a fantasy?
   A. The seaweed began to rot and smell.
   B. Keb wove a seaweed suit.
   C. Hermit crabs live in snail shells.
   D. Keb was very large.

5. Read the example sentence: Keb was a hermit crab of spectacular proportions. Another word for proportions is ________.
   A. length
   B. size
   C. intelligence
   D. colour

6. What did Keb try first so he wouldn’t feel naked?
   A. He lived in a large hole.
   B. He wove a seaweed suit.
   C. He went inside a blue boot.
   D. He wrapped himself in feathers.

Quick Check continued on following page
Keb Needs a Home

7. How does Keb change in the story?
   A. He becomes more confident.
   B. He becomes proud of himself.
   C. He becomes happy.
   D. All of the above

8. Why did Keb "strut" down the shore wearing his new home?
   A. He was worried about the gulls.
   B. He was proud and wanted to show off his new house.
   C. He felt naked without his shell.
   D. He was afraid what the other crabs would think.

9. What happened when Keb covered himself with feathers?
   A. He felt very bad.
   B. The crabs thought he was silly.
   C. The crabs thought he looked really nice.
   D. He found a good home.

10. Read the example sentence: All of the other crabs were envious of Keb’s beautiful new home. What does envious mean?
    A. thankful
    B. jealous
    C. scared
    D. proud

11. Extended Response: Why do you think Keb was hurt to “the core of his feelings” when the other crabs teased him?
Reading A-Z

Quick Check

Lola the Llama

Name ____________________________ Date ______________

Instructions: Read each question carefully and choose the best answer.

1. Where does this story take place?
   A) in a village
   B) on a mountain
   C) at Lola’s home
   D) at Sofia’s home

2. Which words from the text help readers understand what stubborn means?
   A) I live with Sofia in the Andes Mountains of Peru.
   B) No one tells me what to do!
   C) My name is Lola the llama.
   D) In fact, they are the longest group of mountains in the world!

3. The picture of Sofia trying to pull Lola down the mountain shows readers that Sofia is
   ____________.
   A) helpless
   B) lost
   C) strong
   D) happy

4. When Sofia climbs on Lola’s back to ride to the village, Lola
   ____________.
   A) sits down on the ground
   B) eats a carrot
   C) walks to the village
   D) goes down the mountain

5. After Sofia gives Lola an apple, Lola
   ____________.
   A) begs for more apples
   B) eats the apple and takes a nap
   C) gives Sofia a ride down the mountain
   D) takes a bite and spits an apple seed

6. Why does Sofia tell Lola to decide what to do?
   A) Sofia knows Lola won’t do what she asks her to do.
   B) Sofia has another llama to help her.
   C) Sofia wants to take time for lunch.
   D) Sofia is tired and wants to rest.

Quick Check continued on following page
Lola the Llama

Name ________________________ Date __________

7. When Sofia tells Lola to make a choice, Lola _________.
   A. gets mad
   B. feels silly
   C. doesn’t know what to do
   D. decides to go to the village

8. Lola decides to go home with Sofia because she _________.
   A. is tired and angry
   B. wants to make Sofia happy
   C. wants to eat apples and carrots
   D. does not know the way home herself

9. Which of the following best describes Sofia?
   A. She does anything for her llama.
   B. She is smart and can solve problems.
   C. She is stubborn and gets what she wants.
   D. She gives up easily when things don’t go her way.

10. The author wrote this book so readers can _________.
    A. enjoy a funny story about llamas
    B. learn about why llamas are stubborn
    C. decide whether to get a pet llama
    D. find out facts about where llamas live

11. Extended Response: What do you think Lola will do next time Sofia wants to go to the village? Explain.
Quick Check

Name ____________________________ Date ____________

Instructions: Read each question carefully and choose the best answer.

1. What happens first in the story?
   A The boy asks his mother for a drum.
   B The boy asks his mother for a stick.
   C The boy asks his mother for roti.
   D The boy asks his mother for a horse.

2. How did the boy feel at the end of the story?
   A bored
   B disappointed
   C excited
   D joyful

3. What is the trader’s biggest problem in the story?
   A He cannot get to his wedding on time.
   B Robbers stole his goods and left him in a ditch.
   C He has a hungry baby whom he cannot feed.
   D Neighbors are asking him to stop cooking roti.

4. What happens after the boy gives his neighbor his stick?
   A She uses the stick to draw her name in the sand.
   B She tells his mother what a kind boy he is.
   C She is so thankful she gives him a water jug.
   D She gets the fire going and bakes him a soft, round roti.

5. Read this sentence from the story: “Water!” he cried feebly.
   What is another word for feebly?
   A strongly
   B weakly
   C angrily
   D excitedly

6. How might Mother have felt when the boy told her his story?
   A proud
   B upset
   C disappointed
   D thankful
7. What causes the horses to calm down?
   - The boy rides them around town.
   - The boy gives them water to drink.
   - The man gives them treats from his sack.
   - The man brushes their fur with his brush.

8. Why does the boy give his roti away?
   - He didn’t like that flavor of roti.
   - He wasn’t hungry anymore.
   - He heard a hungry baby crying.
   - He wanted to trade his roti for a water jug.

9. *Things that can be bought and sold to meet people’s wants and needs* are called __________.
   - deeds
   - goods
   - musicians
   - traders

10. What is the main lesson of this story?
    - Being honest is the only way to live.
    - When you are kind, kindness comes back to you.
    - If you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way.
    - Enjoy the little things in life and have fun!

11. **Extended Response**: How might the people the boy helped act toward others after he showed them kindness?
Quick Check

Name ____________________________ Date ____________

Instructions: Read each question carefully and choose the best answer.

1. How does Poppy feel during most of the story?
   - A. She is sure that picture day will be great no matter what.
   - B. She feels bad for herself and will not go to picture day.
   - C. She is worried about picture day not being perfect.
   - D. She is angry with her mom for washing her new dress.

2. What lesson does Poppy learn in the story?
   - A. Poppy learns that she must be more careful when drinking punch.
   - B. Poppy learns that everyone is different and this is what makes each person special.
   - C. Poppy learns that people will still like her and be her friend even if she has glasses.
   - D. Poppy learns that she should not let her mom wash her dresses.

3. Which of the following events happens first in the story?
   - A. Poppy finds out she needs glasses.
   - B. Poppy’s necklace breaks.
   - C. Poppy spills punch on her dress.
   - D. Poppy tries on her new dress.

4. Why does Poppy want everything to be just right for picture day?
   - A. Her picture will be in the yearbook.
   - B. She wants everyone to see how beautiful she is.
   - C. Her picture will be hung up in the classroom.
   - D. She wants to have a nice picture to give her parents.

5. A person who takes pictures with a camera is called __________.
   - A. an astronomer
   - B. a photographer
   - C. a teacher
   - D. a performer

Quick Check continued on following page
6. What problem does Poppy’s friend Leah have on picture day?
   A. She also has new glasses.
   B. She has a bandage on her nose.
   C. She has a broken arm.
   D. She is missing a few teeth.

7. How does Poppy feel at the end of the story?
   A. upset
   B. happy
   C. sad
   D. silly

8. What happens after Poppy decides to wear the yellow dress?
   A. She leaves for her doctor’s appointment.
   B. She spills punch on her dress.
   C. Her necklace breaks.
   D. She tries on her outfit for picture day.

9. Why does Poppy not wear the blue dress for picture day?
   A. Her mom did not wash it in time.
   B. It shrunk in the wash and does not fit Poppy.
   C. The punch did not come out in the wash.
   D. Poppy decided she did not want to wear it.

10. A stain is __________.
    A. a dirty mark that is hard to remove
    B. a broken piece of jewelry
    C. a fancy outfit
    D. a dress that is too small

11. Extended Response: Why does Poppy decide to keep her glasses on for the class picture?
Appendix D

re: Brieske-Ulenski 2022059

Carreira, Nancy <NCARREIRA@bridgew.edu>
Thu 1/27/2022 1:41 PM
To: Brieske Ulenski, Adam <ABRIESKEULENSKI@bridgew.edu>
Cc: francesjeffries (francesjeffries@gmail.com) <francesjeffries@gmail.com>; Zoino, Mia <MZOINO@bridgew.edu>

Dear Adam:

The IRB has approved your recent application for the project entitled “The Effects of Critical Literacy Theory on Listening Comprehension and Reading Engagement” #2022059.
You will receive a formal letter of approval, but may consider this e-mail sufficient until that time. Good luck with your project.

Best regards,
Frances Jeffries, Ph.D.
IRB Compliance Officer
Bridgewater State University
Bridgewater, Massachusetts 02325
Email: irb@bridgew.edu
Mobile/Text/WhatsApp: 508.241.6643

From: Carreira, Nancy
Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2022 11:50 AM
To: francesjeffries (francesjeffries@gmail.com) <francesjeffries@gmail.com>
Cc: Zoino, Mia <MZOINO@bridgew.edu>
Subject: FOR YOUR REVIEW re: updated application from Brieske-Ulenski 2022059

Hi Fran. Per your request, and for your additional review, attached is the updated application from Adam Brieske-Ulenski. Thank you. Please let me know your decision so that I can convey the same to the PI. Thanks, Fran.
~Nancy

From: Brieske Ulenski, Adam <ABRIESKEULENSKI@bridgew.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2022 11:23 AM
To: Carreira, Nancy <NCARREIRA@bridgew.edu>
Subject: Re: Brieske-Ulenski 2022059

Nancy,

I have attached the IRB with the recommendation incorporated in section 7. Thank you for the feedback and your assistance. Please let me know if you need anything else.

Best,

Adam Brieske-Ulenski, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor of Literacy Education
Graduate Program Chair of Reading Education

Master's in Reading Education- Language, Literacy, and Culture Track