

Critical literacy

Meaningful and active engagement with literacy requires us to go beyond traditional conceptions of what it means to understand what we read. Children encounter a range of texts in different forms and modes on a daily basis. It has become increasingly important for them to be aware of the underlying biases that influence the perspectives presented in these texts. As every text has been created by at least one author, every text is shaped and constructed by social factors. Critical readers not only understand what they are reading, they question it. Who is represented in the text? Who is not? What ideas are given prominence? What ideas are ignored? Adopting a resistant stance helps children to identify power imbalances in the texts that shape their world and society at large.

Critical literacy involves actively identifying, analysing and challenging the perspectives offered in texts. It also involves questioning the influence of these viewpoints on our everyday lives. From a teaching perspective, it is supported by reading and listening to multiple texts, from multiple perspectives. Teachers facilitate critical literacy through carefully considering the texts that children encounter in their classroom and helping children to analyse who and what the texts represent. Children can also be supported to produce texts that consider alternative perspectives, that challenge the norm, or that explore under-represented voices. In applying their language and literacy skills in this way, they come to be active, thoughtful and critical contributors to the world in which they live.

Litearthacht chriticiúil

Le go mbeidh plé gníomhach lánbhí agann leis an litearthacht, ní leor coincheapa traidisiúnta ar a bhfuil i gceist leis an méid a léimid a thuiscint. Castar réimse téacsanna ar pháistí gach lá, téacsanna i bhfoirmeacha éagsúla agus i modhanna éagsúla. Tá sé ag éirí níos tábhachtaí an t-am ar fad go mbeadh páistí ar an eolas faoin gclaonadh a théann i bhfeidhm ar na tuairimí a chuirtear i láthair sna téacsanna sin. Ó tharla gur chruthaigh údar amháin ar a laghad gach téacs, bíonn gach téacs múnlaíthe agus tógtha ag tosca sóisialta. Ní hamháin go dtuigeann léitheoirí criticiúla a bhfuil á léamh acu, ceistíonn siad é freisin. Cé dó a seasann an téacs? Cé dó nach seasann an téacs? Cé na smaointe a dtugtar tús áite dóibh? Cé na smaointe a dtugtar neamhaird orthu? Ach dearcadh amhrasach a bheith acu, cabhraítear le páistí easpa cothromaíochta a shainathint sna téacsanna a mhúnlaíonn a saol agus, go deimhin, an tsochaí trí chéile.

Is éard atá i gceist le litearthacht chriticiúil ná na tuairimí a chuirtear i láthair i dtéacsanna a shainathint, anailís a dhéanamh orthu agus a ndúshlán a thabhairt. Rud eile atá i gceist léi ná an tionchar atá ag na tuairimí sin ar ár saol laethúil a cheistiú. Ó thaobh an teagaisc de, tacaítear leis an litearthacht chriticiúil ach a lán téacsanna éagsúla a léamh agus éisteacht leo, téacsanna ina gcuirtear a lán tuairimí éagsúla i láthair. Éascaíonn múinteoirí an litearthacht chriticiúil ach a machnamh a dhéanamh go cúramach ar na téacsanna a léann páistí sa seomra ranga agus cabhrú le páistí anailís a dhéanamh ar dhá cheist: (i) cé dó a seasann an téacs? agus (ii) céard dó a seasann an téacs? Is féidir tacú le páistí freisin chun téacsanna a chruthú a bhreithníonn tuairimí malartacha, a thugann dúshlán thuairimí an tromlaigh, nó a chíorann guthanna arb annamh a léirítear iad. Ach a scileanna teanga agus litearthachta a chur i bhfeidhm ar an gcaoi seo, cuireann páistí go gníomhach, go machnamhach agus go criticiúil leis an domhan ina maireann siad.