Critical Literacy Overview

In schools, a critical literacy model reflects a “practical approach to curriculum” melding “social, political, and cultural debate and discussion with the analysis of how texts and discourses work, where, with what consequences, and in whose interests” (Luke, 2012). Within the English language arts, critical literacy practices are taken up based on teachers’ and students’ contexts related to their relationships with different issues or struggles.

While there is not a “universal model” of critical literacies, there are four basic dimensions to the critical literacy framework in the classroom:

1. Disrupting the commonplace: considering “new frames from which to understand experience” through varied texts, analysis of language, and critique.
2. Considering multiple viewpoints: considering our own viewpoints and viewpoints of others.
3. Focusing on the sociopolitical: interrogating how “sociopolitical systems and power relationships shape perceptions, responses, and actions.”

(Lewison, Seely Flint, Van Sluys, & Henkin, 2002)

Depending on the classroom context, methods for teaching with a critical literacy lens will vary.

Suggestions for Further Reading

**Elementary:**

**Secondary:**
Christensen, L. (2000). *Reading, writing, and rising Up: Teaching about social justice and the power of the written word.* Rethinking Schools: Milwaukee, WI.

**English Language Learners:**

**Teachers beginning to implement critical literacy practices:**

**History and background:**