

## CRITICAL READING AND CRITICAL THINKING The State of the Art

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### **Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to provide, for L1 and L2 reading and writing teachers, a brief overview of the literature about critical reading and higher level thinking skills. The teaching of these skills is still neglected in some language classes in Brazil, be it in L1 or in L2 classes. Thus, this paper may also serve as a resource guide for L1 and/or L2 reading and writing teachers who want to incorporate critical reading and thinking into their classes.

In modern society, even in everyday life people frequently need to deal with complicated public and political issues, make decisions, and solve problems. In order to do this efficiently and effectively, citizens must be able to evaluate critically what they see, hear, and read. Also, with the huge amount of printed material available in all areas in this age of "information explosion" it is easy to feel overwhelmed. But often the information piled up on people's desks and in their minds is of no use due to the enormous amount of it. Thus, they need to read selectively, sorting out the bits and pieces that are interesting and useful for them. Again, to do so strong critical

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reading and critical thinking skills are indispensable (Morgan & Shermis, 1989; Sanacore, 1994).

As can be seen in the literature, critical reading or critical literacy (as it is frequently referred to), as well as critical thinking, have been defined in a variety of ways. Shannon (as cited in Jongasma, 1991), for example, views critical reading “as a means for understanding one’s history and culture and their connection to current social structure . . . and for fostering an activism toward equal participation for all the decisions that affect and control our lives” (p. 519). Shor, in turn, (as cited in Lankshear, 1994) describes critical literacy as

analytical habits of thinking, reading, writing, speaking or discussing which go beneath the surface of impressions, traditional myths, mere opinions, and routine clichés; understanding the social contexts and consequences of any subject matter; discovering the deep meaning of any event, text, technique, process, object, statement, image, or situation; applying that meaning to your own context (p.22),

whereas to Flynn (1989), critical reading involves “an interactive process using several levels of thought simultaneously” (p.664), as for example, *analysis* – the clarification of information by examining the component parts; *synthesis* – the combining of relevant parts into a coherent whole; and *evaluation* – which involves establishing standards and then judging ideas against the standards to verify their reasonableness. Some authors do not actually define critical reading, but describe the attitudes or behaviors expected of a critical reader, or what they believe critical reading should aim at (Simpson, 1996; Frager & Thompson, 1985).

As I mentioned previously, the literature also presents a variety of definitions of critical thinking (Feely Jr, 1976; Harris & Hodges, 1981; Dale, 1965). Ruggiero (1984) defines critical thinking as “the close examination of a proposed problem’s or issue’s solution to determine both its strengths and its weaknesses. In short, it means evaluation and

judgment”(p. 129). Ennis (1985; 1987) defines critical thinking as “reasonable reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe and do” (p.5 and p.10, respectively). To Wilson (1988), critical thinking involves predicting outcomes, formulating questions, and responding to text by applying one’s own values and beliefs.

In short, the listing of definitions of critical thinking and of critical reading could go on, but if we examine those few listed above, we may perceive the close similarity between what is said about critical reading and what is said about critical thinking. Also, as Thistlethwaite (1990) points out, critical thinking skills frequently listed in textbooks for teaching critical thinking are similar to, or perhaps the same as those listed in reading texts described as critical reading skills (p.587). For example, critical thinking skills such as withholding judgement until confirming or disconfirming evidence is gathered, questioning, being flexible, inferring, predicting outcomes, recognizing bias are some of the skills that can also be found in critical reading textbooks (Sheerborne, 1981; Harnadeck, 1980).

Commeyras (1990) also raises this issue. She states: “The claim that critical thinking is closely related to reading comprehension is similar to the view that reasoning is an integral part of reading. (. . .) Critical thinking, which involves reasoning, is the process the reader uses to determine which interpretations are consistent with textual evidence and background knowledge”(p.201). This view is also supported by Colins, Brown, and Larkin (1980). Newton (1985) goes further than that. She states: “To read critically is to think critically. Critical thinking is a manner of assimilating and processing information and evaluating ideas. (. . .) Our concern as teachers of reading, is to encourage critical thinking with respect to the written word”(p.26).

Many teachers think that children will develop critical thinking and critical reading skills automatically as they grow older and become more experienced in different fields of knowledge through reading in school, and through life itself, but this view has been challenged by various people in the field. Stauffer (1977), for example, is of the opinion

that critical thinking must and can be taught to students, and that it is, in fact, the responsibility of the school to develop citizens who will have the ability to read and think critically. This view is supported by various authorities in the field (McMillan & Gentile, 1988; Cioffi, 1989; Nickerson, 1989; Wilson, 1988; and others).

Some have stressed that the development of students' critical thinking ought to start in the early grades (Hickey, 1988; McMillan & Gentile, 1988). Thistlethwaite (1990), for instance, strongly emphasizes that "focusing on critical reading should not wait until presumably lower level reading skills have been mastered" (p.586).

On the other hand, some consider junior high school the ideal time to develop this skill (Ericson, Hubler, Bean, Smith, & McKenzie, 1987; Frager & Thompson, 1984). Their justification is that in senior high and college, as it is known, most of the instruction is presented through textbooks, thus, students must know at that stage how to learn from text. Indeed, at college their course work will demand a high level of independent learning. Students will need the abilities to interpret a wide range of literature and to defend their interpretations, for which the skills of questioning, making inferences, predicting outcomes, distinguishing fact from opinion, identifying an author's bias, evaluating the writer's authority, comparing and contrasting information, classifying or categorizing information, analyzing information, synthesizing information from various sources, making judgments, drawing conclusions, making generalizations, among others, are a prerequisite.

Critical reading and thinking skills are also needed for studying. For example, to write a satisfactory summary of a reading passage students must be able to include enough information, to select the most important ideas, and to be sufficiently specific or general. Furthermore, they need the ability to monitor the process by which they read the passage, arrive at a mental summary, verify it with the source text, write the summary, and, finally, check the written summary against the source text. It is also necessary to consider the audience

and the purpose of the summary since both affect what will be written or retained in the summary (Taylor, 1983).

But students definitely need guidance to achieve active and critical reading comprehension of difficult text concepts. Teachers must combine learning from text strategies in a creative way (Bean & Ericson, 1989). I agree with Brown (1985), who says that instruction given in school should guide students in a way to gradually expand their range of competence, and to, finally, enable them to take charge of their own learning, and with Flynn's (1989) concluding statement:

When students actively struggle with interesting problems within a supportive environment they are simultaneously challenged and encouraged to test out their ideas. Young readers develop into independent, critical readers as they learn to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate knowledge by thinking their way through problems in a cooperative environment (p. 668).

Nevertheless, a review of the relevant literature reveals that school has not been very successful at reaching these goals. Since the 1960s and continuing into the 1990s researchers in the fields of education and reading have complained that the teaching of critical reading and higher level thinking skills seems to have received little attention in American schools (Durkin, 1978-79; 1985; Goodlad, 1983; Thistlethwaite, 1990). Brown (1985) states: "There is considerable evidence that a sizable minority of school leavers, when they encounter college, the armed forces, or the workplace, lack the skills of the intelligent novice" (p.4). Brown is referring to students' lack of critical thinking skills.

There have been various attempts in the literature to explain these negative results. One reason pointed out is the emphasis on decoding at the expense of comprehension training in the reading class (Durkin, 1983). Second, in schools that adopt the traditional skills

hierarchy approach for the teaching of reading, teachers hardly have time to dedicate to the teaching of critical thinking skills (Thistlethwaite, 1990). Third, some teachers themselves lack preparation for teaching these skills (Libâneo, 1991). Fourth, teachers fear the parents' reactions, or they themselves may be afraid to be losing some ground if they allow their students too much freedom to think (Thompson Frager, 1984; Thistlethwaite, 1990). Finally, teachers lack the time for preparing appropriate materials to teach critical thinking skills.

In Brazil, unfortunately, we do not have such comprehensive studies to clearly show us the real situation of critical reading and higher level thinking instruction in the schools of the whole country. But the results of individual studies and the observations by people interested in the subject and concerned about making the authorities in education aware of the problem, suggest that the general picture of the country regarding those areas is a very desolate one (Geraldi, 1992; Venturelli, 1992; Souza, 1993; and others). Apparently, critical reading and higher level thinking instruction has been entirely neglected in most of our elementary and secondary schools. Throughout my experience as a teacher of EFL in the College of Letters at UFSC, I have observed, in a formal and in an informal way, that many of our students enter college unprepared in terms of critical reading and thinking skills, and assume therefore a passive attitude towards their own learning. Many of them are puzzled when they are asked to explain or justify their ideas and interpretations of a text, and their responses show little evidence of problem solving strategies or critical thinking. And what is saddest, unable to keep up with the reading and writing work required at college, many of them give up college (Taglieber, 1991).

The reasons why these students leave high school unprepared for college work are varied and complex and will not be discussed here. Regardless of what the reasons are, the crucial issue is that our students lack the skills that are essential for effective college work and for life. It is, then, our task as instructors to help students become independent readers and thinkers through activities that will lead to

the development of the abilities to think critically. I agree with those researchers who contend that instruction of critical reading and higher level thinking skills should permeate elementary and secondary school, but I think that, at least in our case, the development of these skills should continue throughout college. It should be a function of the university to consolidate the process of preparing individuals who can think and act independently and autonomously.

Since the beginning of the 1980s, much has been written about the integration of reading and writing activities in the language classroom as a means to develop both reading and writing skills (Trotsky & Wood, 1982; Rubin & Hansen, 1984; Sinatra, Gemake, & Morgan, 1986). Based on research, models which depict reading and writing as parallel processes were put forth (Tierney & Shanahan, 1991; Shanahan, 1988, Shanahan & Lomax, 1980; 1988; Mosenthal, 1983; Tierney Leys, 1986; Stotsky, 1983). These models assume that both readers and writers use the same steps to obtain meaning and that both reading and writing are composing processes (Petrosky, 1982; Squire, 1984). Yet, more recently, researchers have also become interested in the reading-writing connection as a means to develop students' critical thinking skills (Simpson, 1986; Browning, 1986; Tierney, Sotter, O'Flahavan, & McGinley, 1989; Kurt & Farris, 1990; Thistlethwaite, 1990), and some researchers have suggested the inclusion of one more element in this discussion (Simpson, 1996; Flynn, 1996; Alvermann & Commeyras, 1984). Along these lines there has been a strong effort towards developing effective techniques and model lessons to foster critical reading and higher level thinking skills.

### **Model lessons, techniques, and guidelines for teaching critical reading and higher level thinking**

Lehr (1982), for example, describes some of these model lessons. One, developed by Clifford (1980), involves reading and writing. It is a technique that allows students to perceive how writers generate,

develop, clarify, and organize their critical ideas. It requires students to write before, during, and after reading. There are four stages: (1) *involvement*, in which students develop personal interest in the text; (2) *perception*, in which they contemplate their first personal response by noticing the details in the text that elicited that response; (3) *interpretation*, in which they shift their attention from inside to outside and begin to draw meanings from the text; and (4) *evaluation*, in which they make judgments about the texts.

Another model lesson to improve critical reading and thinking skills is Barnes' (1979) questioning classification system. This lesson is based on class discussion that should help students organize, develop, and express their ideas. Questions are grouped into one of four categories: (1) *cognitive memory questions* that elicit recall of facts or yes-no answers; (2) *convergent questions* that ask students to explain, express in another mode, state relationships, compare and contrast, or solve a problem; (3) *divergent questions* that ask students to infer, reconstruct, predict, hypothesize, solve a problem, or invent or design; and (4) *evaluation questions* that require students to judge, value, defend, or justify a choice or solution. Barnes strongly recommends that teachers use a questioning sequence. In her view, the most logical sequence is the one that starts with questions of fact, moves through questions requiring convergent thinking, and concludes with questions requiring divergent or evaluative thinking. Her reasoning behind this is that if students are unable to relate specific facts of a story, they cannot be expected to retell it in their own words, and if they cannot retell the story in their own words, they will not be able to retell it from another point of view or make critical judgments about it. In other words, cognitive memory and convergent thinking must take place first. They are, so to speak, a prerequisite for divergent and evaluative thinking.

A third model for teaching critical reading and thinking discussed by Lehr is Cunningham's (1980) two-phase lesson. Cunningham argues that teachers often confuse comprehension (understanding

meaning) with critical reading (evaluating meaning) and create, in this way, a dilemma. What happens, he says, is that even if teachers encourage individual responses and divergent thinking in their classes, frequently they get no response at all, and this leads teachers to make negative value judgments about students' thinking (which will turn students off reading) or to accept any response no matter how silly it is (which will diminish the value of reading). Thus, his two-phase lesson is intended to help resolve this dilemma by emphasizing the idea of teaching comprehension and critical reading as distinct but related processes. The first phase, based on Stauffer's (1977) Directed Reading-Thinking Activity, concentrates on increasing student understanding of the possible meanings of a piece of literature. The second phase deals with critical reading of the piece.

Other examples of useful techniques that teachers can use to develop critical reading and higher level thinking, that focus on one or more specific skills, are available in the literature. Paul (1990), for example, devised a series of classifying strategies to enhance high school freshmen's metacognition skills and help them read between the lines, that is, to read critically. These strategies provided an organizational pattern to help students generate clear thinking, reading, and writing. The strategies led them to use analysis, synthesis, inferencing, and evaluation. The author makes an evaluative comment about the technique he proposes:

When students use the classifying strategies (. . .) they are employing analytic, synthetic, and evaluative tools. They examine the elements of the reading for instances of problem solving and its relation to ancient life. They also construct inferences and write paragraphs, creating clear, coherent judgement (p. 97).

Thompson and Frager (1984), present guidelines for teachers to prepare their own lessons to teach critical thinking in reading and in the content areas. They also present a model lesson illustrating the

five guidelines: (1) *stimulate personal interest*; (2) *generate active/interactive participation by all students*; (3) *use prior student knowledge and experience*; (4) *facilitate and encourage skill transfer*; and (5) *extend comprehension instruction beyond the 50-minute class period*. The authors suggest history as an excellent area for demonstrating to students the value of critical reading, viewing, and thinking. They used a combination of TV visuals and printed accounts of the historical event chosen for their model lesson, but they also cite other content areas that can be explored to teach critical thinking. In a later article, Frager and Thompson (1985) discuss the use of conflict in reading material as an effective means to lead students to read critically, to seek further reading, and to enhance reading comprehension. Furthermore, they describe a model lesson based on conflict to teach critical reading. The general pattern of their approach to teach critical reading consists of four steps: (1) have students read conflicting accounts of the same topic; (2) increase cognitive dissonance by eliciting from students explanations and arguments supporting each side of the conflict; (3) model critical reading of the accounts; and (4) extend the lesson to a point where students' cognitive dissonance is resolved by additional reading and thinking skills previously modeled.

### **Using informational texts to develop critical reading and thinking skills**

There has been a strong emphasis on using a variety of texts from newspapers, weekly newsmagazines, and popular magazines to develop classroom activities for teaching critical reading and thinking. Thistlethwaite (1990), for instance, presents a variety of critical activities involving a variety of texts such as news stories, editorials, advertisements, movie reviews, novels, and textbooks to help at-risk college students learn to read and think critically. She carefully describes a number of activities she proposes to teachers of reading and content areas.

Brueggeman (1986) describes a structured process of using college newspaper editorials to elicit students' critical thinking and writing. She argues that editorials in the campus newspaper are a source for relevant critical reading because the issues discussed in these editorials are frequently of interest to individual students of a class. The author suggests a lesson in four general steps or phases: (1) teaching; (2) guided practice; (3) independent practice; and (4) analyzing selections. Yet, she stresses that the campus paper is only "a stepping stone to other more difficult selections" (p. 238), and that later on teachers should look for other texts that may provide a bridge into more complex material. Dwyer and Summy (1986), in turn, propose a model for teaching students to distinguish between opinion and statement of fact by using the newspaper as reading material. However, they call teachers' attention to the fact that there are more than one kind of statement of fact, thus students need to be made aware of this and to be taught how to analyze factual statements. In other words, it is not enough to be able to distinguish between fact and opinion. The authors also recommend newspapers, editorials, reports, and byline columns as excellent sources for developing critical reading skills such as distinguishing fact and opinion, recognizing authors' biases, and comparing and contrasting information.

LaSasso (1983) suggests an approach to motivate reluctant readers and to teach critical reading skills through texts from popular magazines. She found that these magazines have a variety of articles on subjects that usually interest young students, which can be used to develop their interest and pleasure in reading. She used articles from the *National Enquirer*. Again, these articles may be used as a bridge to more challenging readings. Similarly, Frager and Thompson (1984) used a weekly newsmagazine as the main source of reading to develop critical reading in a developmental reading-study skills course for college students. The magazine they chose was *Time*, and the classes concentrated on developing such skills as summarizing information, synthesizing information from different sources, critical reading, and

inference making. The authors point out three positive aspects of a weekly news magazine:

(1) content reflects students' academic majors —political science, business education, science, and fine arts; (2) articles are longer than the isolated paragraphs that often appear in workbooks, but short enough to be used in class; and (3) articles and pictures generate interest and maintain readership (p. 401).

They conclude that "Through this approach, students may gain reading habits which last a lifetime, while instructors gain many opportunities to teach the critical thinking and research skills so vital for success in college" (p.607).

Olson, Gee, and Forest (1989) show how valuable magazines are in elementary and secondary school for developing reading comprehension, critical reading, and for learning content. The authors list a number of different ways to use magazines in content classes, and present useful examples of activities to develop critical reading skills, such as to evaluate the author's credentials, separate fact from opinion, distinguish between prejudice and reason, identify propaganda, analyze opposing points of view, predict outcomes, summarize information, and synthesize information from various sources.

Criscuolo and Gallager (1989) describe a rather unique and very successful experience in teaching reading, thinking, and life skills to socially maladjusted and emotionally disturbed adolescents through the newspaper. They also describe in detail the issues the classes dealt with and the types of reading activities students performed, and conclude by saying:

It isn't easy to teach students who are antisocial, violent, verbally abusive, drug abusive, and often truant. ( . . . )

Using the newspaper proved to be a success in reaching them because it contains current, relevant information. Its adult quality and nonschool format appealed to these disruptive students and served to upgrade their reading and English skills to an immeasurable degree (p.443).

Cioffi (1992) used a combination of ads, news reports, and variants of the Grimm brothers' fairy tales to develop critical reading abilities. His strategy involved students in tasks with perceived conflicts and discrepancies. The author states: "Discrepant accounts of events, whether real or fictional, give students a basis for developing critical reading skills"(p.48). He recommends that teachers start with ads in the classroom, then move to news reports, and finally, to variants of literature. Flynn (1989) also used a variety of texts. She devised an instructional model to develop critical reading skills through cooperative problem solving, and gives suggestions for implementation using examples from her classroom experiences. Flynn used Bransford & Stein's (1984) five-step problem solving approach called IDEAL — an acronym for the key skills of *Identifying, Defining, Exploring, Acting,* and *Looking* — included in the approach. The reading materials she used involved real or simulated problems which students had to solve. Furthermore, she recommends role-playing of a human relations or social problem that can be selected from journals, social studies texts, short stories, novels; and the newspaper, which presents real problems. In this experience, students were also encouraged to share their own personal problem situations with their colleagues. She states in the end of her article: "Combining the elements from two separate disciplines turns critical reading from a reactive to an active process" (p.668).

### **Using literary texts to develop critical reading and thinking skills**

Contrary to the traditional belief that a piece of literature should not be extensively analyzed, Commeyras (1989) presents a

rationale for using drama or fiction to teach critical thinking skills. The author states, "since literature reflects life, it can well be used in the classroom to promote critical thinking" (p. 703). In her article she discusses one instructional approach to teach critical thinking skills through literature, suggesting that other approaches may be developed by other teachers. Commeyras' approach was designed to engage students in inductive reasoning in order to study personalities in plays. In her sample lesson, she used information about the character of Tom Sawyer, taken from the play adapted by Spencer (1981) from Mark Twain's classic novel.

The idea of using literature for developing critical thinking skills is shared and supported by various other authors in the field of reading. In Buckley's (1986) view, literature provides "argument and inferences about our lives, items that are critical to good writing". McMillan and Gentile (1988) strongly advocate the return of literature to the classroom to help teach critical thinking to children in the early grades. They state: "Through the posing of dilemmas and characters in the controlled setting of school, open discussions of alternatives and predictions can occur, and teachers can assist children in developing the ability to think both critically and ethically" (p.878). Hickey (1988) maintains that critical reading readiness can be developed as early as Kindergarten level through questions, games, and other activities. Her idea is supported by various people. She cites Turner (1988); Wolf, Casneder and Casneder (1967); Burns, Roe and Ross (1984). In her article, Hickey outlines examples of activities involving games and questions to encourage young children towards critical thinking.

Tomlinson (1997) developed a six-step model of notemaking in literature to enhance critical reading, which she calls a "continuum of notemaking processes" (p.470). This "continuum" engages readers in three ever deepening levels of processing the text: (1) shallow = independent reading, (2) deep = journal exchange and class discussion,

and (3) deepest = independent reflection. The author makes some evaluative comments about the strategy:

The six-step coding system can help students develop structure and focus for tracking and mapping important themes, events, or characters while reading. The six-step coding system can also provide a meaningful frame-work for notemaking as an aid to reasoning and thinking critically, reorganizing content, remembering important ideas, and identifying important details for writing journal entries (p.475).

Page (1998) reports on a teaching experiment involving instructors and students of such fields as social science, natural science, business, and accounting. These instructors helped their students understand better their course contents and develop higher order thinking abilities by including reading and discussion of literary texts in their courses. They found that the technique helped students develop such thinking skills as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Ollman (1996) combined reading of literary works, discussion, and writing. She presents a list of seven reading response formats, which she investigated with her class of 7<sup>th</sup> graders. Every 5 weeks, she asked students to attempt a new type of written response to their self-selected adolescent novels. Ollman found, in the end, that "students were finally thinking creatively and critically as they made meaning of literature." To illustrate this, she quotes one of her students' words: "After I read each book, a tiny little piece of me changes" (p. 581). It was clear to her that books were touching her students' lives, as she had expected.

Sebesta, Monson, and Senn (1995) developed, defined, and researched a four-stage hierarchy: (1) *evocation*; (2) *alternatives*; (3) *reflective thinking*; and (4) *evaluation* to assess and promote students' aesthetic response to literature. They tried to develop a hierarchy of evolving stages instead of a taxonomy of discrete categories because in their view, an authentic aesthetic response demands a journey through

these stages. To use their own words: "Lacking evocation, the reader is unlikely to examine alternatives; lacking an examination of alternatives, the thoughtful reader is unlikely to arrive at a stage of reflection" (p.445).

Flood, Lapp, and Nagel (1993), in a reading research project, discuss how multicultural literature may be used to develop critical reading and thinking. The students were given a passage to read and discuss. After they finished reading and discussing, the researchers asked them to do various types of written assessment, such as journal entries, formal response papers, survey responses, and they themselves kept a teacher log. Through these written assessments the researchers tried to measure the effects of literature on students' behavior. It is the authors' view that "Multicultural literature may be a source of input that causes students to evaluate the validity of their beliefs and actions. It can be the vehicle that allows them to share the thoughts, feelings, and life experiences of others" (p. 421).

## **Conclusion**

In sum, the need for teaching critical literacy has been a deep concern of theoreticians, researchers, and teachers in the areas of reading and writing. It has also been a burning issue of discussion in reading periodicals and newspapers from various parts of the world such as America, Canada, Europe, Australia, and others during the last fifteen years. Furthermore, the International Reading Association in conjunction with some American higher educational institutions, other institutions, and foundations have funded and implemented a series of projects of developing critical literacy in various other countries, as for instance, the Reading for Understanding Project in Romania, the Orava Project in Slovakia, and more recently, the Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking Project whose goal is to work with teachers and teacher trainers at the elementary and secondary levels in former Soviet dominated countries – Albania, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Romania, and Russia – which are going through rapid social,

political, and technological changes. As stated in the newspaper article, "The project seeks to help educators reshape classroom instruction with a coherent set of teaching methods that promote critical thinking and independent learning – and also to set up models and methods of staff development that can be used to train teachers long after the project is complete." (Reading Today, 1997, p.1).

These projects are certainly the most significant events happening in the area of critical literacy development, for they have not remained at the level of discussion or just on paper. Most of them have already been implemented, and, apparently, with great enthusiasm of the people involved: "*It was a case of the real and the ideal merging: teachers bridging borders and cultures to help each other help their students to think with more independence and confidence, to be more tolerant of others, and to help make a more democratic and peaceful world*" (Reading Today, 1998, p.1). At the same time, the IRA International Development Division has plans to extend this project to other countries: "Much is happening with the Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking (RWCT) project (. . .) Currently, IRA volunteers are actively involved in nine countries, with more volunteers and countries set to participate." (Reading Today, 1998, p. 31)

Finally, the investment in terms of financial and human resources in these projects, as well as the effort and dedication of the people involved in the development of critical literacy in children to help them become citizens who can think and act critically and independently, should inspire and stimulate Brazilian governmental and educational authorities to join forces to start the huge amount of work in this area that there is to be done in this country.

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