

# Sharing Knowledge & Transforming Realities: Critical Literacy

ALMA FLOR ADA & F. ISABEL CAMPOY  
Interpretation by georgina cecilia pérez

## EFFECTIVE READING: A DIALOGUE BETWEEN READER & TEXT

Effective reading goes beyond finding out what is written on a page. It is indeed a dialogue between reader and text in which the reader contributes as much as the text.

Reading is more than a source of information and entertainment. It is an empowering act. Reading provides the opportunity of understanding self and others.

It can be a source of courage, dignity, kindness, generosity and hope to act as a more capable protagonist of one's own life.

There are four aspects, which we have called phases, to an effective reading act. They do not happen independently, but simultaneously, although here we present them independently to make them more clearly understandable.

## DESCRIPTIVE PHASE

In this initial moment the reader understand the content of the text.

*What? When? Where? Who? Why?*

These are questions asked by the reader and answered by the text.

## PERSONAL INTERPRETIVE PHASE

The reader responds to the text with *feelings* and *emotions* based on the *reader's real life experiences* in circumstances related to/by similarity or opposition to the text. The reader validates (or questions, or expands) her/his experience with information from the text.

*How do I feel about this?*

*Who do I know that has experienced something similar?*

*How has my own experience differed?*

*What would I do...?*

*How would I feel?*

The type of questions to guide the dialogue in this phase:

*Have you ever seen [known] something like this?*

*If this were your family, how would things have been different?*

*Have you felt something like the author describes?*

*In a similar situation, how have you felt?*

## CRITICAL / MULTICULTURAL / ANTIRACISM PHASE

The reader engages in *critical reflection*.

*Is this right (moral, appropriate, healthy, kind, courageous, generous, just, equitable)?*

*Who benefits (suffers) from these conditions?*

*What would be the consequences if all would adopt this idea (behavior)?*

*In which way would diverse people (of different ethnicity, culture, genre, age, sexual orientation, physical ableness, class, education) react to this?*

*Do these concepts allow for human diversity? Do they take it into account?*

The type of questions to guide the dialogue in this phase:

*Who benefits in a situation like this? Who suffers?*

*Has anyone been excluded from this text? Who is left out? Why?*

*What are the author's intentions? Is there a point the author tries to prove?*

## CREATIVE / TRANSFORMATIVE PHASE

The reader is moved to action by the text.

*What do I know now that will empower me?*

*In which ways do I understand my reality better?*

*How can I act to transform my inner self?*

*My social reality?*

The type of questions to guide the dialogue in this phase:

*What can you do in a situation like the one in the text?*

*In which ways would you speak/act differently now?*

*How can you improve your life/conditions/relations?*