

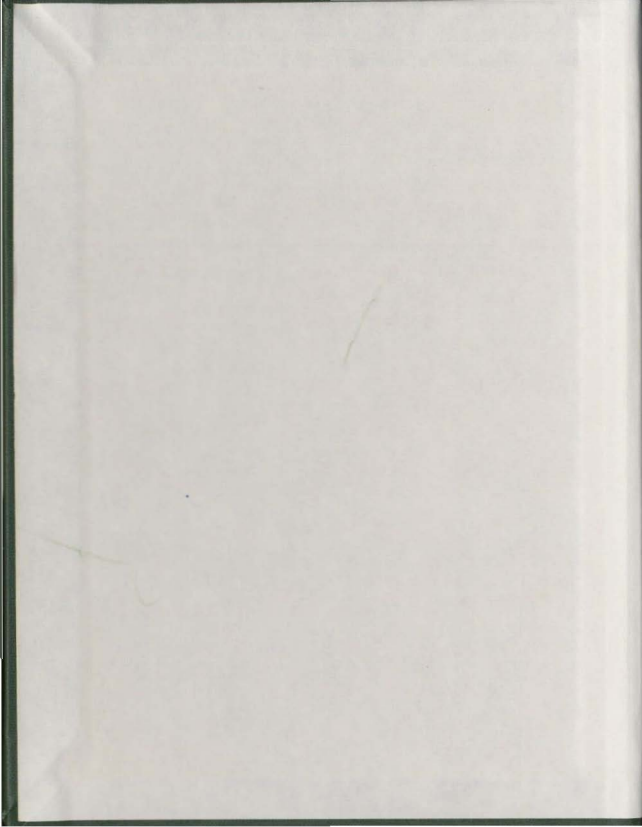
TEACHING CRITICAL READING IN THE  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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TEACHING CRITICAL READING IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by



Rosemary Whelan, B.A. (Ed.), B.A.

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Education

Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
Memorial University of Newfoundland

June 1981

St. John's

Newfoundland

## ABSTRACT

### Teaching Critical Reading in the Elementary School

Rosemary Whelan

This study was concerned with identifying problems that elementary teachers in the Ferryland School Board District experience in teaching critical reading and with preparing a booklet presenting suggestions to help teachers deal with those problems.

The study covered a period of 30 months, during which the problems that teachers often encounter in teaching critical reading were identified through two forms of a questionnaire. One form was sent to the supervisory personnel in the district and the other to the elementary teachers. The supervisory personnel form was designed to elicit from the language arts consultant and the elementary principals those aspects of teaching critical reading in which teachers request help and those in which the supervisory personnel from their observations felt that teachers need help whether or not they request it. The elementary teachers' form was designed to determine whether teachers themselves experience problems in teaching specific aspects of critical reading.

A comprehensive study of the professional literature, together with a review of basal reader guidebooks and workbooks, was then undertaken in the identified problem areas. A synthesis of the information gleaned from all these sources was utilized in preparing a first draft of the booklet.

The first draft of the booklet was circulated to five reading specialists for formative evaluation. Each of these individuals was given time to read and examine the booklet for the purpose of determining its strengths and weaknesses. All criticisms were considered and suggestions for improvement were incorporated in a second draft.

The second draft of the booklet was distributed to one teacher in each of the five elementary grades in the Ferryland School Board District for summative evaluation. Each teacher was asked to examine the booklet and give her opinion on its practicality and usefulness. The teachers in their responses indicated strong positive feelings toward the booklet. They stated that it was worthwhile in helping them to develop a deeper understanding of the critical reading process, and in presenting suggestions for teaching various critical reading skills. The second draft was then accepted as the final draft.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to express sincere gratitude to all who have aided in any way in the successful completion of this study. Sincere thanks are expressed to the Ferryland School Board for granting permission to circulate a questionnaire to their supervisory personnel and their elementary teachers. Thanks are also due to the language arts consultant, the elementary principals, and the elementary teachers who responded to the questionnaires, and to the reading specialists and teachers who co-operated so generously in reacting to their examination of the booklet. Without the co-operation of all of those mentioned this study would not have been possible.

Special thanks are expressed to Dr. Ethel Janes for her guidance and helpful criticisms throughout all phases of the study. The writer is also indebted to Dr. Marc Glassman for his valuable assistance.

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PART I

THE STUDY

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Ability to read critically is a vitally important part of an individual's education. A number of reading authorities including Tinker and McCullough (1968), Karlin (1971), Smith (1975), Stauffer (1975), and Goodman (1976) report, however, that critical reading ability does not appear automatically as a result of general development in reading skills. On the contrary, they contend that even students of excellent general reading ability may read most materials without any critical reaction or evaluation. In this respect, they conclude that if critical reading ability is to be developed, it must be promoted by planned training. Unfortunately, relatively few studies have served to point the way toward more effective programs at the elementary level. The importance of the task and the lack of effective programs dealing with critical reading strongly suggest the need for direction.

#### The Problem

This study is confined to the Perryland School Board District and is concerned with helping elementary teachers in the area foster critical reading ability in children. At the present time, elementary teachers in the district are

convinced that the reading programs in the schools throughout the district provide few definitive suggestions for teaching critical reading. A survey of the basal reader guidebooks (see Appendix A) substantiates the teachers' claims. Teachers' concern in this area of reading is also frequently voiced at reading workshops and is often aired in school-related conversations with teachers. High school teachers complain that the students coming from elementary schools accept at face value everything they read. Elementary teachers, on the other hand, point out that effective teaching of critical reading at the elementary level is hampered by the paucity of practical material available on teaching a child to read critically. They further contend that the schools in the district make limited resource materials available to teachers. Here they point to the scarcity of professional literature in the schools, adding that few of the schools subscribe to any professional journals concerned with reading. Some of the teachers also admit feeling inadequately prepared to teach critical reading. These teachers report having completed only one or two courses in reading during their professional training. And many of these courses were taken 10 to 15 years ago.

It seems reasonable to assume that if teachers are to accept their proper responsibility for teaching critical reading, they must acquire a working knowledge of critical reading, and be given specific guidelines for developing it. This study proposes to deal with the problem in the Ferryland



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School Board District by analyzing the specific aspects of teaching critical reading which cause problems for those teachers, and by preparing a booklet to help meet the teachers' needs.

#### The Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to prepare a booklet of guidelines to help elementary teachers in the Ferryland School Board District develop critical reading ability in children. The booklet is intended to supplement the reading programs by offering teachers background information in the area of critical reading and by presenting suggestions to help them work more effectively toward the development of this skill. With this purpose in mind, the writer describes a broad range of techniques, ideas, and activities.

#### Significance of the Study

Goodman (1967), Stauffer (1969), and Smith (1975), prominent reading authorities, contend that effective readers think through and react to materials they read. Whether they fully accept the ideas they read, partially accept them, or completely reject them is an individual decision. What is important in making this decision is that each reader involve himself beyond passive acceptance and superficial reaction to a reading selection. Otherwise he is not using one of the main tools of a discriminating and perceptive reader--the ability to read critically.

Today, more than ever before, critical reading skills are needed by every reader. Never before has the reader been bombarded by so many words from so many sources attempting to influence him or persuade him to vote for this or that candidate, to buy this or that product, to accept this or that ideology, or to belong to this or that club.

It is common knowledge that people are influenced by what they read. Too often they do not read objectively and consequently they adopt the author's point of view without weighing the pros and cons of the issue. The countless number of people who succumb to advertisements each day attests to this fact. On this point Harris (1962) maintains that "the trusting reader who believes everything he finds in print is a potential victim for any writer with a product or an idea to sell" (p. 246).

Cushenberry (1969) supports Harris's view when he writes that "in a democratic society, it is imperative that future citizens be trained to weigh carefully every statement read or heard" (p. 95). Ten years earlier, Artley (1959) cautioned that "unless critical reading is taught we can expect to make little progress toward the resolution of our national and international problems" (p. 122).

It is true that in recent years interest and research in critical reading have increased. Unfortunately, however, it appears that interest, research, and actual teaching have not kept pace with one another. As King, Ellinger, and Wolf

(1967) note in their preface to Critical Reading:

It is obvious from the number of articles about critical reading in the literature that educators consider it an important goal in reading instruction. The fact that they continue to write about it, however, indicates that this goal has not been fulfilled. (p. v)

Gans (1940) investigated the ability of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade children to determine whether a sentence or paragraph contains information relevant to a given question or topic. She found that the discrimination required for critical evaluation of what is read tends to be poorly developed, even among the more able pupils.

Six years later, De Boer (1946) contended:

If we may judge the schools by their product, we have abundant evidence of their failure to teach critical reading. College students who dare or care to challenge a textbook or to verify a fact in supplementary sources, or who know how to locate and organize material from a variety of courses, are relatively rare. (p. 251)

Evidence indicates that critical reading continues to be neglected. In a survey done by Ellinger and Huck (1965), 40 per cent of the adults interviewed could not identify the political leanings of the daily newspapers they read. Many professional reading texts, however, list critical reading as a comprehension skill, but it is often the last one to be named. This position, it seems, may be indicative of the place that critical reading usually occupies in elementary schools. A recent article by Cushenberry (1978) lends support to this view as he writes:

An examination of the teaching objectives of most reading programs reveals that a considerable amount

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of attention is given to helping pupils understand the literal meaning of words and sentences while only limited emphasis is placed on the area of critical reading. As a result too many pupils reach the upper grades firmly believing that a printed statement in a book must be true. They have not had experiences in determining the validity of a statement involving fact and opinion. (p. 103)

It seems reasonable to conclude from a search of the literature that critical reading is a skill that is seldom taught thoroughly. A study of teaching time and emphasis in United States schools (Austin & Morrison, 1963) indicates that more than half of the first and second grade teachers and about one-third of the third and fourth grade teachers questioned allot little or no instructional time for teaching critical reading. Not until grades five and six did schools estimate that teachers gave attention to critical reading.

Critical reading instruction appears to be left to the secondary level. Further support for this observation is obtained indirectly from Buros' Reading Tests and Reviews which lists specific critical reading tests for college and secondary levels only and lists one test, the Bond, Clymer and Hoyt Test of Developmental Reading which includes a short subtest on evaluating and interpreting at the grades 4-6 level.

McKee (1966) agrees that critical reading is neglected in elementary schools. In his opinion; "most people enrolled in the latter grades of the elementary school are poorly equipped to read critically" (p. 380).

### Explanations for the lack of critical reading

Instruction have been offered by many reading authorities. As early as 1959, Williams, in a study of "Critical Reading Skills Found in Basal Readers," reported that among the obstacles to a clearly defined program in critical reading in the elementary grades have been a lack of agreement among the educators as to what critical reading really is, over-emphasis on literal comprehension, and requiring pupils to read at their frustration level.

Austin and Morrison (1963) note that the following factors may inhibit critical reading: inadequate training at the college level for implementing instruction, lack of teacher education in logical thinking skills, little aid in most basal reader teaching guides, classroom reading instruction which stresses readiness and guided reading, and tests that are concerned primarily with literal comprehension.

Robbins (1966) points out six factors that impede the teaching of critical reading: lack of understanding and consensus as to what critical reading is, lack of emphasis in teacher training programs on ways of developing the ability in children, insufficient time to prepare and teach the skills, omission of controversial discussion topics from the curriculum, failure of the curriculum to keep pace with knowledge, and lack of suitable evaluation instruments. With regard to Robbins' last factor, it is interesting to note that Smith (1973) asserted that:

The greatest deterrent to research in critical reading has been the lack of adequate evaluation instruments for determining the status and growth of students in this important area of reading. Standardized reading tests overemphasize literal comprehension and provide no basis for assessing the ability to read critically. (p. 165)

Another deterrent, as she sees it, is the lack of a consistent definition of critical reading.

Generally, a review of the literature reporting the neglect of critical reading reveals that the most consistently reported causes are: vague and ambiguous concepts of the nature of critical reading, inadequate definition of the specific skills involved, insufficient instructional materials and techniques, and the limited abilities of teachers to instruct pupils in these skills. The available evidence also demonstrates that critical reading skills do not appear automatically as a result of general development in reading skills. There must be planned, systematic instruction to develop critical reading, and teachers must take the initiative by engaging children in critical reading and thinking activities. Stauffer (1975) attests to the significance of the latter statement when he declares:

How children acquire the ability to read critically depends largely on how they are taught and how early in their learning to read career the cognitive processes are taught. The acquisition of basic reading-thinking skills depends almost entirely on the teacher and the processes she uses. . . . It is her attitude regarding reading as a thinking process and her grasp of teaching techniques for developing reading-thinking skills that makes the differences.

(p. 4)

### Definition of Terms

For purposes of this study the following terms are defined:

Elementary teachers. All the teachers teaching in the elementary grades four through eight.

Ferryland School Board District. All the schools within the school system on the Southern Shore of Newfoundland extending from Bay Bulls to St. Shotts.

Literal reading. The process by which the reader reads the printed words on the page, understanding the ideas and information explicitly stated by them. The reader shows understanding of what he is reading by paraphrasing or summarizing the ideas expressed. He can also follow directions, recall and recognize facts and details, classify, follow sequence, and formulate the main ideas.

Interpretive reading. The process by which the reader reads not only the printed words on the page but also reads between them to find out what the author intended to convey. It includes literal reading but is more involved. The reader thinks about what he is reading and supplies many meanings not directly stated in the printed words. He speculates on what has happened between events, anticipates what will happen next, makes comparisons, draws conclusions, identifies characters' reactions and motives, and experiences emotional reactions.

Critical reading. The process by which the reader reads beyond the printed words on the page to find out not only what the author is saying, but why he is saying it. It includes literal and interpretive reading but it goes further than either of these. The reader is actively involved in the process and makes use of his own experiences to think critically about what he is reading. As he reads, he recognizes the author's attitude and bias, determines the author's purpose, judges the author's competency, and analyzes the accuracy of statements and the logic of arguments.

#### Organization of the Study.

This study consists of two parts. Part I identifies problems that teachers experience while teaching specific aspects of critical reading, and Part II presents a booklet of guidelines for dealing with the identified problems.

Part I is organized in three chapters. Chapter I focuses on the problem and the intent and significance of the study. A description of the procedures followed in the study is presented in Chapter II. Chapter III contains a summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

Part II of the study is presented in six sections. These sectional divisions were largely determined by the format of the questionnaire. Thus, except in one instance where two major problem items were combined, each of the



major problems identified in the questionnaire was designated a separate section in the booklet.

Section I focuses on extending teachers' knowledge and understanding of the critical reading process. Teaching reading as a thinking process is the main emphasis in Section II. Section III presents suggestions for developing a critical attitude toward reading. The importance of questions and the questioning technique employed to promote critical reading ability is discussed in Section IV. Section V discusses specific critical reading skills and presents suggestions for developing those skills. In Section VI, the role of evaluation in the teaching of critical reading is examined and suggestions for evaluating children's critical reading ability are presented.

## CHAPTER II

### METHODOLOGY

In this study, problems that elementary teachers in the Ferryland School Board District encounter while teaching critical reading were identified by means of a questionnaire. A search of the literature pertaining to those problem areas was then made and information gleaned from it was utilized in preparing a booklet of guidelines.

#### Questionnaire

Two different forms of a checktype questionnaire based on the structural design of Janes (1970) were devised. One form was sent to supervisory personnel--eight elementary principals and one language arts consultant--in the district, and the other to the 41 elementary teachers. It was felt that using two forms of the questionnaire would strengthen the survey instrument, since each form would serve as a check on the other. This check was needed because some teachers might be unaware of a specific problem in teaching critical reading, or might feel too insecure in their teaching position to commit themselves to voice a problem. The questionnaire for supervisory personnel would help offset this type of weakness. On the other hand, the questionnaire for teachers would provide a larger sample and also

give the writer input from those individuals directly concerned with the problem.

The items for inclusion in the questionnaire were determined from a review of the literature on critical reading, a study of basal reader guidebooks in grades four to eight (see Appendix B), and the writer's own teaching experience. A general description of the questionnaires follows, and the questionnaires are presented in Appendices B and C.

The questionnaires had seven main problem items and each of these had various sub-items. Open spaces were also provided in each section to allow the respondents to add items or comments.

The questionnaire for supervisory personnel was designed to elicit the kinds of help in teaching critical reading that teachers request from principals and the language arts consultant, and the kinds of help teachers need whether or not they request it. Help needed was determined from the principal's and the consultant's identification of problems during reading lessons they observed. The respondents to the questionnaire were asked to check (✓) each of two columns indicating whether many, few, or none of the teachers request help and whether many, few, or none need help in each main problem item and in each sub-item. The vague reference terms of "many" and "few" were qualified for respondents in an introductory note directing them to interpret "many" as more than one-third of the teachers and "few" as fewer than one-third

of the teachers, with the understanding that the answers could only be estimates of the actual numbers.

The questionnaire for teachers contained the same list of main problem items and sub-items as the supervisory personnel questionnaire, but the response format was different. Teachers were asked to check (✓) "Yes" or "No" to indicate whether or not they had a problem.

In mid-May the questionnaires were mailed to the supervisory personnel and elementary teachers. The purpose, design, and format of the questionnaires were explained in an attached letter, and a stamped, addressed envelope was enclosed for returning the questionnaire. Because few had been returned by early June, teachers and supervisory personnel were telephoned and reminded they had promised to complete the questionnaire. By the end of the school year, however, only 31 replies had been received from a possible 50. Conversations with nonrespondents led the writer to believe that the questionnaire had been received at a particularly busy time but that a larger response could be hoped for in the fall. Since it was assumed that, in all probability, questionnaires would be mislaid or lost during the summer months, 18 additional copies were prepared. These were mailed to the appropriate individuals in early October. Seven replies were received from these, totalling 39 responses.

### Preparation of the Booklet

The questionnaire items were carefully tabulated and scrutinized, since the plan was to include in the booklet all questionnaire items meeting the following criteria:

1. Items to which one-third or more of the teachers checked "yes" indicating a specific problem.
2. Items to which one-third or more of the total supervisory personnel checked "many" in the help requested column.
3. Items to which one-third or more of the total supervisory personnel checked "many" in the help needed column.
4. Items to which two-thirds or more of the total supervisory personnel checked "few" in the help needed column.
5. Items to which two-thirds or more of the total supervisory personnel checked "few" in the help requested column.
6. Items to which the language arts consultant checked "many" in the help needed column.
7. Items to which the language arts consultant checked "many" in the help requested column.

#### Analysis of Questionnaire Data: Teacher Questionnaire

Completed questionnaires were examined and categorized as supervisory personnel responses and elementary

teacher responses. Of the 41 elementary teachers to whom copies of the questionnaire were sent, 33, that is 80 per cent, responded. Five of the elementary principals, that is, 63 per cent, replied. The one language arts consultant for the district responded. This information is presented in Table 1.

Table 1  
Questionnaire Respondents

Questionnaires	Supervisory Personnel			Total
	Language Arts Consultant	Elementary Principals	Elementary Teachers	
Number Sent	1	8	41	50
Number Returned	1	5	33	39
Per cent of Returns	100	63	80	78

Each group of teachers' responses and supervisory personnel responses was analyzed separately. The teachers' responses were tabulated to reveal the number of "Yes" and "No" responses for each listed main problem item and each sub-item.

Item one. A majority of teachers indicated that item one, "Lack of general background information on critical reading," was a problem area and that additional information on each of the sub-items was desirable. This information is presented in Table 2.

Table 2  
Teacher Questionnaire Analysis: Item One

Problem	Yes	No
1. Lack of general background information	32	1
Factors favorably influencing critical reading	27	6
Factors inhibiting critical reading	32	1
Characteristics of critical reading	25	8
Techniques for teaching critical reading	28	5

Item two. An analysis of main item two showed that 32 of the 33 respondents checked "Yes," indicating that "How to stimulate children's ability to read and think critically" was a conscious concern. Although all the sub-items recorded a less substantial majority of "Yes" responses than the main item, at least half the responses in all sub-items were "Yes." The lowest number of "Yes" responses was for "How to formulate challenging questions." Table 3 presents the data for item two on the teacher questionnaire.

Table 3

## Teacher Questionnaire Analysis: Item Two

Problem	Yes	No
2. How to stimulate children's ability to read and think critically	32	1
How to formulate challenging questions	16	17
How to encourage children to share reactions on material read	19	14
How to stimulate discussions on material read	17	16
How to initiate activities which give children opportunities to develop critical reading ability	26	7

Item three. Thirty of the 33 respondents checked "Yes," indicating that main item three, "How to help children develop a critical attitude toward reading," was a problem. Similarly, the responses to all sub-items showed that most teachers considered all of these aspects of teaching critical reading a problem. The lowest number of "Yes" responses was 18 for the sub-item "How to help children draw on their background of experiences to evaluate as they read." Because the number of "Yes" responses was more than half the total, it too pointed to an area where teachers required help. Responses to item three are presented in Table 4.



Table 4  
Teacher Questionnaire Analysis: Item Three

Problem	Yes	No
3. How to help children develop a critical attitude toward reading	30	3
How to help children question the value and accuracy of the material read	28	5
How to help children withhold judgment until they have finished reading	21	12
How to help children draw on their background of experiences to evaluate as they read	18	15
How to make children aware that their attitudes and biases influence critical reading	26	7

Item four. "How to foster a critical reading environment" was checked by 31 teachers, indicating that this aspect of teaching critical reading was a problem. For sub-items two and four there were similarly a consistently high number of "Yes" responses. Sub-items one and three, although not receiving such a high number of "Yes" responses as the other two sub-items, were nevertheless clearly delineated as problem aspects with more than half the responses indicating that there was a problem. Table 5 presents the responses.

Table 5  
Teacher Questionnaire Analysis: Item Four

Problem	Yes	No
4. How to foster a critical reading environment	31	2
How to provide a supportive atmosphere for critical reading	21	12
How to develop the habit of thinking about the material as it is read and after it is read	28	5
How to take advantage of other curriculum areas to foster critical reading ability	23	10
How to make use of a variety of sources to develop critical reading	27	6

Item five. The trend toward a high number of recorded "Yes" responses continued with main item five, "How to formulate questions to encourage critical reading." The lowest number of "Yes" responses was for sub-item one, "How to formulate questions that require students to make judgments," but as in other low response areas this was still more than half the total. These responses are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

## Teacher Questionnaire Analysis: Item Five

Problem	Yes	No
5. How to formulate questions to encourage critical reading and thinking	27	6
How to formulate questions that require students to make judgments	17	16
How to formulate questions that require students to analyze the accuracy of statements	20	13
How to formulate questions that require students to analyze the logic of arguments	22	11
How to formulate questions that require students to apply what they have read	23	10
How to formulate questions that require students to evaluate what they have read	22	11

Item six. Of the 33 responses tabulated for main item six, "How to help children develop critical reading skills," 31 indicated that this was a major concern. The lowest number of "Yes" responses was 17 for sub-item one, "How to help children distinguish fact from opinion." Thus half of the teachers did not regard this as a problem area. However, since 16 teachers reported that it was a problem aspect of teaching critical reading, it must be assumed that this particular sub-item skill is not adequately

developed through the programs they are using. The responses are presented in Table 7.

Table 7  
Teacher Questionnaire Analysis: Item Six

Problem	Yes	No
6. How to help children develop critical reading skills	31	2
How to help children distinguish fact from opinion	17	16
How to help children recognize the author's attitude	21	12
How to help children judge the competency of the author	27	6
How to help children determine the author's purpose	22	11
How to help children judge the validity and reliability of information	26	7
How to help children understand implied meanings:	24	9
Figures of speech	21	12
Connotations of words	24	9
How to help children detect propaganda techniques	27	6
How to help children detect advertising techniques	24	9

Item seven. "How to evaluate children's critical reading" was reported as a problem aspect of teaching critical reading by 25 of the 33 respondents. Constructing written tests was the main concern in this area. Table 8 presents the responses.

Table 8

## Teacher Questionnaire Analysis: Item Seven

Problem	Yes	No
7. How to evaluate children's critical reading	25	8
<u>Informal</u>		
Observing during class discussions the kinds of behavior that indicate critical reading	13	20
Observing during class discussions the kinds of behavior that indicate lack of critical reading ability	13	20
<u>Formal</u>		
Constructing written tests to evaluate skills taught	22	11

Analysis of Questionnaire Data:  
Supervisory Personnel Questionnaire

An analysis of supervisory personnel responses was undertaken to obtain additional information on problem aspects of teaching critical reading. For this analysis, supervisory personnel responses were tabulated to show the number of responses indicating "many," "few," and "none" in the "help needed" and the "help requested" columns of the questionnaire. An analysis of these responses indicated that all the main items and sub-items met the criteria set for including items for discussion in the booklet. Strangely enough, however, although teachers themselves reported all items as problem aspects of teaching critical reading, the supervisory personnel reported that few

teachers asked for help. The highest reported number requesting help was for main item one, "Lack of general background information." Interestingly, as well, four of the six supervisory respondents indicated that teachers needed help in "Formulating challenging questions" and five of the six indicated that teachers needed help in "Helping children share reactions." These were two areas where teachers' "Yes" responses were lowest. Perhaps teachers were not as perceptive of their problems in these two aspects of teaching critical reading as in other areas. Supervisory personnel responses are presented in Appendix G.

The supervisory personnel responses were further categorized and tabulated as principals' responses and language arts consultant's responses because the language arts consultant worked closely with all teachers in the district observing their teaching and holding individual conferences with them. It was therefore thought that her estimation of "help needed" and "help requested" should be taken into careful consideration when teachers' responses or other supervisory personnel responses did not meet the criteria set for including items in the booklet.

Scrutinization of the language arts consultant's responses showed that "many" had been checked for all items in the "help needed" column. This finding supported the teachers' and elementary principals' identification of problem aspects in teaching critical reading. Surprisingly, however, few of the teachers had requested help from the

consultant. The language arts consultant's responses are given in Appendix G.

Few of the respondents listed additional items that they considered needed attention. Under the first main problem aspect, "Lack of general background information," one item was added:

Teacher's approach to the validity of critical reading.

In the second main problem aspect, "How to stimulate children's ability to read and think critically," two respondents added one item each. These were:

Helping children perceive material read as part of their own personal experience.

Helping children understand the importance of critical reading.

Only one item was added to the list under the third problem aspect, "How to help children develop a critical attitude toward reading." This item was:

How to make students read objectively.

In the fourth problem, "How to foster a critical reading environment," one respondent suggested adding:

How to project ahead and anticipate a probable outcome.

Three items were added in the fifth section, "How to formulate questions to encourage critical thinking and reading." These were:

How to formulate questions to get the main idea.

How to formulate questions of cause/effect relationships.

How to formulate questions that require students to extract only the pertinent facts.

One item was added under "How to help children develop critical reading skills." This was:

How to help students understand a literal meaning and then an implied one.

In the seventh section, "How to evaluate children's critical reading skills," one respondent suggested adding:

How to see if pupils' skills have grown through discussion.

Although only one or two respondents suggested adding these additional items, all of them were carefully read and examined. This examination revealed, however, that all of these suggestions were already included in the questionnaire and therefore would be discussed in the booklet. There was no need to include them as additional items.

A synthesis of the information gleaned from a search of the literature on critical reading together with information gathered from basal reader guidebooks, workbooks (see Appendix A), and the writer's own teaching experience was then utilized in preparing a draft of the booklet. To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the booklet, a formative evaluation was undertaken.

#### Formative Evaluation

The formative evaluation consisted of having five reading specialists examine the booklet in its developmental stage. These five individuals were first sent a letter requesting their help in evaluating the booklet. A



follow-up letter accompanying the first draft of the booklet asked each individual to read it, assessing in what respects it was effective and in what respects it needed to be changed or clarified. Individuals were encouraged to write on the draft any changes they considered necessary and to add any suggestions or comments for improving it. In addition, evaluation forms were placed at the end of each section of the booklet for the examiners to check. These evaluation forms, based on the structural design developed by Janes (1970), asked the examiners to evaluate the writer's success in explaining each problem in critical reading, and to evaluate the usefulness of each suggested activity. A three-point scale was used for each question. The scale ranged from very successful to unsuccessful in evaluating the writer's explanation of each problem. In evaluating the utility of each activity the scale ranged from very useful to impractical. The purpose of these forms was to provide the evaluator with structural criteria for determining in what respects the booklet was effective and in what respects it needed to be changed. The evaluation forms are presented in Appendix H.

#### Analysis of Formative Evaluation Data

To facilitate discussion of the formative evaluation data, individuals' checked responses to the evaluation form items and individuals' comments on the booklet are clustered where possible. The numerical data from the evaluation

forms have been tabulated and are presented in Appendix I.

The comments and responses of four evaluators indicated that they considered all the activities very useful and that the writer had been very successful in explaining all sections of the booklet. One commented:

I commend you on the thoroughness of your research. You have explored a wide range of possibilities. I especially like the way you are providing opportunities for integrating other aspects of the language arts. This should be of great help to teachers.

Another said, "A truly fine piece of research and scholarship." One of the five respondents felt that the writer had been very successful in explaining all sections of the booklet except the last one. In her comments she noted that although the writer was very successful in explaining each of the areas specifically discussed in this last section on "Evaluating critical reading ability," she rated the two general areas "Informal evaluation" and "Formal evaluation" somewhat successful because in her estimation they were inadequately developed. Informal evaluation should have included a discussion of children's self-evaluation and miscue analysis. Formal evaluation should have included a section on the cloze procedure. This same respondent did not check any questions on the evaluation form evaluating the usefulness of the activities because she had not actually tried them.

Other responses reflecting the need for modification of the booklet pointed out the following minor changes

to be made in the second draft:

1. The phrase "at the children's reading level" was added to sentence two under "Modification of Close Procedure," page 135, to clarify for teachers the difficulty of the reading passages to be used with children.

2. A sub-section entitled "Helping children ask questions" was added to the section "Developing the Habit of Thinking While Reading." One specialist felt teachers would appreciate guidelines in this area.

3. Geography was added under classroom approaches for helping children directly apply critical reading skills to other areas of the curriculum. It was felt this section should encompass the total social studies areas rather than just history as had previously been dealt with in the booklet.

4. The address of one source providing further information on a variety of sources from which free and inexpensive material could be obtained was added to page 150. This was in response to a request for the address of two sources of free and inexpensive material. Since the one source given in the booklet lists multiple sources of free and inexpensive material, it was not deemed necessary to include a second source.

5. School and classroom libraries, inadvertently omitted from "Libraries" on page 150, was added.

6. Southern was inserted to precede Shore on pages 153 and 154. This was done to clearly identify the area to anyone outside the district reading the booklet.

7. Further information for helping children examine the motives, drives, and emotions of characters was added to page 163. This additional information pointed out three specific things children should be taught to look at: (1) what the character says; (2) what the character does; and (3) what other people say about the character.

8. Two evaluation exercises on pages 176 and 177 were further qualified because of a request for a clear definition of them. To one of these--comparing groups of stories--it was suggested that the comparison be for interest, plot, suspense, and character development. To the other--deciding on which of several stories would make the best dramatization for oral presentation--it was suggested that the deciding factors include a consideration of length, interest, dramatic quality, number of characters, scenery, props, and costumes needed.

9. The numbers 4-6 were inserted in brackets after lower elementary grades and 7-8 after later elementary grades to clarify the somewhat ambiguous terms of lower and later elementary grades.

10. A comparison of different editions of the same encyclopedia was added to the paragraph "Examining copyright dates" to emphasize how knowledge changes.

11. Related activities for detecting propaganda and advertising techniques were expanded.

#### Revising of Booklet

After careful analysis of the formative evaluation responses and individual comments, preparation for the revised version of the booklet was begun. In this stage, the writer reworked the original draft based on the written comments and the responses to the evaluation questions. All of the above suggestions for improvement, as well as the suggestions for adding "Children's Self-Evaluation," "Miscue Analysis," and "The Cloze Procedure" to the evaluation section, were incorporated by the writer. The revised draft was then distributed to one teacher in each of the five elementary grades in the Ferryland School Board District for summative evaluation. These individuals had previously been approached and had indicated their interest in examining the booklet.

#### Summative Evaluation

In the summative evaluation each of the five teachers was requested to examine the booklet and to complete an evaluation form (see Appendix J).

The summative evaluation form was designed to elicit teachers' opinions on the practicality and utility of the booklet as a guide in making the teaching of critical reading more effective. For this purpose the form made use of a five-point scale: strongly agree, agree, undecided,

disagree, and strongly disagree. Each teacher was asked to choose the response which best conveyed her opinion of the value of the booklet to her in her teaching. Open spaces were also left for teachers to make additional comments and suggestions. The purpose of this evaluation was to provide feedback for either accepting the booklet as it was or for revising it again.

#### Analysis of Data from Summative Evaluation

Table 9 shows the responses of the teachers to each of the five categories for each item on the summative evaluation form. The responses are clearly encouraging and would seem to indicate a positive attitude toward the booklet's practicality and utility. Teachers' responses generally indicated that the booklet was worthwhile and that study and use of it could enhance a teacher's knowledge about teaching critical reading. Certainly, all the teachers agreed that they would use it with future classes and that every effort should be made to distribute it to all elementary teachers in the district.

Responses to a request for additional comments at the end of the form provided further evidence that the booklet was of benefit to elementary teachers. One teacher remarked, "I think this is a very worthwhile project, and it should be a valuable aid to all teachers." Another said that it was an "excellent resource book, which should make a real contribution to teachers in their teaching of

Table 9

## Responses to Summative Evaluation Form

Items	Strongly				
	Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Disagree
1. The objectives of the booklet are clearly stated	5				
2. The booklet achieved the stated objectives	5				
3. The ideas and activities presented are relevant to your work	5				
4. There is sufficient guiding information to give a comprehensive view of what is involved in teaching critical reading	5				
5. The amount of material presented is too great					5
6. The booklet contributed to your understanding of what is involved in teaching critical reading	5				
7. The booklet is well organized--a definite plan is evident	5				
8. The booklet provided as much guidance as you would have liked to receive	5				
9. During the next school year, a conscious effort will be made to utilize the ideas presented in the booklet	5				
10. You would recommend that a similar booklet be initiated in other school districts	5				
11. The explanations of suggested practices and procedures for meeting problems in teaching critical reading are very clear	5				

critical reading." A third added, "I find your booklet explicit and practical on principles and practices of teaching critical reading. I think that you should consider making it available to all schools in a published or unpublished form." Since all five teachers found the booklet extremely useful and did not see the need for making any changes in it, this second draft was accepted as the final draft.



## CHAPTER III

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains a summary of the study, major conclusions drawn from it, and recommendations concerning school boards, teachers, and research and development.

#### Summary

This study was concerned with identifying problems that elementary teachers in the Ferryland School Board District experience in teaching critical reading, and with preparing a booklet presenting suggestions to help teachers deal with those problems. Teachers' problems were identified through two forms of a questionnaire, one sent to the supervisory personnel in the district and the other to elementary teachers. After analyzing the data from the completed questionnaires, a comprehensive study of the professional literature together with a review of basal reader guidebooks and workbooks was undertaken in the identified problem areas. A careful synthesis of information gleaned from all these sources was then utilized in preparing a draft of the booklet. This draft was examined by five reading specialists who assessed its strengths and weaknesses. When the revisions evolving out of this phase of the evaluation were completed, the booklet was sent for further

assessment to one teacher in each of the five elementary grades in the district. Since the responses reported from this evaluation were highly positive, this second draft of the booklet was accepted as the final draft.

#### Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn from a review of the literature used in preparing the booklet.

1. One of the most challenging problems facing today's schools is how to develop critical readers. Evidence from research seems to indicate that most children do not become critical readers by themselves and schools are not giving them the help they need. Most children, it seems, are poorly equipped to read critically. Many are ready to swallow anything they read (De Boer, 1946; Ellinger & Huck, 1965; and Cushenberry, 1978).

2. Part of the reason for the neglect of critical reading is the lack of an adequate evaluation instrument. Literal comprehension skills rather than critical reading skills are emphasized in most standardized reading tests. Critical reading skills, however, cannot be assumed on the basis of literal or general comprehension skills (Robbins, 1966; Smith, 1973).

3. Children can improve in critical reading ability, but instruction must be initiated at the beginning stages of reading and continue through elementary, high school, and college. This instruction must be systematically planned in a curriculum design which encourages problem

solving, inductive thinking, and free verbal expression among children in materials within their experiential backgrounds and reading levels (Maw, 1964; Wolf, Huck & King, 1967; Stauffer, 1975).

4. The importance of questions in developing critical reading ability demands attention in teacher education programs. According to the professional literature, questions often determine the kinds of comprehension and critical reading skills children achieve. Unfortunately, research studies report that many teachers continue to ask literal type questions to which children quickly become sensitive; they know what teachers want and generally do a good job of supplying it (Taba, 1964; Guszak, 1967; Stauffer, 1969).

5. Attitudes and beliefs hinder ability to do critical reading. Teachers, therefore, need to guide children in understanding the role their beliefs and biases play in the critical interpretation of the material they read (Crossen, 1948; McKillop, 1952; Piekarz, 1954; Groff, 1962).

6. Children must compare and analyze the content of similar topics in different reading selections if they are going to have a good foundation in critical reading. This necessitates providing a variety of materials. The variety should be great enough to embrace a wide range of interests and ability levels and, if possible, to include a wide range of viewpoints (Anderson, 1960; Stauffer, 1969).

7. Guidance in critical reading should not be limited to a "reading period." Every day there are many excellent opportunities to help children grow in this ability. The social studies and science programs abound with opportunities for the development of critical reading, and the potential value of the newspaper and other mass media should not be overlooked (Artley, 1959; Heilman, 1967; Cheyney, 1971).

8. Regardless of techniques, methods, or materials the teacher herself and the way she runs her classroom are of vital importance in developing critical reading ability. The classroom atmosphere must reflect profound respect for individuals as unique human beings. Critical evaluation of materials cannot be conducted in threatening situations in which the teacher does not allow for differences of opinion and belief. Children must be free to express their ideas openly (Durr, 1967; Stauffer, 1975).

#### Recommendations

On the basis of the above conclusions, the following recommendations concerning school boards, teachers, and future research and development are made.

##### School Boards

1. School boards should make a greater effort to insure that schools include the development of critical reading as one of their objectives. The teaching of this important skill must be carefully planned and not left to

chance. Inservice workshops would be useful for those teachers unsure of how to proceed with instruction in this area of reading.

2. School boards should insist that critical reading skills be a vital part of the reading programs they adopt for teaching reading. The reading programs they invest in should include critical reading in the beginning stages of reading and continue with systematic development of these skills through elementary and high school.

3. School boards should exert greater effort in supplementing single textbooks with a large variety of reference materials, magazines, newspapers, and pamphlets.

#### Teachers

1. Individual teachers may need to think about extending and refining their critical reading and thinking skills.

2. Teachers' critical thinking and reading habits should provide models for children.

3. Teachers should discuss with children the many factors affecting critical reading.

4. Critical reading skills should be taught in all areas of the curriculum.

5. Teachers should provide numerous opportunities for children to express ideas openly and freely.

6. The questioning techniques as well as the questions a teacher asks should be a focal aspect in a teacher's self-evaluation.

Research and Development

1. Educationally stimulating materials to promote critical reading should be developed at all grade levels.
2. Methods for measuring achievement in critical reading skills should be developed. Reading tests should include critical reading and thinking:
3. Studies should be undertaken to assess the extent to which teacher education institutions are preparing prospective teachers to teach critical reading skills.

## APPENDIX A

Basal Reader Series Surveyed

Ginn Series

Ginn and Company Publishers  
 3771 Victoria Park Avenue  
 Scarborough, Ontario  
 MLW 2P6

## Guidebooks and workbooks; accompanying:

Starting Points in Reading A Books 1 (c. 1972) and  
 2 (c. 1973)

Starting Points in Reading B Books 1 (c. 1973) and  
 2 (c. 1974)

Starting Points in Reading C Books 1 (c. 1975) and  
 2 (c. 1975)

## Guidebooks accompanying:

Introduction to Literature (c. 1967)

The Study of Literature (c. 1970)

Nelson Series

Thomas Nelson and Sons Canada Limited  
 81 Curlew Drive  
 Don Mills, Ontario

## Guidebooks, activity books and studybooks accompanying:

Rowboats and Roller Skates (c. 1975)

Driftwood and Dandelions (c. 1970)

Hockey Cards and Hopscotch (c. 1971)

Northern Lights and Fireflies (c. 1971)

Kites and Cartwheels (c. 1972)

Sleeping Bags and Flying Machines (c. 1973)

Toboggans and Turtlenecks (c. 1973)



Voyager Series

Copp-Clarke Publishing Co. Limited  
517 Wellington Street, West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5V 1G1

Guidebooks, resource books, and workbooks accompanying:

Voyager 1 (c. 1969)

Voyager 2 (c. 1971)

Voyager 3 (c. 1973)

APPENDIX B  
TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

## Questionnaire

### Teachers' Problems in the Teaching of Critical Reading

In this questionnaire, critical reading is interpreted as the process by which the reader reads beyond the printed words on the page to find out not only what the author has said but why he has said it. The reader is actively involved in the process and makes use of his own experiences to think critically about what he is reading. As he reads, he recognizes the author's attitude and bias, determines the author's purpose, distinguishes fact from opinion, judges the author's competency, and analyzes the accuracy of statements and the logic of arguments.

Many teachers experience problems in fostering development of this important ability among their students. This questionnaire is designed to gather information regarding the various sources of those problems.

(a) In each section, check ( / ) Yes or No to indicate whether you regard the item as a problem in teaching critical reading.

(b) In the space provided at the end of each section, add any additional items that cause or (could cause) problems in teaching critical reading.

Problem	Yes	No
<p>1. Lack of general background information on critical reading</p> <p>Factors favorably influencing critical reading</p> <p>Factors inhibiting critical reading</p> <p>Characteristics of critical reading</p> <p>Techniques for teaching critical reading</p> <p>Other: (Describe)</p>		
<p>2. How to stimulate children's ability to read and think critically</p> <p>How to formulate challenging questions</p> <p>How to encourage children to share reactions on material read</p> <p>How to stimulate discussions on material read</p> <p>How to initiate activities which give pupils opportunities to develop critical reading skills</p> <p>Other: (Describe)</p>		
<p>3. How to help children develop a critical attitude toward reading</p> <p>How to help children question the value and accuracy of the material read</p> <p>How to help children withhold judgment until they have finished reading</p>		

Problem	Yes	No
<p>3. (Continued)</p> <p>How to help children draw on their background of experiences to evaluate as they read</p> <p>How to make children aware that their attitudes and biases influence critical reading</p> <p>Other: (Describe)</p>		
<p>4. How to foster a critical reading environment</p> <p>How to provide a supportive atmosphere for critical reading</p> <p>How to develop the habit of thinking about the material as it is read and after it is read</p> <p>How to take advantage of other curriculum areas to foster critical reading ability</p> <p>How to make use of a variety of sources to develop critical reading</p> <p>Other: (Describe)</p>		
<p>5. How to formulate questions to encourage critical thinking and reading</p> <p>How to formulate questions that require students to make judgments</p> <p>How to formulate questions that require students to analyze the accuracy of statements</p>		

Problem	Yes	No
<p>5. (Continued)</p> <p>How to formulate questions that require students to analyze the logic of arguments</p> <p>How to formulate questions that require students to apply what they have read</p> <p>How to formulate questions that require students to evaluate what they have read</p> <p>Other: (Describe)</p>		
<p>6. How to help children develop critical reading skills</p> <p>How to help children distinguish fact from opinion</p> <p>How to help children recognize the author's attitude</p> <p>How to help children judge the competency of the author</p> <p>How to help children determine the author's purpose</p> <p>How to help children judge the validity and reliability of information</p> <p>How to help children understand implied meanings:</p> <p>    Figures of speech</p> <p>    Connotations of words</p> <p>How to help children detect propaganda techniques</p> <p>How to help children detect advertising techniques</p> <p>Other: (Describe)</p>		

Problem	Yes	No
<p data-bbox="221 260 660 300">7. How to evaluate children's critical reading.</p> <p data-bbox="291 319 381 339"><u>Informal</u></p> <p data-bbox="311 356 705 413">Observing during class discussions the kinds of behavior that indicate critical reading</p> <p data-bbox="311 431 705 488">Observing during class discussions the kinds of behavior that indicate lack of critical reading ability</p> <p data-bbox="291 507 360 527"><u>Formal</u></p> <p data-bbox="311 544 640 580">Constructing written tests to evaluate skills taught</p> <p data-bbox="291 600 495 619">Other: (Describe)</p>		

APPENDIX C  
SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL QUESTIONNAIRE



## Questionnaire

### Teachers' Problems in the Teaching of Critical Reading

In this questionnaire, critical reading is interpreted as the process by which the reader reads beyond the printed words on the page to find out not only what the author has said but why he has said it. The reader is actively involved in the process and makes use of his own experiences to think critically about what he is reading. As he reads, he recognizes the author's attitude and bias, determines the author's purpose, distinguishes fact from opinion, judges the author's competency, and analyzes the accuracy of statements and the logic of arguments.

Many teachers experience problems in fostering development of this important ability among their students. This questionnaire is designed to gather information regarding the various sources of those problems as they are revealed through teachers' questions to people in supervisory positions. As you carry out supervisory duties, you may also, from time to time, consider from your observations that a teacher needs help with certain aspects of critical reading whether or not he/she has requested it. Spaces are provided for you to record (a) the kinds of questions you are asked and (b) the areas in which you feel help is needed.

In responding to the items, you should interpret many as more than one-third and few as fewer than one-third of your teachers. It is understood that your answers can only be estimates of the actual numbers.

(a) In column A, check (✓) to indicate whether many, few, or none of the teachers whom you work with ask questions about the item.

(b) In column B, check (✓) to indicate whether, from your observations, you consider that many, few, or none of your teachers need help with the item.

(c) In the space provided at the end of each section, add any additional items that, in your experience, cause problems for teachers in teaching critical reading.

Problem	A			B		
	Help Requested By			Help Needed By		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
<p>1. Lack of general background information on critical reading</p> <p>Factors favorably influencing critical reading</p> <p>Factors inhibiting critical reading</p> <p>Characteristics of critical reading</p> <p>Techniques for teaching critical reading</p> <p>Other: (Describe and check spaces)</p>						
<p>2. How to stimulate children's ability to read and think critically</p> <p>How to formulate challenging questions</p> <p>How to encourage children to share reactions on material read</p>						

	A			B		
	Help Requested By			Help Needed By		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
2. (Continued)						
How to stimulate discussions on material read						
How to initiate activities which give pupils opportunities to develop critical reading skills						
Other: (Describe and check spaces)						
3. How to help children develop a critical attitude toward reading						
How to help children question the value and accuracy of the material read						
How to help children withhold judgment until they have finished reading						
How to help children draw on their background of experiences to evaluate as they read						

	A			B		
	Help Requested By			Help Needed By		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
3. (Continued)						
How to make children aware that their attitudes and biases influence critical reading						
Other: (Describe and check spaces)						
4. How to foster a critical reading environment						
How to provide a supportive atmosphere for critical reading						
How to develop the habit of thinking about the material as it is read and after it is read						
How to take advantage of other curriculum areas to foster critical reading ability						
How to make use of a variety of sources to develop critical reading						

Problem	A			B		
	Help Requested By			Help Needed By		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
4. (Continued)						
Other: (Describe and check spaces)						
5. How to formulate questions to encourage critical thinking and reading						
How to formulate questions that require students to make judgments						
How to formulate questions that require students to analyze the accuracy of statements						
How to formulate questions that require students to analyze the logic of arguments						
How to formulate questions that require students to apply what they have read						
How to formulate questions that require students to evaluate what they have read						

	A			B		
	Help Requested By			Help Needed By		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
5. (Continued)						
Other: (Describe and check spaces)						
6. How to help children develop critical reading skills						
How to help children distinguish fact from opinion						
How to help children recognize the author's attitude						
How to help children judge the competency of the author						
How to help children determine the author's purpose						
How to help children judge validity and reliability of information						
How to help children understand implied meanings:						
Figures of speech						
Connotations of words						

Problem	A			B		
	Help Requested By			Help Needed By		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
6. (Continued)						
How to help children detect propaganda techniques						
How to help children detect advertising techniques						
Other: (Describe and check spaces)						
7. How to evaluate children's critical reading						
<u>Informal</u>						
Observing during class discussions the kinds of behavior that indicate critical reading						
Observing during class discussions the kinds of behavior that indicate lack of critical reading ability						
<u>Formal</u>						
Constructing written tests to evaluate skills taught						
Other: (Describe and check spaces)						



APPENDIX D  
LETTERS TO SCHOOL BOARD AND  
SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL

Cape Broyle  
May 2, 1979

Mr. Frank Galgay,  
Superintendent,  
Ferryland R.C. School Board.

Dear Mr. Galgay:

As part of the requirements for a Master of Education degree at Memorial University, I have chosen, under the supervision of Dr. Ethel Janes, to prepare a booklet of guidelines for teaching identified problem aspects of critical reading in the elementary school. This study, I think, should be helpful in making teachers aware of the importance of critical reading and in presenting practical suggestions to foster development of this skill in children. To facilitate completion of the study I need your permission to circulate among the elementary teachers, principals, and language arts consultant a questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed to elicit information concerning the problems teachers may experience in teaching critical reading.

I should greatly appreciate your co-operation in this study, and trust you will let me know your decision as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Rosemary Whelan

Cape Broyle  
Southern Shore  
May 22, 1979

Dear

As part of the requirements for the Master of Education program in Curriculum and Instruction, I have chosen, under the supervision of Dr. Ethel Janes of Memorial University, to prepare a booklet of guidelines for teaching critical reading in the elementary grades. This study, I feel, should be helpful to elementary teachers by making them aware of the importance of critical reading and by presenting them with practical suggestions on how to foster critical reading ability in elementary children.

Since I plan to base the booklet on problems that teachers have, I need information regarding those aspects of critical reading in which teachers request help from principals and those in which principals consider that teachers need help whether they request it or not. I should therefore be grateful if, from your experience in working with teachers, you could complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me at your earliest convenience.

It is unlikely that any one principal could respond to all the items in each section of the questionnaire, since all the practices and techniques used by a teacher may not be evident during supervisory visits. Consequently, it is understandable that you may not check spaces in column B for all the items in each section.

I should greatly appreciate your co-operation in this project and trust that you will find it possible to return the questionnaire by June twelfth. An envelope is enclosed for this purpose.

Yours sincerely,

Rosemary Whelan.

APPENDIX E  
LETTERS TO TEACHERS

Cape Broyle  
Newfoundland  
September 30, 1979

Dear

As part of the requirements for the Master of Education program in Curriculum and Instruction, I have chosen, under the supervision of Dr. Ethel Janes of Memorial University, to prepare a booklet of guidelines for teaching critical reading in the elementary school. This study, I feel, should be helpful to elementary teachers by presenting guidelines and practical suggestions for fostering development of critical reading ability in elementary children.

Since I plan to base the booklet on problems that teachers encounter in teaching critical reading, I need information regarding those aspects of critical reading in which teachers would like help. I should therefore be grateful if, from your experience, you could complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me at your earliest convenience.

I should greatly appreciate your co-operation in this project, and trust that you will find it possible to complete and return the questionnaire. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Rosemary Whelan.

Cape Broyle  
March 31, 1981

Dear

As you know, I have been working under the supervision of Dr. Ethel Janes of Memorial University on a booklet of guidelines for teaching critical reading in the elementary school. Right now I am in the process of preparing a second draft of the booklet. I am hoping to have this second draft completed in the near future, and I would like to have it examined by elementary teachers. If you could find time to read and examine the booklet, for the purpose of assessing its over-all worth--that is, its practicality and usefulness to elementary teachers--I would greatly appreciate hearing from you.

Thank you for your kind attention and I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Rosemary Whelan.

Cape Broyle  
April 28, 1981

Dear

Pertinent to my letter of March 31st I am forwarding to you the second draft of a booklet on Critical Reading. Could you take time to read and examine it for the purpose of assessing its practicality and usefulness? For your convenience in assessing the over-all worth of the booklet, you will find a questionnaire located at the end of the booklet. It would be greatly appreciated if you could respond to the statements and questions in the questionnaire. Any additional comments or suggestions you wish to make anywhere in the booklet will also be kindly accepted and appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Rosemary Whelan.

APPENDIX F  
LETTERS TO READING SPECIALISTS



Cape Broyle  
Newfoundland  
November 11, 1980

Dear

As part of the requirements for the Master of Education program in Curriculum and Instruction, I have chosen, under the supervision of Dr. Ethel Janes of Memorial University, to prepare a booklet of guidelines for teaching critical reading in the elementary school. The study, I feel, should be helpful to elementary teachers by offering guidelines and practical suggestions for fostering development of critical reading ability in elementary children.

I am hoping to have the booklet completed sometime within the year and would like to have it evaluated by reading specialists and teachers. If you could find time to read and examine a first draft of the booklet, for the purpose of assessing in what respects it is effective and in what respects it needs improvement, I would greatly appreciate hearing from you.

Thank you for your kind attention and I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Rosemary Whelan.

Cape Broyle  
Newfoundland  
December 30, 1980

Dear

Pertinent to my letter of November 11th I am forwarding to you the first draft of a booklet on Critical Reading. Could you take time to read and examine it for the purpose of assessing in what respects it is effective and in what respects it needs improvement? For your convenience in assessing strengths and weaknesses of the booklet, you will find a questionnaire located at the end of each section. It would be greatly appreciated if you could respond to the statements and questions in the questionnaire. Any additional comments or suggestions you wish to make anywhere in the booklet will also be kindly accepted and appreciated.

Thank you for your valuable assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Rosemary Whelan.

APPENDIX G  
RESPONSES TO THE SUPERVISORY  
PERSONNEL QUESTIONNAIRE

## Supervisory Personnel Responses

Item	Help Requested			Help Needed		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
1. Lack of general background information	0	5	1	2	4	0
Factors favorably influencing critical reading	2	2	2	3	3	0
Factors inhibiting critical reading	1	2	3	3	3	0
Characteristics of critical reading	1	2	3	3	3	0
Techniques for teaching critical reading	1	4	1	2	4	0
2. How to stimulate children's ability to read and think critically	2	3	1	3	3	0
How to formulate challenging questions	1	2	3	2	4	0
How to encourage children to share reactions on material read	0	3	3	1	5	0
How to stimulate discussions on material read	0	4	2	2	4	0
How to initiate activities which give pupils opportunities to develop critical reading skills	1	4	1	3	3	0

Item	Help Requested			Help Needed		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
3. How to help children develop a critical attitude toward reading	0	3	3	2	3	1
How to help children question the value and accuracy of material read	0	3	3	2	3	1
How to help children withhold judgment until they have finished reading	0	4	2	2	4	0
How to help children draw on their background of experiences to evaluate as they read	1	3	2	2	4	0
How to make children aware that their attitudes and biases influence critical reading	0	3	3	2	4	0
4. How to foster a critical reading environment	1	3	2	4	2	0
How to provide a supportive atmosphere for critical reading	1	2	3	3	3	0
How to develop the habit of thinking about the material as it is read and after it is read	2	2	2	4	2	0

Item	Help Requested			Help Needed		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
4. (Continued)						
How to take advantage of other curriculum areas to foster critical reading ability	2	1	3	4	2	0
How to make use of a variety of sources to develop critical reading	2	2	2	4	2	0
5. How to formulate questions to encourage critical thinking and reading	2	2	2	5	1	0
How to formulate questions that require students to make judgments	1	2	3	4	2	0
How to formulate questions that require students to analyze the accuracy of statements	0	3	3	3	3	0
How to formulate questions that require students to analyze the logic of arguments	0	4	2	4	2	0
How to formulate questions that require students to apply what they have read	1	2	3	4	2	0
How to formulate questions that require students to evaluate what they have read	1	2	3	5	1	0

Item	Help Requested			Help Needed		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
6. How to help children develop critical reading skills	2	3	1	5	1	0
How to help children distinguish fact from opinion	0	4	2	3	3	0
How to help children recognize the author's attitude	1	2	3	3	3	0
How to help children judge the competency of the author	0	2	4	1	5	0
How to help children determine the author's purpose	0	3	3	2	4	0
How to help children judge the validity and reliability of information	1	3	2	4	2	0
How to help children understand implied meanings:	0	4	2	2	4	0
Figures of speech	0	4	2	2	4	0
Connotations of words	0	4	2	2	4	0
How to help children detect propaganda techniques	1	3	2	4	2	0
How to help children detect advertising techniques	1	3	2	4	2	0

Item	Help Requested			Help Needed		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
7. How to evaluate children's critical reading	2	2	2	2	3	1
<u>Informal</u>						
Observing during class discussions the kinds of behavior that indicate critical reading	0	4	2	4	2	0
Observing during class discussions the kinds of behavior that indicate lack of critical reading ability	0	4	2	3	3	0
<u>Formal</u>						
Constructing written tests to evaluate skills taught	2	1	3	5	1	0



## Principals' Responses

Item	Help Requested			Help Needed		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
1. Lack of general background information on critical reading	0	4	1	1	4	0
Factors favorably influencing critical reading	2	2	1	2	3	0
Factors inhibiting critical reading	1	2	2	2	3	0
Characteristics of critical reading	1	2	2	2	3	0
Techniques for teaching critical reading	1	3	1	1	4	0
2. How to stimulate children's ability to read and think critically	2	2	1	2	3	0
How to formulate challenging questions	1	2	2	1	4	0
How to encourage children to share reactions on materials read	0	3	2	0	5	0
How to stimulate discussions on materials read	0	4	1	1	4	0
How to initiate activities which give pupils opportunities to develop critical reading skills	1	3	1	2	3	0

Item	Help Requested			Help Needed		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
3. How to help children develop a critical attitude toward reading.	0	3	2	1	3	1
How to help children question the value and accuracy of material read	0	3	2	1	3	1
How to help children withhold judgment until they have finished reading	0	4	1	1	4	0
How to help children draw on their background of experiences to evaluate as they read	1	3	1	1	4	0
How to make children aware that their attitudes and biases influence critical reading	0	3	2	1	4	0
4. How to foster a critical reading environment	1	3	1	3	2	0
How to provide a supportive atmosphere	1	2	2	2	3	0
How to develop the habit of thinking about the material as it is read and after it is read	2	2	1	3	2	0

Item	Help Requested			Help Needed		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
4. (Continued)						
How to take advantage of other curriculum areas to foster critical reading ability	2	1	2	3	2	0
How to make use of a variety of sources to develop critical reading	2	2	1	3	2	0
5. How to formulate questions to encourage critical thinking and reading	2	2	1	4	1	0
How to formulate questions that require students to make judgments	1	2	2	3	2	0
How to formulate questions that require students to analyze the accuracy of statements	0	3	2	2	3	0
How to formulate questions that require students to analyze the logic of arguments	0	4	1	3	2	0
How to formulate questions that require students to apply what they have read	1	2	2	3	2	0
How to formulate questions that require students to evaluate what they have read	1	2	2	4	1	0

Item	Help Requested			Help Needed		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
6. How to help children develop critical reading skills	2	2	1	1	4	0
How to help children distinguish fact from opinion	0	4	1	2	3	0
How to help children recognize the author's attitude	1	2	2	2	3	0
How to help children judge the competency of the author	0	2	3	0	5	0
How to determine the author's purpose	0	3	2	1	4	0
How to help children judge the validity and reliability of information	1	3	1	3	2	0
How to help children understand implied meanings:	0	3	2	1	4	0
Figures of speech	0	3	2	1	4	0
Connotations of words	0	3	2	1	4	0
How to help children detect propaganda techniques	1	3	1	3	2	0
How to help children detect advertising techniques	1	3	1	3	2	0

Item	Help Requested			Help Needed		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
7. How to evaluate children's critical reading	2	2	1	4	1	0
<u>Informal</u>						
Observing during class discussions the kinds of behavior that indicate critical reading	0	4	1	3	2	0
Observing during class discussions the kinds of behavior that indicate lack of critical reading ability	0	4	1	2	3	0
<u>Formal</u>						
Constructing written tests to evaluate skills taught	2	1	2	4	1	0

## Language Arts Consultant's Responses

Item	Help Requested			Help Needed		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
1. Lack of general background information on critical reading		1		1		
Factors favorably influencing critical reading			1	1		
Factors inhibiting critical reading			1	1		
Characteristics of critical reading			1	1		
Techniques for teaching critical reading		1		1		
2. How to stimulate children's ability to read and think critically		1		1		
How to formulate challenging questions			1	1		
How to encourage children to share reactions on material read			1	1		
How to stimulate discussions on material read			1	1		
How to initiate activities which give pupils opportunities to develop critical reading skills		1		1		

Item	Help Requested			Help Needed		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
3. How to help children develop a critical attitude toward reading			1	1		
How to help children question the value and accuracy of the material read			1	1		
How to help children withhold judgment until they have finished reading			1	1		
How to help children draw on their background of experiences to evaluate as they read			1	1		
How to make children aware that their attitudes and biases influence critical reading			1	1		
4. How to foster a critical reading environment			1	1		
How to provide a supportive atmosphere for critical reading			1	1		
How to develop the habit of thinking about the material as it is read and after it is read			1	1		

Item	Help Requested			Help Needed		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
4. (Continued)						
How to take advantage of other curriculum areas to foster critical reading ability			1	1		
How to make use of a variety of sources to develop critical reading			1	1		
5. How to formulate questions to encourage critical thinking and reading			1	1		
How to formulate questions that require students to make judgments			1	1		
How to formulate questions that require students to analyze the accuracy of statements			1	1		
How to formulate questions that require students to analyze the logic of arguments			1	1		
How to formulate questions that require students to apply what they have read			1	1		
How to formulate questions that require students to evaluate what they have read			1	1		



Item	Help Requested			Help Needed		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
6. How to help children develop critical reading skills.		1		1		
How to help children distinguish fact from opinion			1	1		
How to help children recognize the author's attitude			1	1		
How to help children judge the competency of the author			1	1		
How to help children determine the author's purpose			1	1		
How to help children judge the validity and reliability of information			1	1		
How to help children understand implied meanings:		1		1		
Figures of speech		1		1		
Connotations of words		1		1		
How to help children detect propaganda techniques			1	1		
How to help children detect advertising techniques			1	1		

Item	Help Requested			Help Needed		
	Many	Few	None	Many	Few	None
7. How to evaluate children's critical reading			1	1		
<u>Informal</u>						
Observing during class discussions the kinds of behavior that indicate critical reading			1	1		
Observing during class discussions the kinds of behavior that indicate lack of critical reading ability			1	1		
<u>Formal</u>						
Constructing written tests to evaluate skills taught			1	1		

APPENDIX H  
FORMATIVE EVALUATION FORMS

## Critical Reading

How successful has the writer been in extending your background information in the following areas of critical reading?

	Very Successful	Somewhat Successful	Unsuccessful
Factors affecting critical reading ability:			
Intelligence Attitude Background experiences Literal reading Classroom environment			
Characteristics of critical reading			
Techniques for teaching critical reading			
Group discussion Discussion opportunities Classroom teacher's role Comparisons Modification of cloze procedure			

Comments:

**Stimulating Children's Ability to Read  
and Think Critically**

How successful has the writer been in explaining  
how each of the following activities can stimulate chil-  
dren's ability to read and think critically?

	Very Successful	Somewhat Successful	Unsuccessful
Fostering a critical reading environment  Physical environment Emotional environment Classroom approaches			
Developing the habit of thinking while reading  Classroom approaches  Making predictions Making inferences Verifying inferences Comparing summaries			
Using other curriculum areas  Classroom approaches  History Science Mathematics			
Making use of a variety of sources  Free and inexpensive materials Magazines, brochures, and old texts Libraries Film, filmstrips, records, and tapes			

	Very Successful	Somewhat Successful	Unsuccessful
Activities involving a variety of sources  Newspapers Magazines Travel folders Television Films Human Resources			
Initiating activities to give practice in critical reading  Classroom approaches  Brainstorming Riddles Basal reader activities Free reading time			

Comments: (Indicate which items, if any, are not clearly explained or are explained in too great detail.)

Evaluate the usefulness of the suggestions made for conducting each of these activities:

	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Impractical
Fostering a critical reading environment Physical environment Emotional environment Classroom approaches			
Developing the habit of thinking while reading Classroom approaches Making predictions Making inferences Verifying inferences Comparing summaries			
Using other curriculum areas Classroom approaches History Science Mathematics			
Making use of a variety of sources Free and inexpensive materials Magazines, brochures, and old texts Libraries Films, filmstrips, records, and tapes Activities involving a variety of sources: Newspapers Magazines Travel folders Television Films Human resources			

	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Impractical
Initiating activities to give practice in critical reading			
Classroom approaches			
Brainstorming			
Riddles			
Basal reader activities			
Free reading time			

Comments:



**Helping Children Develop a Critical Attitude  
Toward Reading**

How successful has the writer been in explaining how each of the following activities can help children develop a critical attitude toward reading?

	Very Successful	Somewhat Successful	Unsuccessful
Helping children draw on their background experiences  Classroom approaches			
Making children aware of their own attitudes and biases  Classroom approaches  Local issues Controversial read- ing material Basal reader			
Helping children with- hold judgment  Classroom approaches  Snap judgments Purposeful reading			

Comments:

Evaluate the usefulness of the suggestions made for developing each of the following critical reading abilities:

	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Impractical
Helping children draw on their background experiences Classroom approaches			
Making children aware of their own attitudes and biases Classroom approaches Local issues Controversial reading material Basal reader			
Helping children to withhold judgment Classroom approaches Snap judgments Purposeful reading			

Comments: (Indicate any ideas that you feel require further explanation.)

Formulating Questions to Encourage Critical  
Thinking and Reading

How successful has the writer been in explaining how to formulate questions to encourage critical thinking and reading?

	Very Successful	Somewhat Successful	Unsuccessful
Preparing questions			
Questioning procedure			
Teachers' attitude			
Individual differences			
Treatment of responses			
Questions requiring judgment			
Classroom approaches			
Sample questions			
Questions requiring analysis of arguments			
Classroom approaches			
Analyzing arguments			
Sample questions			
Questions requiring application of what is read			
Classroom approaches			
Applying learned facts			
Applying principles of democracy			

	Very Successful	Somewhat Successful	Unsuccessful
Questions requiring evaluation			
Classroom approaches Evaluation exercises			

Comments:

Evaluate the usefulness of the suggestions made for formulating questions to encourage critical reading:

	Very Somewhat		
	Useful	Useful	Impractical
Preparing questions			
Questioning procedure			
Teacher's attitude			
Individual differences			
Treatment of responses			
Questions requiring judgment			
Classroom approaches			
Sample questions			
Questions requiring analysis of arguments			
Classroom approaches			
Analyzing arguments			
Sample questions			
Questions requiring application of what is read			
Classroom approaches			
Applying learned facts			
Applying principles of democracy			
Questions requiring evaluation			
Classroom approaches			
Evaluation exercises			

Comments: (Indicate which items, if any, are not clearly explained or are explained in too great detail.)

### Developing Critical Reading Skills

How successful has the writer been in explaining how to develop each of the following critical reading skills?

	Very Successful	Somewhat Successful	Unsuccessful
Distinguishing fact from opinion			
Classroom approaches			
Concrete and abstract statements			
Facts about themselves			
Related activities			
Recognizing the author's attitude			
Classroom approaches			
Related activities			
Judging the competency of the author			
Classroom approaches			
Checking author competency			
Selecting most qualified author			
Determining the author's purpose			
Selected activities			

	Very Successful	Somewhat Successful	Unsuccessful
Judging the reliability and validity of information			
Reliability Classroom approaches			
Examining copy-right dates Primary and secondary reports			
Validity Classroom approaches			
Understanding implied meanings			
Figures of speech			
Common comparative types			
Simile			
Metaphor			
Personification			
Irony			
Hyperbole			
Classroom approaches Related activities			
Connotations of words Classroom approaches Related activities			
Detecting propaganda techniques			
Bad names			
Glad names			
Transfer			
Testimonial			
Plain folks			
Card stacking			
Band wagon			
Classroom approaches Related activities			

	Very Successful	Somewhat Successful	Unsuccessful
Detecting advertising techniques			
The weasel claim			
The we're-different-and-unique claim			
The water-is-wet claim			
The so-what claim			
The vague claim			
The endorsement or testimonial claim			
The scientific claim			
The compliment-the-consumer claim			
The rhetorical question			
Classroom approaches			
Related activities			

Comments:



Evaluate the usefulness of the practices and procedures suggested for the following:

	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Impractical
Distinguishing fact from opinion			
Recognizing the author's attitude			
Judging the competency of the author			
Determining the author's purpose			
Judging the validity and reliability of information			
Understanding implied meanings:			
Figures of speech			
Connotations of words			
Detecting propaganda techniques			
Detecting advertising techniques			

Comments:

## Evaluating Critical Reading Ability

How successful has the writer been in explaining how each of the following can be used to evaluate critical reading ability?

	<u>Very Successful</u>	<u>Somewhat Successful</u>	<u>Unsuccessful</u>
Informal evaluation Observation Classroom approaches Observation notes Informal records Checklists  Interpreting the checklists			
Formal evaluation  Constructing written tests Test items			

Comments:

Evaluate the usefulness of the suggestions made for evaluating critical reading:

	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Impractical
Informal evaluation			
Observation			
Classroom approaches			
Observation notes			
Informal records			
Checklists			
Interpreting the checklists			
Formal evaluation			
Constructing written tests			
Test items			

Comments: (Include any items or ideas that you feel require further explanations.)

APPENDIX I  
RESPONSES TO FORMATIVE  
EVALUATION FORMS

## Critical Reading

How successful has the writer been in extending your background information in the following areas of critical reading?

	Very Successful	Somewhat Successful	Unsuccessful
Factors affecting critical reading ability:			
Intelligence	5		
Attitude	5		
Background experiences	5		
Literal reading	5		
Classroom environment	5		
Characteristics of critical reading	5		
Techniques for teaching critical reading			
Group discussion	5		
Discussion opportunities	5		
Classroom teacher's role	5		
Comparisons	5		
Modification of cloze procedure	5		

Comments:

**Stimulating Children's Ability to Read  
and Think Critically**

How successful has the writer been in explaining how each of the following activities can stimulate children's ability to read and think critically?

	Very Successful	Somewhat Successful	Unsuccessful
<b>Fostering a critical reading environment</b>			
Physical environment	5		
Emotional environment	5		
Classroom approaches	5		
<b>Developing the habit of thinking while reading</b>			
Classroom approaches	5		
Making predictions	5		
Making inferences	5		
Verifying inferences	5		
Comparing summaries	5		
<b>Using other curriculum areas</b>			
Classroom approaches	5		
History	5		
Science	5		
Mathematics	5		
<b>Making use of a variety of sources</b>			
Free and inexpensive materials	4	1	
Magazines, brochures, and old texts	5		
Libraries	4	1	
Film, filmstrips, records, and tapes	5		

	Very Successful	Somewhat Successful	Unsuccessful
Activities involving a variety of sources			
Newspapers	5		
Magazines	5		
Travel folders	5		
Television	5		
Films	5		
Human resources	5		
Initiating activities to give practice in critical reading			
Classroom approaches	5		
Brainstorming	5		
Riddles	5		
Basal reader activities	5		
Free reading time	5		

Comments: (Indicate which items, if any, are not clearly explained or are explained in too great detail.)

Evaluate the usefulness of the suggestions made for conducting each of these activities:

	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Impractical
Fostering a critical reading environment			
Physical environment	4		
Emotional environment	4		
Classroom approaches	4		
Developing the habit of thinking while reading			
Classroom approaches	4		
Making predictions	4		
Making inferences	4		
Verifying inferences	4		
Comparing summaries	4		
Using other curriculum areas			
Classroom approaches	4		
History	4		
Science	4		
Mathematics	4		
Making use of a variety of sources			
Free and inexpensive materials	4		
Magazines, brochures, and old texts	4		
Libraries	4		
Films, filmstrips, records, and tapes	4		
Activities involving a variety of sources:			
Newspapers	4		
Magazines	4		
Travel folders	4		
Television	4		
Films	4		
Human resources	4		



	<u>Very Useful</u>	<u>Somewhat Useful</u>	<u>Impractical</u>
Initiating activities to give practice in critical reading			
Classroom approaches	4		
Brainstorming	4		
Riddles	4		
Basal reader activities	4		
Free reading time	4		

Comments:

Helping Children Develop a Critical Attitude  
Toward Reading

How successful has the writer been in explaining how each of the following activities can help children develop a critical attitude toward reading?

	Very Successful	Somewhat Successful	Unsuccessful
Helping children draw on their background experiences			
Classroom approaches	5		
Making children aware of their own attitudes and biases			
Classroom approaches	5		
Local issues	5		
Controversial reading material	5		
Basal reader	5		
Helping children withhold judgment			
Classroom approaches	5		
Snap judgments	5		
Purposeful reading	5		

Comments:

Evaluate the usefulness of the suggestions made for developing each of the following critical reading abilities:

	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Impractical
Helping children draw on their background experiences			
Classroom approaches	4		
Making children aware of their own attitudes and biases			
Classroom approaches	4		
Local issues	4		
Controversial reading material	4		
Basal reader	4		
Helping children to withhold judgment			
Classroom approaches	4		
Snap judgments	4		
Purposeful reading	4		

Comments: (Indicate any ideas that you feel require further explanation.)

Formulating Questions to Encourage Critical  
Thinking and Reading

How successful has the writer been in explaining  
how to formulate questions to encourage critical thinking  
and reading?

	Very Successful	Somewhat Successful	Unsuccessful
Preparing questions	5		
Questioning procedure	5		
Teacher's attitude	5		
Individual differ- ences	5		
Treatment of responses	5		
Questions requiring judgment	5		
Classroom approaches	5		
Sample questions	5		
Questions requiring analysis of arguments	5		
Classroom approaches	5		
Analyzing arguments	5		
Sample questions	5		
Questions requiring application of what is read	5		
Classroom approaches	5		
Applying learned facts	5		
Applying principles of democracy	5		

	Very Successful	Somewhat Successful	Unsuccessful
Questions requiring evaluation	5		
Classroom approaches	5		
Evaluation exercises	5		

Comments:

Evaluate the usefulness of the suggestions made for formulating questions to encourage critical reading:

	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Impractical
Preparing questions	4		
Questioning procedure	4		
Teacher's attitude	4		
Individual differences	4		
Treatment of responses	4		
Questions requiring judgment	4		
Classroom approaches	4		
Sample questions	4		
Questions requiring analysis of arguments	4		
Classroom approaches	4		
Analyzing arguments	4		
Sample questions	4		
Questions requiring application of what is read	4		
Classroom approaches	4		
Applying learned facts	4		
Applying principles of democracy	4		
Questions requiring evaluation	4		
Classroom approaches	4		
Evaluation exercises	4		

Comments: (Indicate which items, if any, are not clearly explained or are explained in too great detail.)

## Developing Critical Reading Skills

How successful has the writer been in explaining how to develop each of the following critical reading skills?

	Very Successful	Scemwhat Successful	Unsuccessful
Distinguishing fact from opinion	5		
Classroom approaches	5		
Concrete and abstract statements	5		
Facts about them- selves	5		
Related activities	5		
Recognizing the author's attitude			
Classroom approaches	5		
Related activities	5		
Judging the competency of the author			
Classroom approaches	5		
Checking author competency	5		
Selecting most qualified author	5		
Determining the author's purpose			
Selected activities	5		

	Very Successful	Somewhat Successful	Unsuccessful
Judging the reliability and validity of information			
Reliability	5		
Classroom approaches	5		
Examining copyright dates	5		
Primary and secondary reports	5		
Validity	5		
Classroom approaches	5		
Understanding implied meanings			
Figures of speech	5		
Common comparative types	5		
Simile	5		
Metaphor	5		
Personification	5		
Irony	5		
Hyperbole	5		
Classroom approaches	5		
Related activities	5		
Connotations of words	5		
Classroom approaches	5		
Related activities	5		
Detecting propaganda techniques			
Bad names	5		
Glad names	5		
Transfer	5		
Testimonial	5		
Plain folks	5		
Card stacking	5		
Band wagon	5		
Classroom approaches	5		
Related activities	5		



	Very Successful	Somewhat Successful	Unsuccessful
Detecting advertising techniques			
The weasel claim	5		
The we're-different-and-unique claim	5		
The water-is-wet claim	5		
The so-what claim	5		
The vague claim	5		
The endorsement or testimonial claim	5		
The scientific claim	5		
The compliment-the-consumer claim	5		
The rhetorical question	5		
Classroom approaches	5		
Related activities	5		

Comments:

Evaluate the usefulness of the practices and procedures suggested for the following:

	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Impractical
Distinguishing fact from opinion	4		
Recognizing the author's attitude	4		
Judging the competency of the author	4		
Determining the author's purpose	4		
Judging the validity and reliability of information	4		
Understanding implied meanings:			
Figures of speech	4		
Connotations of words	4		
Detecting propaganda techniques	4		
Detecting advertising techniques	4		

Comments:

## Evaluating Critical Reading Ability

How successful has the writer been in explaining how each of the following can be used to evaluate critical reading ability?

	Very Successful	Somewhat Successful	Unsuccessful
Informal evaluation		1	
Observation	5		
Classroom approaches	5		
Observation notes	5		
Informal records	5		
Checklists	5		
Interpreting the checklists	5		
Formal evaluation		1	
Constructing written tests	5		
Test items	5		

Comments:

Evaluate the usefulness of the suggestions made for evaluating critical reading:

	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Impractical
<b>Informal evaluation</b>			
Observation	4		
Classroom approaches	4		
Observation notes	4		
Informal records	4		
Checklists	4		
Interpreting the checklists	4		
<b>Formal evaluation</b>			
Constructing written tests	4		
Test items	4		

Comments: (Include any items or ideas that you feel require further explanations.)

APPENDIX J  
SUMMATIVE EVALUATION FORM

## SUMMATIVE EVALUATION FORM

The 11 items listed below are designed to assess your opinion as to the practicality and utility of the booklet. Indicate, by circling, the response which best conveys your opinion of the value of this booklet to you in your teaching of critical reading.

1 = Strongly Agree      3 = Undecided  
 2 = Agree                4 = Disagree  
                               5 = Strongly Disagree

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The objectives of the booklet are clearly stated.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. The booklet achieved the stated objectives.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. The ideas and activities presented are relevant to your work.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. There is sufficient guiding information to give a comprehensive view of what is involved in teaching critical reading, | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. The amount of material presented is too great.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. The booklet contributed to your understanding of what is involved in teaching critical reading.                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. The booklet is well organized--a definite plan is evident.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. The booklet provided as much guidance as you would have liked to receive.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. During the next school year, a conscious effort will be made to utilize the ideas presented in the booklet.            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

10. You would recommend that a similar booklet be initiated in other school districts. 1 2 3 4 5
11. The explanations of suggested practices and procedures for meeting problems in teaching critical reading are very clear. 1 2 3 4 5

Additional Comments:

## APPENDIX K

## SOURCES OF FREE AND INEXPENSIVE MATERIAL



A Catalogue of Health Teaching Aids

Health Education Division  
 Department of Health  
 85 Elizabeth Avenue  
 St. John's, Nfld.

Classroom Aids for Teachers

Grolier Limited  
 200 University Avenue  
 Toronto, Ontario

Educators Guide to Free Audio and Video Materials

James L. Berger  
 Educators Progress Service Inc.  
 Randolph, Wisconsin, 53956

Free and Inexpensive Educational Aids

- Thomas J. Pepe  
 General Publishing Canada Company  
 Don Mills, Ontario

Free and Inexpensive Teaching Aids for Science Education

- Muriel Beuschlein  
 The Publications Office  
 Chicago State College  
 6800 South Stewart Avenue  
 Chicago, Illinois, 60621

1980-81 List of Free Materials Available to Educators

Dow Jones and Company Inc.  
 The Educational Service Bureau  
 P.O. Box 300  
 Princeton, N.J., 08540

Free Magazines for Teachers and Libraries

- Ken Haycock  
 Ontario Library Association  
 2397A Bloor Street  
 West Toronto, Ontario  
 M6S 1P6

Resource Material

Canadian Red Cross Society  
 Newfoundland Division  
 P.O. Box 13156, Station A  
 St. John's, Nfld.  
 A1B 4A4

Resources Clearinghouse Catalogue

Faculty of Education  
 Box 90, Arts-Education Building  
 Memorial University of Newfoundland  
 St. John's, Nfld.  
 A1B 3X8

PART II  
Guidelines for Dealing with  
Identified Problems in Teaching Critical Reading  
to Elementary School Children

## PREFACE

Reading should stimulate the child's intellectual curiosity. To this end, the child needs more than just the simple parroting back of facts from stories he has read. He needs to be challenged to think more deeply. The ultimate goal is to have the child eventually become a thinking adult who can react critically to oral and written communication and not be influenced by abuses of logic or emotional appeal.

In today's complex society it is becoming increasingly important for individuals to think critically in order to cope with the vast amount of propaganda to which they are exposed through the mass media of communication. For this reason, the writer believes that the critical reading skills should be given emphasis in the reading program. Development of these skills, of course, is not only in the hands of the reading teacher. Since the skills related to critical reading operate in all reading situations, every teacher has a responsibility to develop and evaluate them.

Teaching for critical reading and thinking is not a simple task. Teachers need to plan for its development, to be creative in trying a variety of methods and materials, to be sensitive to the kinds of experiences the class is ready for, to be alert to factors that can impede progress,

and to be ingenious in evaluating critical reading ability (Maw, 1964). Desirous of helping teachers meet these challenges, the writer has prepared this booklet of guidelines.

The booklet was designed to help meet a reported need of elementary teachers in the Ferryland School Board District. Specific aspects of teaching critical reading which cause problems for those teachers were identified by means of a questionnaire sent to teachers and supervisory personnel. The format of the questionnaire determined the organization of the booklet. Of the seven major possible problem items presented in the questionnaire, six were designated section headings, and sub-items under each major problem were discussed within the appropriate sections. Information gleaned from professional literature in the main furnished the writer with ideas and activities for overcoming identified difficulties.

The writer hopes this booklet will make the teacher's job of stimulating and encouraging critical reading somewhat easier and considerably more meaningful. Suggested activities included in the booklet are representative of the kinds teachers can create to get children to think about, evaluate, comprehend, and question what they read. Teachers can use or adapt these activities to suit the needs of their classes. The booklet, then, is not intended as a blueprint, but rather as a guide presenting a broad framework upon which additional plans and ideas may

be built by teachers.

Specifically, the objectives of this booklet are:

- (1) to provide teachers with information on the critical reading process and the kinds of thinking it involves;
- (2) to suggest a variety of activities to stimulate and challenge children to become critical readers;
- (3) to offer suggestions for integrating the teaching of critical reading with other curriculum areas; and
- (4) to offer suggestions for evaluating children's critical reading ability.

## SECTION I

### CRITICAL READING

Although there appears to be no general agreement on a precise definition of critical reading, present in many of the definitions offered in the professional literature is the agreement that critical reading involves critical thinking and that it requires the evaluation of material, comparing it with previously set standards and judging it accordingly (Gans, 1940; Glaser, 1941; Deboer, 1946; Russell, 1956; Sochor, 1959; Karlin, 1963; Spache, 1963; Smith, 1965; Goodman, 1967; Robinson, 1972; Smith 1975; and Stauffer, 1975). Hence, in this booklet, critical reading is defined as the process by which readers read beyond the printed words on the page to find out not only what the author has said, but why he has said it. The reader is actively involved in the process and makes use of his own experiences to think critically about what he is reading. As he becomes proficient in reading critically, he recognizes the author's purpose, distinguishes fact from opinion, judges the author's competence, and analyzes the accuracy of statements and the logic of arguments.

### Factors Affecting Critical Reading Ability

To encourage and stimulate growth in critical reading the teacher must have knowledge and understanding of some of the influences which develop or hinder the process. Several factors reported as influencing the extent of development in critical reading are intelligence (Nardelli, 1947), the attitude of the reader toward the content he is reading (McKillop, 1952), background experiences (Russell, 1956), a foundation in the basic skill of literal comprehension (Robinson, 1966), and the classroom environment (Raths, 1967). A brief discussion on the facilitating or limiting effects of each of these factors is presented in this section. Ways of minimizing the negative and maximizing the positive aspects of each of these are discussed in Sections II and III.

#### Intelligence

Although intelligence may prove to be a significant factor, it must be pointed out that mere possession of high intelligence does not guarantee critical reading ability, nor does low intelligence prevent it. On the contrary, children of low intelligence can benefit to a substantial degree when they receive direct training in the critical reading skills (Karlin, 1963). Similarly, children of high intelligence can fail to develop this ability spontaneously (Piekarz, 1954). What is suggested

here is that teachers should not neglect teaching the critical reading skills to any child. Each child should be encouraged to react to ideas to the extent that he is able. But, as in any other learning situation, teachers' expectations for slow learners' achievement should not be as high as those for brighter children.

#### Attitude

Prejudice toward or against persons, ideas, or topics may interfere with the reader's performance in evaluating printed matter (McKillop, 1952). A reader, it seems, may recall facts accurately but if value judgments are involved, preconceived notions, biases, and prejudices stand in the way of critical evaluations. Certainly, if a reader's mind is already made up on a particular issue, he has little inclination to obtain objective data on the opposing side, or even to believe it if he does obtain it. Young children as well as older ones appear subject to such adverse influences (Groff, 1962). Teachers who lead children to realize that their feelings and beliefs can affect their critical evaluations are setting the stage for critical reading.

#### Background Experiences

The importance of a wide background of experiences as a foundation for reading is apparent from the writings of many reading experts. Russell (1956), for example, lists it first among four conditions he considers essential



to critical reading. Heilman (1967) goes so far as to suggest that perhaps an inadequate background of experiences is the greatest barrier to critical reading. Similarly, Spache (1963) points out that "critical reading may be well nigh impossible if the reader is ignorant of the facts underlying the author's presentation" (p. 85). One cannot deny that the more first hand experiences a reader has with a topic, the more meaningful it is for him and the better are his chances of making sound judgments in matters concerning it. Obviously, if the reader has no experiences against which to check his reading, he may not sense inadequacies in the content; for example, he may not realize that descriptions of other countries, people, or ways of living and working are incomplete or inaccurate.

#### Literal Reading

Common sense tells us that an individual must be able to read literally if he is to read critically. This statement does not imply, however, that proficiency in literal reading itself automatically insures critical reading, or that literal reading should be emphasized to the exclusion of critical reading in the primary grades. As Wolf, Huck, and King (1967) point out, "critical reading does not begin after the author's ideas have been grasped, but is an ongoing part of the process" (p. 4). Indeed, with clear-cut purposes for reading and recognition of the need for improvement, critical reading ability can

develop side by side with other basic reading skills (Stauffer, 1975). What is important in this respect is fostering a critical attitude by asking relevant questions as the child reads material at his reading level.

#### Classroom Environment

Many teachers are aware that an individual threatened by a situation, or fearful of failing, or of being ridiculed, or laughed at, or of not having the right answers will find it hard to consider any ideas unemotionally or critically. Children in environments arousing such feelings learn to avoid thinking, because thinking gets them into trouble. It is safer to keep quiet or to give a quick simple answer. Often there really is not time for them to think nor is there any reward for it. There are just more answers to get, more pages to complete, and more assignments to face. Teachers, therefore, must set the tone for critical reading, and maintain a steady balance in the classroom between verbalization, overt activity, and reflective thinking.

#### Characteristics of Critical Readers

Critical readers are not sponge readers, absorbing everything they read. On the contrary, they question, evaluate, and think about what they read. A review of the literature on critical reading reveals that readers involved in the critical reading process exemplify many of

the following characteristics:

1. They do not believe everything they read (McKee, 1966).
2. They actively examine, ponder, and challenge the writer's ideas (Spache & Berg, 1966).
3. They coordinate what they already know with new incoming data, and thereby supply meanings not directly stated in the text (Goodman, 1976).
4. They distinguish fact from opinion (McKee, 1966).
5. They determine the author's purpose in writing even when it is not directly stated (McKee, 1966).
6. They reread when they think they may have missed something (Goodman, 1976).
7. They look for contradictory statements, discrepancies, and inconsistencies (Zintz, 1975).
8. They are alert to propaganda devices, one-sided views, and inadequate information (Bill & Eller, 1964).
9. They recognize their own biases and the author's bias (Artley, 1959).
10. They do not let their own feelings or the author's feelings lead them astray (Artley, 1959).
11. They evaluate the author's credentials (McKee, 1966).
12. They suspend judgment until they get all the facts (Artley, 1959).
13. They are open-minded and willing to modify previous beliefs when new information proves that they are wrong (Dechant, 1964).

14. They are sensitive to figurative language (Zintz, 1975).
15. They read critically in all areas of the curriculum and, indeed, in all their reading (Heilman, 1967).
16. They are aware that some materials are more factual than others (McKee, 1966).
17. They enjoy reading widely and sharing ideas with others (Stauffer, 1969).
18. They are not manipulated by what they read (Stauffer, 1969).

#### Techniques for Teaching Critical Reading

Reading experts agree that helping children to develop critical reading ability is a challenge for teachers at all grade levels. They contend, however, that those who recognize the importance of teaching the process will strive to do so. Indeed, Rath (1967) believes that teachers will find the experience of seeing pupils growing in mastery of the critical reading and thinking skills exciting. It is exciting, he says, to find children becoming enthusiastically involved in evaluating activities and to find them evaluating when they have not even been asked to do so.

There are many instructional techniques which teachers can employ to develop children's reading ability. For critical reading, however, it is best to employ strategies that involve children in activities that not

only require them to think but that also give them time to think about selections and time to voice their thoughts and feelings. Perhaps the most popular and effective techniques for this purpose are: group discussions, comparisons, and a modification of the cloze procedure. Before discussing each of these separately, however, it must be pointed out that no one teaching strategy is superior to others. In fact, more than one may be needed with a specific child, and no one technique may work with all children. Regardless of the strategy a teacher uses, it is essential that materials be within the experiential background and reading level of the children. Children must be carefully motivated and directed to read for specific purposes.

#### Group Discussion

Discussions stimulate children to share their point of view, based upon reading, study, and personal experience. And sharing reactions clarifies thinking by allowing children to compare predictions and see how other members handled information to predict, compare, and evaluate. Indeed, Stauffer (1969) maintains that by comparing and evaluating their own thinking with that of others, children may become more keenly aware of the mental processes reading requires. Besides, as children discuss and recommend stories they liked, others are encouraged to read them. Moreover, hazy or erroneous concepts can be identified and compared. Hence, children may learn to modify their ideas,

to accept or reject the ideas of others, to recognize prejudice in themselves as well as in others, and to sense a need for more knowledge of the subject under discussion. The search for further information can lead to other questions--questions about the author and the authenticity, or accuracy of events or characters. Unresolved problems that establish purposes for further reading, thinking, and discussion can emerge, thus providing children with additional practice in thinking and reading critically. Finally, as teachers listen and guide discussions, they can see how effectively critical reading and thinking are being used.

Discussion opportunities. Teachers can guide discussions in connection with children's reading many times each day. Stories can be discussed during and after the reading. Now and then at appropriate times during the reading, questions which stimulate cause and effect reasoning and which call for comparisons, inferences, and the drawing of conclusions provide opportunities for children to discuss their thinking with the teacher and with each other.

Class discussions stimulating critical reading do not need to be limited to reading lessons. Local controversial issues or current national issues suitable to the class grade level and interest may evoke lively discussion (Spache, 1963). For such discussions, teachers might choose from the following local concerns:

- Moonlighting in the fishing industry--a threat to fishermen's livelihood
- Moose hunting--to ban or not to ban
- Community Councils--every community needs one
- School Taxes--are they necessary?
- Paving the Witless Bay Line--should it be a priority?

National issues teachers may take advantage of are:

- The Seal Hunt
- Patriation of the Constitution
- Provincial and Federal Off-Shore Resource Claims
- Strikes in the Working Force

Discrepancies noted by children in the same book or in a comparison of sources may likewise invite discussion on which source is correct or why there is a discrepancy (Janes, 1970). Even games in which children pretend they are famous detectives and conduct an imaginary search for a missing person may stimulate a discussion of the importance of determining fact and opinion (Ruddell, 1974).

"The Mean Heartless Detective" in the Grade IV basal reader Starting Points in Reading A, book two, presents an opportunity for children to play detective, and at the same time affords the teacher an opportunity to emphasize the need for distinguishing fact from opinion when analyzing clues.

Classroom teacher's role. The teacher's role in the discussion is one of directing the children to examine their many reactions to a selection and the reasons for those

reactions. Before beginning the discussion it is important to have the class agree on basic discussion procedures. These will probably include:

- Before speaking each child must raise his hand to be recognized by the discussion leader.
- One child speaks at a time.
- Other children listen attentively when someone is speaking.
- All speakers try to keep to the topic.
- No child ridicules or belittles another child's contribution.

At first a teacher should not be discouraged if the flow of ideas is rather disorganized, or irrelevant anecdotes are introduced, or inadequate support for opinions is evident. Indeed, in the beginning she may need to intercede frequently and direct the discussion back to the proper course. At no time, however, does she put herself in a position of approving or disapproving what is said. Children should be allowed to discuss what they think about the topic. Gradually, with many opportunities for discussion, they learn to listen more attentively while others are talking, and they learn to continue the topic without distraction. In time they should become more fluent, expressing their ideas more coherently, and these speaking assets should carry over into writing. As children reach this proficiency stage in discussion technique, they can even be critical of the discussion



procedure. This may involve comments on how well it went, what was especially good, and what, if anything, could be done next time to improve it.

### Comparisons

A second effective technique for developing critical reaction to what is read employs various types of comparisons. A child may compare biographies of the same person for details and authenticity (Hill, 1962). A book may be checked against a film or filmstrip to decide how similar the two are. Different versions of a story may be compared and contrasted for similarities and differences in setting, detail, and character delineation (Spache, 1963).

### Modification of Cloze Procedure

A third interesting technique, described by Gomberg (1976), uses a modification of the cloze procedure. In this approach, significant words from short reading passages, at the children's reading level, are deleted. The children are then asked to read the passages, filling in each blank in some logical manner. More than one answer is possible. The only requirement is that the answer be logical and relevant to the reading selection. Children take turns reading aloud their completed passages and discussing reasons for accepting an insertion. Other class members contribute to the discussion by accepting or rejecting insertions, giving their reasons. Gomberg

suggests that teachers using this procedure "may find that children become involved in a cluster of thinking skills . . . and become more critical of what they read by judging, evaluating and searching for accuracy" (p. 457).

## SECTION II

### STIMULATING CHILDREN TO READ AND THINK CRITICALLY

Thinking is implicit in every aspect of reading. In fact, Goodman (1967) and Smith (1975) maintain that only through thinking can comprehension and critical reading take place. Reading experts generally agree that anyone, seeing the need and given the opportunity, can do critical reading or thinking, but they also maintain that these abilities do not naturally evolve in the process of reading. Indeed, they believe that many children in today's classrooms are passive and simply do not think while reading.

Teachers need to provide experiences to stimulate these passive children. This can best be accomplished throughout the school day by emphasizing logical thought processes and oral communication. In this respect, children must be given time to think, talk, and write about their reading. This section offers guidelines and suggestions for doing so. In a large sense, the main emphasis is on fostering a critical reading environment, developing the habit of thinking while reading, using other curriculum areas, making use of a variety of resources, and initiating activities which give children opportunities to practice their critical reading ability.

### Fostering a Critical Reading Environment

The physical surroundings and general atmosphere in the classroom can promote or stifle curiosity and thinking, contribute to positive or negative attitudes toward reading and school in general, strengthen good or poor self-concepts, and increase or interfere with a child's efforts to learn (Durr, 1967; Stauffer, 1975). Thus, dreary, unstimulating classrooms lacking in suitable reading materials can inhibit the reading growth of some children who would bloom in a bright, stimulating environment.

#### Physical Environment

Classrooms should be exciting places with lots of things to do, see, and talk about. Interesting exhibits should always be present. There should be a plentiful supply of attractive challenging books on display. As Burns (1976) says,

Children who are interested in the materials presented to them to read will put forth much more effort in the reading process than will children who have no interest in the available reading materials. (p. 10)

#### Emotional Environment

The classroom atmosphere, if it is to be conducive to thinking, must make children feel at ease, encourage them to think for themselves, and allow them to express their ideas even when different from those of other children or the teacher. If there are feelings of tension or

pressure, children become anxious and insecure. As a result, these emotional tensions may seriously interfere with efforts to learn, and cause negative attitudes toward reading. On the other hand, in a bright relaxed atmosphere reading may take on the aspect of a delightful challenge.

#### Classroom Approaches

Each teacher needs to assume responsibility for fostering a wholesome critical reading environment. This is best achieved through friendly co-operative teacher-pupil relations nurtured by the teacher's genuine interest in each child, his activities, and interests. Here, it is essential that the teacher's manner and speech not betray a superficial attempt at acceptance. Each child must be respected and encouraged to respect others as well as himself. The teacher who respects children is willing to listen to them and give them opportunities to discuss ideas. She is sympathetic to the reading needs of all children, helping them face uncertainties, limitations, and inadequacies. In this connection, she plans and organizes the curriculum so that reading materials are at each child's instructional level, and skill needs are systematically met. Above all she practices patience, and is accepting as she guides and questions the children. When children respond very slowly at first, she does not insist on more information but rather encourages them through further exploratory

questions (Raths, 1967).

Thus, a good emotional climate is created primarily by the way in which teachers talk about reading, by their reactions to children's successes and failures, and by the variety of stimulating activities going on in the classroom. Such a climate is evident when a friendly spirit of co-operative work prevails. The teacher acts as guide, advisor, and contributor, trying to get children to discover things for themselves rather than "soak up the flood of information given by the teacher" (Durr, 1967, p. 56).

#### Developing the Habit of Thinking While Reading

Even children of primary grade level have the ability to think, but having the ability does not mean they automatically use it. Children, like adults, are generally inclined to do little more than is demanded of them. If their instructional demands and reading needs are met with little reflective thought while reading, that will be the type of reading that they will be inclined to do (Stauffer, 1969).

#### Classroom Approaches

Telling a child to think is not the answer. This simply does not work. Instead, before actual reading of the selection begins, clear-cut purposes to guide thinking should be established. These purposes should vary according to the maturity level of the children involved and

according to the selection under discussion. They would probably include looking for ideas, information, answers, attitudes, support for a point of view, cause-effect relationships, and the like.

Once reading of the selection has been completed, teachers should insure that children are given additional time to think about and analyze what they have read. To this end, interesting purposeful activities requiring further thinking must be proposed. These activities should be difficult enough to stimulate the children but not difficult enough to frustrate them.

Ideally, thinking should be an established part of the children's total school activity. Hence, whenever possible, it should be extended to the playground and home. Children, for example, may be given riddles to read with a day or two to think of solutions as they discuss them with playmates on the playground and with family members at home. In addition, teachers should provide the children with opportunities to discuss their answers and the reasoning process they employed in reaching a solution.

Making predictions. Beginning with the title of the selection, teachers may ask, "What can this title mean? Why do you think so?" Most children are quick to take up the thinking challenge of these kinds of questions, but slow children may require further lead-in to this kind of thinking activity. These children might be asked to

examine the pictures for clues to what the stories may be about or to what characters may be saying. After thinking about and discussing their ideas, the children might be directed to read part of the selection. As they read, the teacher can guide their thinking by stopping the reading once in a while to allow them to anticipate, draw conclusions, and make educated guesses. Simply asking, "What do you think is going to happen next?" arouses interest and gets children thinking.

Making inferences. Getting children to infer from context other information not directly stated is quite useful in stimulating thinking. Inferring here could entail identifying the setting of a story from the description given or inferring what characters are feeling from what they say. In the early elementary grades (4-6) or with a group of slow children teachers may need to ask questions, giving hints to guide their inferential thinking. A question like "Where does the story take place?" can be led into by asking "Does the author tell the location by naming the city or country?" or "Does he describe the locale?" or "Does he use foreign names or words?" From there, children may be asked to infer if the story could take place anywhere else without changes.

Verifying inferences. After reading the selection, children should be asked to verify inferences. Implicit here is asking them to sift what they have read, weigh



evidence, and select passages which prove or disprove predictions.

Comparing summaries. Teachers can write two different summaries of a selection. One summary should give an accurate account while the other contains some inaccuracies. Children can evaluate each summary in order to choose the correct one.

Helping children ask questions. Teachers who ask thought provoking questions provide a model for children to do the same. Many children, however, will need more than just a model. Some will need help in merely asking questions while others will need help in raising the level of their questions.

The Directed Reading Approach, in which children preview a selection to identify purposes for reading it and are encouraged at several points to anticipate how the story will develop, is helpful in getting them to ask questions. In this approach the teacher invites children, prior to the reading, to raise questions they would like answered in the selection.

Another useful technique to help individual children develop questioning abilities is the Request Procedure developed by Manzo (1969). In this procedure both the teacher and the child silently read the first sentence in a selection. The child then is invited to ask the teacher as many questions as he wishes about the sentence. After

all the child's questions are answered, the second sentence is read and the teacher asks the child questions. Throughout the procedure the child is encouraged to imitate the teacher's questioning behavior.

Teachers using the Directed Reading Approach and the Request Procedure will be surprised at the number of questions children ask. At first many of the questions may be of a literal type, but gradually children, imitating their teachers' behavior, will learn to raise the level of their questions. Teachers can provide children with additional help and extra practice in asking questions in social studies by having them survey headings, topics, and sub-topics and turn these into questions.

#### Using Other Curriculum Areas

Instruction in critical reading should not end with the basal reading program. That program merely provides a foundation. Critical reading and thinking should be promoted by the total school program. As Heilman (1967) points out, "the abilities of critical reading operate in all reading situations . . ." (p. 435). Furthermore, psychology of learning maintains that purposeful practice is essential to the mastery of any complex skill (Gagné & Bolles, 1963). Since content area subjects provide functional opportunities for the development of critical reading ability, it is best to incorporate critical reading within the range of activities carried out in these subject areas throughout

the day. The ideal picture at any level is not critical reading for a period followed by study of social studies or science. Instead, once teachers have demonstrated use of the skills, every opportunity to use them in realistic situations must be seized.

#### Classroom Approaches

Teachers should provide practice for children in critical reading skills in science and in social studies by setting up reading purposes according to children's ability to deal with them. Gathering the facts should not be the only concern in these subjects. Children should be given enough facts to enable them to make predictions and then asked to make guesses about the consequences. Children in Grade V studying the History of Newfoundland and Labrador, for example, quickly learn that the English merchants and shipowners' main interest in Newfoundland was in making profits from the fishing ships they sent here. From this limited information the children could be asked to predict the merchants' reaction to fishermen settling here. Later, they can check their guesses against documentary sources or established facts and try, where necessary, to determine wherein their reasoning went wrong. Children can and should be taught to delve into the causes and the general significance of events. Instead of merely exposing children to the superficial treatment of the 'bank crash' in the Grade V text, teachers might involve them

in looking for the causes and the effects of it. Also, since much of the text is concerned with early settlement, children could investigate why some settlements grew and prospered and others failed and were abandoned. Studying content areas in this manner is bound to cause children to ask questions. Those questions that are not answered in the selection may then be investigated in other sources. Factual information can be compared, discrepancies can be noted, and the qualifications of authors can be determined. The sources of information for this kind of study may include factual accounts, biographies, magazines, and newspaper articles as well as reference materials such as encyclopedias and atlases.

Geography. Children will be using critical reading skills if they are asked to do research on a problem in the geographic area they are studying. This will involve locating dependable books and articles that deal with the problem at hand, selecting information that bears on the problem, and organizing this information so that it contributes to the solutions of the problem. Instead of just learning that areas like St. John's, Gander, and Lewisporte are growing centers in the province of Newfoundland, grade fives might examine what physical features of these areas contributed to their population growth and commercial development. When they study the seal fishery they could read and discuss what the Green Peace Organization and the

Cod Peace Group have both said, about this annual Newfoundland event. Such a study will give the children a chance to withhold judgment until they have gotten both sides of the issue and will also provide them with an opportunity to detect propaganda techniques. It will certainly raise questions for which the children will need to seek answers from other sources. In the Grade IV geography text, Around the World, children might consider how other people cope with their environment.

Geography texts of all levels will contain illustrations such as maps, charts, tables, and graphs. Children may need to be reminded that these illustrations are not just to be looked at but are to be read since they often clarify textual information. Teachers should teach children to analyze these for their accuracy and clarity. This will involve encouraging children to search through recent atlases and to send for updated statistics and information from the various departments of government. When the new information is gathered, the children might develop with the teacher's guidance graphs, charts, maps, or tables incorporating the updated statistics and information.

History. Children might be asked to imagine they live in a particular period and to write a diary entry, a story, or a poem describing their feelings. In Grade V history they might be asked to imagine they lived in St. John's during the fire of 1892. They could also weigh the actions

of citizens and government in the period of history they are studying. Again, in Grade V history they might weigh the actions of Lord Baltimore and Oliver Cromwell in getting Sir David Kirke recalled to England and imprisoned. In Grade VI, an account of some historical happening like the Riel Rebellion may lead to a debate or to the writing of a newspaper account of the same event.

Science. Children doing experiments might be asked to evaluate the directions for clarity as they read and think about the procedures involved. As the children continue to read and discuss the experiment, teachers might ask them to predict what would happen if a specific variable were manipulated. When the children have actually manipulated this variable, teachers could ask them to draw inferences from their observations, or even to hypothesize what would happen if certain variables were changed. Once the experiment has been completed, teachers might ask if the results were conclusive or if other tests were called for. From there the children might proceed to designing an experiment to test any hypotheses they formulated.

Mathematics. As children do verbal mathematics problems, they should be taught to distinguish known from unknown factors in the problems. After identifying this relationship, they can proceed to determine the necessary computations. Before performing the actual computations, they should estimate what the answer would most likely be.

### Making Use of a Variety of Sources

Most teachers are very much aware that many children regard the printed word as infallible. Gradually, teachers can help children outgrow this naive impression by having them identify and compare statements from several sources. When more sources than one are used, children will be able to compare facts and conclusions (Artley, 1959). A comparison of sources should help children see that sometimes different historical accounts do not agree on certain points and that a printed statement may be out of date. The War of 1812-1814, for example, as recorded in the Grade VI Ginn Studies in Canadian History may be reported quite differently in American texts. Children comparing these sources would be motivated to develop a critical attitude toward the readings as they sought to distinguish fact from opinion, determine each author's bias, judge each author's competency, and judge the reliability and validity of each piece of information.

In geography, changes in boundaries, place names, and population may not be given, and new countries may not be identified in the text. The copyright date of the Grade V geography text is 1972. Many of the Newfoundland mines operating at that time have since ceased operating. One such example is the fluorspar mine in St. Lawrence which closed in 1978. Some of the pictures in the text depicting Newfoundland communities are no longer truly representative of the areas shown and many figure captions

need to be updated. Besides making children aware of possible inconsistencies and inaccuracies in print, the search for additional information in a variety of sources should give them experiences in selecting information relevant to a particular topic, comparing it, evaluating it, organizing it, and presenting a report.

#### Free and Inexpensive Material

If children are to read critically, they need abundant materials at various reading levels in different subject areas. To some extent, teachers can provide such a diversity of materials by securing as much free and inexpensive material as possible (see Appendix K).

Magazines, brochures, and old texts. Teachers must always be on the lookout for magazines, brochures, and old texts that may be used in constructing materials at the interest and reading levels of children. Catalogues, bulletins, industrial and commercial pamphlets, travel folders, and government agency reports are available on request. These can be used to construct colorful, interesting reading material with up-to-date statistical information for children to compare with appropriate textbook information.

Libraries. School and classroom libraries should be utilized as much as possible. Children who have interesting books at home might be invited to share them with the class. Other possible sources of materials are the Arts



and Culture Centre Library in St. John's and the Curriculum Resource Centre at Memorial University. Books from these libraries may be borrowed for two or three weeks.

Films, filmstrips, records, and tapes. Teachers should not overlook the variety of free loan films, filmstrips, records, and tapes available from the Department of Education, the National Film Board, and the Junior Red Cross. These can not only provide vicarious experiences as well as develop concepts, but are also highly motivating for initiating discussion on critical viewing and evaluation of sources.

#### Activities Involving a Variety of Sources

With all the available resources there is no need to limit critical reading to the basal reader program. Instead, teachers can initiate activities that call for the location of information in a variety of sources. The reading textbook may serve as the starting point, but additional aids to learning may be found in other textbooks and library books. After reading about the voyages of early explorers like John Cabot and Christopher Columbus, Grade V children, for instance, should be able to find and compare library books and other history texts dealing with the voyages of these men.

Newspapers. Children can bring in copies of the Evening Telegram and the Daily News to compare reports of writers on the same event and to note variations. They can pick

out statements of fact and opinion, or they can study an account of a political speech, discussing it in terms of the propaganda techniques used.

Magazines. Book, play, and movie reviews in different magazines can be analyzed. Children coming from homes subscribing to Time or Maclean's might be asked to collect the reviews over a period of a few weeks. These can then be duplicated for various groups to compare how the reviewers agree or differ in their views (Cheyney, 1971).

Travel folders. Reported attractions in travel folders can be investigated in other sources, and costs can be compared among the different agencies. Similar types of travel packages might be compared and evaluated in terms of services offered and costs entailed.

Television. Opportunities for critical analysis need not be limited to printed matter or to school activities. Children's preoccupation with television viewing, for example, should be utilized. Teachers should get children to discuss their favorite television shows from the point of view of what makes them appealing. From such a discussion might evolve the need for children to analyze their television viewing habits. During this analysis teachers should strive to get them to focus on whether they watch programs selectively or indiscriminately. From this analysis children might proceed to draw up their own criteria

for judging the worth of particular shows. Here they might look at whether the programs present situations they can relate to, whether the incidents are realistic and whether the characters themselves are believable. For an analysis of overall programming, children might examine the appropriateness of the scheduled times for particular shows, the suitability of these shows for general viewing, and the variety offered in daily scheduled arrangements.

Children can be encouraged to watch favorite television commercials, analyzing their appeal and identifying advertising techniques used to sway the public. After the commercials are discussed in class, teachers might encourage children to revise them to give a more honest representation of the advertised product. Children may even want to do experiments with paper towels, cleansers, soaps, and garbage bags to test the accuracy of some of the commercial statements.

Films. Movies and filmstrips are other media which children may evaluate. After viewing a film or filmstrip, children might discuss whether: the material shown contributed to ideas not easily obtained from other sources, the vocabulary was suitable for the grade level, the photography was of good quality, and the film or filmstrip was old or new.

Human resources. Sometimes human resources can be drawn on. Other teachers or people in the community may be

interviewed to verify the accuracy of reported statements concerning places they have visited or lived in, or concerning events they have witnessed. Elderly men in the community who have actually participated in the annual seal hunt could be invited to class to recall their adventures and misadventures as well as to verify the accuracy of the Grade V history text's account of this annual event. Children studying Norway in the Grade IV geography text Around Our World could seek an interview with the Norwegian living in the community of Cape Broyle. He should be able to verify the accuracy of the text's account concerning the land, its people, and their way of life. Living in a sodded roof house will not seem so unreal to the children of the Southern Shore if they can view the Norwegian's home in Cape Broyle. Certainly they should enjoy comparing the Norwegian's fishing boat and gear with the local fishermen's boat and gear. This comparison could be for size, sturdiness, cost, and utility. There are also many people living on the Southern Shore who have worked in the mines in Labrador. These people should be able to inform the children about mining operations there, and answer questions in that specific area as well as satisfy the children's curiosity about the land, the climate, and the people. Children who have moved into communities from other provinces may also be able to verify the accuracy of reported statements concerning areas they came from. Children moving from Toronto who have visited the Metro

Toronto Zoo, for instance, may be able to verify the accuracy of statements in the Starting Points in Reading B, second book, basal reader selection "The Metro Toronto Zoo." Certainly they will be able to attest to the size of the zoo, and the kinds of animals found there, but they may also be able to add that the zoo ride reported as a future dream in the basal reader is today a reality.

#### Initiating Activities to Give Practice in Critical Reading

Developing critical reading ability takes time and effort. Like any other ability, it requires time for explanation, time for reflection, and time for practice. To insure maximum progress, teachers must not be satisfied with giving explanations and providing time for reflective thinking; they must also provide activities giving children opportunities to practice the ability. In this respect, teachers may often have to depend on their own initiative and creativity since development of critical reading ability is seriously neglected in most basal reading programs (Williams, 1959; Corbin, 1975).

#### Classroom Approaches

The creative teacher may find that in every school and community there are more materials and experiences for developing critical reading and thinking than most teachers realize. Activities involving brainstorming and riddles, for instance, are easily initiated and are highly motivating.

Teachers can also encourage children to evaluate ideas and engage in other critical reading exercises by involving them in activities related to the reading selections in their basal readers. In addition to initiating various critical reading activities, teachers need to provide free reading time at all grade levels as a major extension of the school reading program. This school time is vital in providing reading practice for children who need it the most. Otherwise, they get little or no practice in making a skill an integral part of performance.

Brainstorming. This activity gets children thinking, and thinking is vital to critical reading. Teachers may begin by dividing children into groups and giving them two minutes to write down all the uses they can think of for an object such as an ash tray or a rope. At the end of two minutes teachers should check on each group to see how they are progressing. Groups may be given additional time to look through reference books for extra help in expanding their lists. When all groups are satisfied with their lists, individual groups may be invited to discuss their items with each other.

Riddles. In addition to figuring out teacher-presented riddles, children may enjoy creating their own. Each can then exchange his creation with another child for the purpose of getting him to figure out the answer to the riddle.

Basal reader activities. Children may evaluate the actions of characters in a story, or vote for their favorite story character. With the latter activity, each child chooses the character he likes best from a unit of stories, and picks out from the story specific instances which reflect favorably on that character. Then he makes posters and slogans to encourage votes from the rest of the class. Before the election is held, each child makes a short presentation, pointing out the assets of his nominated character. The purpose of the presentation is to sway the voters who are required, of course, to evaluate the characters critically before they cast their votes (Criscuolo, 1979).

Free reading time. Classrooms need a variety of reading materials to entice children to read. One series that children usually enjoy and which may prove an invaluable asset to the classroom library is the Encyclopedia Brown Series. This series, available in paperback from Scholastic Book Services, provides reading enjoyment and encourages children to think while reading. There are nine books in the series, each containing 10 eight-page stories in which Encyclopedia Brown, a young boy detective, works to solve interesting cases. Each story ends with a challenging question for the reader to answer from clues contained within the story. Encyclopedia Brown's answers to the questions and solutions to the mysteries are in the back of each book. These can be cut out, labelled, and filed in an

envelope in the teacher's desk. Children may be invited to read some of the stories and challenged to solve the case. They can be given at least one day to think about each story and if they wish they may skim or read it again.

This series has been described in some detail because it stimulates thinking with its readily available questions at the end of each story and it gives teachers an idea they can use with other books in the classroom library. Teachers familiar with the children's books available in the classroom can prepare questions to insert at the end of various books. Or children, after reading these books, may be encouraged to pose questions for others to answer when they have read the books. Groups having read the same books should then be invited to discuss their answers and the reasoning behind them, pointing out information from the book to substantiate their claims.

The idea of having children on rare occasions answer and discuss specific questions on books they read in their free reading time can help develop critical reading ability. At the same time, it must be pointed out that children should not be required to answer specific questions on all books they read in this time. Such a practice could kill children's interest in reading and defeat the ultimate goal. There must also be times for children to read plenty of books of their choice, without having to answer questions.



### SECTION III

#### HELPING CHILDREN DEVELOP A CRITICAL ATTITUDE TOWARD READING

Critical reading consists not only of learning certain skills, but also of developing a critical attitude toward what is being read. Unfortunately, children do not automatically develop a critical reading attitude. Teachers have to stimulate and guide its development. There are many ways they can approach this task. Getting children to draw on their background experiences, making them aware of their own biases and attitudes, and encouraging them to withhold judgment until they have sufficient information are among the ways that will be discussed in this section. Of course, for any of these approaches to be effective, teachers must set the stage for thoughtful, purposeful reading by being good models in displaying attitudes of inquiry and suspended judgment.

#### Helping Children Draw on Their Background Experiences

Many children actually have the background experiences to extend their critical reading ability but fail to use them. Implicit in this statement is the need for teachers to take the time and trouble to encourage children to draw upon their experiences. Teachers acquainted with

the experiences of children can pose questions, bringing into focus meaningful associations with the reading. For the child with limited background experiences, teachers need to increase that background or find another way to relate the child's limited experiences to the new one.

#### Classroom Approaches

Teachers can best encourage children to draw on their background experiences as they build readiness for reading selections. At the beginning of the reading lesson a discussion should be held with children, inviting them to recall any experiences which they may have had regarding the topic. As the children discuss their experiences, much can be learned about what they know that will contribute to their understanding of the topic. At the same time shared experiences may broaden the limited experiences of others, help them more fully understand the selection, and perhaps stimulate further thinking.

As the reading proceeds, children should be asked to compare what they have read with what they know from their own experiences. Here, for example, readers can make judgments about the way characters act contrasted with what children have been taught at home, at school, and through the churches. With continued practice in this questioning technique, teachers may, after a short time, stimulate children to question information in the selections, evaluating statements in light of their previous knowledge.

### Making Children Aware of Their Own Attitudes and Biases

All children come to school with certain prejudices, emotions, and experiences which may be so strong that they do not allow an evaluation of the true facts (Crossen, 1948; McKillop, 1952; Piekarz, 1956). Perhaps the starting point in improving critical reading, then, is to make readers aware of their own personal feelings. Certainly, readers must learn to recognize their attitudes before they can attempt to control them. This is not suggesting that readers can totally submerge their feelings; far from it. Reading always is influenced by the reader's attitudes. Readers need, however, to be aware of the effects of the subjective element so that they can be minimized. Negative reactions toward the author's nationality, race, religion, or viewpoint must not be allowed to distort meaning. On the other hand, highly favorable impressions of the author's reputation or name must not lead readers to accept unquestioningly everything he has written.

#### Classroom Approaches

Conditions calling for recognition of one's personal feelings and attitudes may need to be planned by the teacher. Particular school or community issues on which opinions are strongly divided should prove useful. Reading material drawn from controversial fields such as politics, race, and religion is equally useful. Teachers

can further help children during the reading of basal reader selections. During the preparation for the reading of a selection, for instance, teachers might help children recognize their attitudes by encouraging them to express their personal opinions. Group discussions should prove fruitful here. These may bring out favorable or unfavorable attitudes towards topics. During the ensuing discussion teachers might also get children to examine how they arrived at their personal opinions or conclusions. In this respect, it is vital to ask them to validate their statements. Teachers should further lead children to see that without evidence their interpretation is being based on personal opinion rather than fact.

Local issues. Children should be asked to express their own feelings on school and community issues such as:

- Sex education in the schools
- Changing the present regulations governing the drawing of fish berths
- Banning moose and caribou hunting in the area
- The pros and cons of community councils

After expressing their opinion, children should be asked to research the topics through whatever means are available--for example, through guest speakers, interviews, and reading. Based upon what they have learned, they can write papers telling why they have or have not changed their minds.

Controversial reading material. Reading material drawn from controversial fields like politics, race, and religion is readily available through various magazines and newspapers. Teachers might select and duplicate pertinent sections from these materials for class reading. After the reading, class discussions should help children analyze their own reactions to the reading in light of their political leanings, religious affiliation, or feelings about racial issues. Experiences like these, provided frequently enough, should help children develop an awareness of their own views, and help them see how their judgments often tend to be made in the direction of their own feelings toward the subject (Anderson, 1960).

Basal reader. During the reading of basal reader selections children should be encouraged to think about the motives of characters, the drives that influence their behavior, and the emotions that affect their actions and decisions. Following the reading of the story "The Baker's Daughter" in the Grade IV basal reader Starting Points in Reading A, teachers might invite children to consider the kind of girl the baker's daughter was and why she acted as she did. It would be helpful here to teach the children to look at three things: (1) what the character says, (2) what the character does, and (3) what the other people say about the character. Similarly, in Grade V the teacher might encourage children to think about why Martin in "The

"Bully of Barkham Street" was a bully, or how he felt when he acted as a bully, or if they think he can change.

#### Helping Children Withhold Judgment

It is tempting to base conclusions upon a minimal amount of information, but critical readers must learn to curb this tendency. Instead, they must withhold final judgment until they have analyzed and interpreted the material. They must compare ideas presented in selections with external criteria provided by the teacher and authorities in the subject, or with internal criteria provided by their experience, knowledge, or values.

#### Classroom Approaches

Teachers can help children avoid making snap judgments by leading them into a discussion on the limitations of doing so. Children also learn to suspend judgment until all available sources are explored when the teacher insures that they are always given a purpose for reading and are always challenged to defend their interpretation of what they have read. Another effective procedure teachers might employ is asking children to check a group of ideas from a selection in terms of such statements as: selection proves this true, this might be true but selection does not tell, selection proves this false. An equally effective approach is asking children to determine which, if either, of two conflicting points of view is the correct one. The

objective here is to have children validate their statements with proof, and through the ensuing discussion determine why discrepancies exist. Sometimes it is beneficial to make children aware of bias in writing and of devices authors use to sway readers. Once aware of bias, the reader is more likely to make a conscious effort to withhold judgment until he has an adequate basis for coming to a considered conclusion. Bias and devices to sway readers will be dealt with in some detail in Section V.

Snap judgments. A very simple beginning in helping children withhold judgments may be to have the class give snap judgments on a current or local news item. In Grade VIII, for example, children could quickly decide for or against:

- Patriation of the Constitution
- Banning the seal hunt
- Maticil spraying

Afterwards they might be asked to collect, organize, and relate facts that have bearing on the items. Children should decide on the basis of the new evidence whether their previous judgments were correct. They may find that added information has changed their first impressions. Upon further investigation, they may conclude that their snap judgments were unsatisfactory, inadequate, or even unworkable.

Purposeful reading. At any grade level, there will be children who have not learned to initiate their own

purposes for reading. To insure that these children continually have a purpose for reading, teachers should use a Directed Reading Approach. Using this approach the teacher would motivate the children to set purposes for reading by asking them to read the title of a story and from it make suggestions on what the story is probably about, what the characters may be like, and what kinds of experiences they would expect the characters to have. Then from an examination of the pictures children would look for additional clues to support their suggestions as well as clues to where and when the story probably took place. As the reading of the selection proceeds, children seek verification of their responses. In addition the teacher stops at various points in guided reading to allow the children to anticipate outcomes and formulate judgments. Implicit here is that teachers preread selections to determine logical places for children to pause, anticipate, and make predictions. After the reading, children compare and discuss previous and final judgments as it is only natural that they may have had to accept, reject, modify, or extend their predictions.



#### SECTION IV

#### FORMULATING QUESTIONS TO ENCOURAGE CRITICAL THINKING AND READING

The art of asking thought provoking questions is an essential aspect of the teaching of critical reading. Too frequently, however, questions are asked merely to determine how well a child has remembered what he has been told or has studied (Guszk, 1967). This purpose of questioning, although quite legitimate, is not the major or most important purpose. On the contrary, as Stauffer (1969) maintains, questions which require only verbatim reproduction of the ideas deter critical reading by dulling children's natural curiosity and rewarding them for not thinking. Through frequent exposure to these literal type questions children may learn the superficial knack of giving back what the text says, and may even learn to anticipate the answer the teacher expects. Thus, they may incorrectly give the impression of having achieved a high degree of excellence in comprehension. Thought provoking questions, on the other hand, give children a mind set, guide them in what to look for, and suggest to them the more important aspects of the selection in front of them. As Taba (1964) points out, "a focus set by the teacher's questions circumscribes the mental operations which students can perform, determines

what points they can explore, and what modes of thought they can learn" (p. 53).

#### Preparing Questions

Good questions, like any other aspect of teaching, require careful planning. Such planning would involve teachers in:

- Becoming knowledgeable about the types of questions. Questions determining details and main ideas are not sufficient. Instead, questions must be developed requiring children to interpret, analyze, apply, and evaluate their reading as well as requiring them to make judgments and determine the author's purpose.
- Analyzing and planning the kinds of thinking tasks to be set. This necessitates previewing a selection to frame questions that will arouse interest, bring in experiences in everyday life, and challenge thinking.
- Being precise and clear in the wording of the questions to focus thinking squarely on the task.
- Encouraging a child who reports a fact to indicate how he knows it.

#### Questioning Procedure

Asking the right kinds of questions is only part of the art of questioning. Equally important in facilitating

critical thinking through challenging questions is the teacher's attitude during questioning and her treatment of the child's response. Her attitude should be natural, friendly, and conversational. She should ask questions in a friendly manner, not too hurriedly, and not in a fashion likely to create nervous tension. She should present questions to the class before calling upon a child to answer. Individual differences should be taken into account, and questions should be distributed. The teacher should not make a practice of calling on bright children at the expense of others, calling only on those who raise their hands, calling in a fixed order, or calling exclusively on the inattentive children. She should allow children time to think of and phrase an answer. Children slow in responding or responding with an incorrect or inadequate response should be given clues and encouragement to develop their own answers. The teacher should not cut off children's thinking by giving automatic answers. Instead, she should be willing to accept plausible answers, and not have a single response in mind. When necessary she may want to ask for clarification of responses in an attempt to further thinking or to determine how children were thinking.

#### Questions Requiring Judgments

Judging is an evaluative process in which the reader decides between right and wrong, between fairness and unfairness, or between success and failure. Even young

children are capable of this important thinking and learning activity, but they need experience in making responsible judgments based on facts rather than emotions or prejudice. They need to learn to weigh alternatives in judging whether a statement is true, a plan sound, or an action wisely taken (Stauffer, 1969).

Responsible judgments are based on careful study of the evidence. Children reading critically are aware of this. Hence, fully understanding the author's ideas, they select and weigh all the available information in terms of their own personal beliefs and values, and in terms of the historical time and setting of the actions and events. Any judgments made are relevant to the purposes declared and are fair and verifiable. Children abstain from making judgments when they lack sufficient information or background knowledge to provide them with a basis for judging. When they do make judgments they are able to support them by referring to the author's statement(s) and their own beliefs and values (Thorn & Pagan, 1977).

#### Classroom Approaches

Teachers can help children make responsible judgments by formulating questions that require them to do their own judging about information encountered in reading. In this connection, it is important that teachers not frame opinions in advance by giving their own or citing others' views. Instead, questions should be phrased so that different opinions can be accepted (Aschner, 1961). Questions

requiring children to accept or reject and to agree or disagree are usually beneficial. This means that teachers should question the desirability of characters or situations and the validity of arguments. It is equally useful to question whether stories are fictional or nonfictional and whether statements are fact or opinion.

### Sample Questions

Children in Grade V using the Starting Points in Reading B basal reader might be asked:

- How would you interpret the sentence: "Grown-ups filled him with defiance," in paragraph 18 of the selection "The Bully of Barkham Street"?
- Why did Martin in this story act the way he did?
- What would you do if someone called you names? Would you ignore them or act as Martin did? Why?
- How can Martin change his troublesome behavior?
- The story ends on the note that Martin has to change or lose the only real friend he has--his dog. What do you think Martin does? Why?
- Did this story interest you? Why (or why not)?

### Questions Requiring Analysis of Arguments

Skill in determining the validity of arguments is important to all people, but in a society such as ours, it is imperative. A great many ideas come to us in the form of arguments. Some are an honest effort to convince people of the merits of certain ideas. Others purport

to sell people ideas by presenting only the favorable aspects of them. Many commercial claims and political speeches fall into this category. Sometimes there is even a conscious effort to prevent the hearer or reader from becoming aware of all the important considerations. Thus the critical reader must be taught to look for opinions, assumptions, convictions, faulty reasoning, and sweeping generalizations when analyzing arguments.

#### Classroom Approaches

The teacher can prepare beginning elementary children to analyze the logic of arguments in selections by asking them whether the beginning of the selection is effective, the conclusion appropriate, the title well chosen, and the actions of the characters consistent. Older children should be expected to analyze a wider range of materials. Newspaper articles, discussions in books, pamphlets, statements by children in classroom discussions, and pro and con arguments about local, provincial, and national issues all provide content for critical analysis of arguments.

Analyzing arguments. Children learn to determine whether the arguments they read are logical when they are taught to examine the steps the author takes to prove his point. First, the main argument should be identified. As children reason through the supporting arguments, they should look for unproved statements and generalizations based on a single instance. Finally, they should examine the conclusion to decide whether there is enough evidence for it (Wolf, 1967).

### Sample Questions

Teachers might have to rely on newspaper articles and columns as source materials for providing practice in this aspect of critical reading. As children read these articles and columns, teachers can guide them in their analysis by formulating questions like the following:

- Does the author draw valid conclusions? Substantiate your answer.
- What arguments support the conclusion?
- What arguments refute it?
- Are there any arguments in the selection refuting one other? Explain.
- Does the author recognize both sides of the question? Prove your point.
- Does he use emotional appeals? What emotions does he appeal to? Why do you think these are effective?
- Has he omitted anything? How do you know? How can you find out?

### Questions Requiring Application of What Is Read

Children apply previously learned facts, principles, and generalizations to new problems and situations when they are challenged to do so (Hunkins, 1972). What this calls for is asking children to relate ideas they read to other situations and learning tasks. At the same time, it must be remembered that teachers cannot provide enough planned practice in critical reading to prepare the reader

for all reading situations. At best, they can simply provide a wide variety of examples requiring critical reading.

#### Classroom Approaches

Simply asking children to think of other solutions to problems in a story, ways of preventing events from happening, proof or disproof of superstitions or misconceptions, and their own actions in similar situations can be starting points for applying knowledge and comprehension. From there, application of the critical reading skills can be extended to the general curriculum by the teacher's formulating questions that require children to apply learned facts, generalizations, values, and principles. Whenever there is a possibility of application, children should be encouraged to attempt it.

Applying learned facts. Practical skills acquired in mathematics can be applied to local school situations. The proposal of new school buildings for three communities in the Ferryland School Board District, for instance, presents an ideal opportunity for applying mathematic skills. Children might be asked: "How many classrooms are needed to accommodate 30 children per class when the total enrollment is given? What dimensions would the lunch room call for if the building code requires four square feet of space per child?"

Applying principles of democracy. Understanding of the democratic process can be applied to the organization of



a class government. Children can hold their own elections for classroom councils. They could nominate candidates for president, secretary, treasurer, and classroom prefect. Nominated individuals could then organize their own campaign as they seek classmates' support in preparing banners, posters, and pins. The candidates themselves would also prepare speeches presenting their views and plans on what they would do if elected to the nominated positions. Children should be given three or four days to get organized before the candidates officially present themselves through their speeches. Once the speeches have been given, all the students in the classroom should be given a chance to secretly vote on the candidates of their choice. When the voting has ceased, all ballots should be counted to determine which candidates were successful in attaining a majority of the votes for each position.

#### Questions Requiring Evaluation

In essence, evaluation deals with judgment and focuses on the qualities of accuracy, acceptability, desirability, worth, or probability of occurrence. It requires checking the author's statements against experience and other sources. Hence, the reader must be taught to weigh what the author says and challenge ideas he feels are wrong. He must note whether the author is making sweeping generalizations which he does not back up with sufficient facts or whether he uses propaganda devices.

### Classroom Approaches

Evaluations can be made according to internal and external criteria. In terms of internal criteria, the child must be taught to analyze data or conclusions from standpoints such as logic, accuracy, and consistency. This involves asking whether the material is written from a biased point of view, and whether the author's line of reasoning can be followed, and whether his conclusions can be accepted. In terms of external criteria, the prime focus is on having the child apply known criteria (the reader's experience, knowledge, or values, and information provided by the teacher or by authorities on the subject) to judge the various situations or conclusions that he encounters or develops.

Evaluation exercises. It is important that children experience exercises that force them to evaluate. Exercises in this category would usually require children to:

- Discuss the merits of an individual story.
- Compare groups of stories for interest, plot, suspense, and character development.
- Discuss the styles and purposes of various types of materials.
- Check information in a basal reader against follow-up reading in reference texts.
- Decide on appropriate material to share with another class.

- Decide, on the basis of length, interest, dramatic quality, number of characters, scenery, props, and costumes needed, which of several stories would make the best dramatization or oral presentation.

Unless teachers require children to make evaluations, they are not likely to do so. Involving them in exercises like those listed above should encourage them to make the effort to evaluate as they read.

## SECTION V

### DEVELOPING CRITICAL READING SKILLS

Systematic guidance in developing critical reading ability is important if a child is to realize his potential as an intelligent reader. As Robinson (1972) points out, "critical reading is basic to the appreciation of literature, to arriving at sound conclusions about personal and social problems and to scientific investigation . . ." (p. 244). Ability in this area should also help eliminate the unresponsive and superficial reactions teachers often get from children. It should make reading more enjoyable and enriching and make for lifetime reading habits. Moreover, it should prepare children to read well enough to function effectively in and out of school, and should help them to make intelligent decisions based upon the material that they read.

Although many children experience difficulty in developing critical reading ability, most of them can and do learn when they are provided with adequate instruction (Taba, 1964; Wolf, 1967). Appropriate instruction, however, must be based on a diagnosis of the children's reading strengths and weaknesses. The implications here are that instruction be given at each child's functional reading level, and that it take into consideration any

factors and conditions that impede learning. At the same time, it must be remembered that critical reading skills develop over a long period of time. Even after all aspects have been introduced, refinement of them continues.

This section deals specifically with providing suggestions for helping children to develop the following reading skills:

- Differentiating between fact and opinion
- Recognizing the author's attitude
- Judging the competency of the author
- Determining the author's purpose
- Judging the validity and reliability of information
- Understanding implied meanings
- Detecting propaganda and advertising techniques

#### Distinguishing Fact from Opinion

Distinguishing fact from opinion is one of the sub-skills involved in critical reading. What makes this skill vital is the widespread tendency among people to accept unquestioningly as fact anything they see in print. Actually, many printed statements reflect opinions rather than proven facts. Sometimes these opinions are hidden and can be detected only through careful examination of the statements. Ability to distinguish fact from opinion is necessary, therefore, not only for school achievement but also in daily living.

Classroom Approaches

Distinguishing fact from opinion is often hampered by limited experiential background in the subject, vague ideas of what constitutes a fact, and unawareness of the clues signalling opinion (McKee, 1966). What is called for, then, is attention to these matters. Teachers must help children see that a fact can be distinguished from an opinion in that a factual statement can be verified and proven to be true. An opinion, on the other hand, is an expression of one's preference, feelings, beliefs, or judgments. Different people may have different opinions about the same thing, and not everyone may agree with an individual's opinion. From there, teachers can proceed to point out that another major difference between facts and opinions is the language in which they are expressed. Facts are stated as unqualified assertions and use more precise language than the qualifiers and indicators of opinions (Schell, 1967). Qualifiers children should be taught to look for are: seems, appears, probably, may, likely, possibly, apparently, and usually. Indicators to watch out for might include: I think, we believe, our conclusion, in the author's judgment, it has been reported, reliable sources inform us, in my opinion, it seems to me, if you ask me, and as I see it.

Although knowledge of the qualifiers and indicators of opinions is helpful, their usefulness as reliable clues for distinguishing facts and opinions should not be

overestimated. Sometimes authors omit qualifiers and indicators when expressing an opinion. Children must be made aware of this possibility as well as the possibility that facts may be distorted through omissions, misuse of words, and faulty observations.

Children should be taught to determine the relative merits of opinions as well as to separate the opinions from facts. They need to be shown that not all opinions are of equal value. Some are based on solid facts, whereas others are unsupported. Teachers can help children determine the validity of opinions by having them examine the integrity of the writer as well as other supporting evidence. Children will undoubtedly require many and varied opportunities to practice and apply this critical reading skill.

When children have difficulty distinguishing fact from opinion, they might be asked to select statements which tell about something they see, touch, hear, and feel. These can be compared with statements which tell what somebody thinks, believes, or feels, but which are not proven. From there they might proceed to listing facts about themselves: age, birthday, parents' names and address. Then they might list opinions such as "I am the best player on our team," and "My mom makes the best apple pie."

#### Related Activities

As their skill improves, children should be given practice in separating fact from opinion when a list of interwoven facts and opinions is presented. At first,

only clear-cut facts and opinions within familiar content should be presented. Grade V children, for example, might be presented with a list of statements like the following:

- Every boy should have a dog.
- John Cabot made a voyage to Newfoundland in 1497.
- Cape Broyle is the most beautiful settlement on the Southern Shore.
- The Western Adventurers opposed early settlements in Newfoundland.
- Newfoundland became a part of the Dominion of Canada in 1949.

When children become more proficient in this skill, teachers might ask them to determine if the information presented in a paragraph is fact or opinion. Later, as their reading interests and skills expand, they might be asked to list the facts and opinions from reading selections in library books, encyclopedias, and newspapers. As a follow-up to all of these activities, children should be given opportunities to discuss their findings, commenting on reasons for their choice.

#### Recognizing the Author's Attitude

Sometimes a writer's feelings on a subject color and distort the objectivity of his thoughts, and hence influence the way he writes on that subject. He may, for instance, put a statement of fact in a context which makes it sound different from the actual fact, or he may ask a



question which insinuates that something is true when it is, in fact, utterly false.

Often the author's feelings are not stated formally, and as a result require careful reading to be exposed. Feelings presented as thoughts can be revealed provided the reader is aware that attitudes are often reflected in tone--serious, light-hearted, ironic, sarcastic, logical, emotional, or condescending--and in the author's choice of words.

#### Classroom Approaches

Teachers can help children recognize the author's attitude by beginning very simply with statements expressing clearly identifiable opposing attitudes such as:

- 1) I skipped, ran, twirled, and sang as I returned home from school with my report.
- 2) Tears streamed down my face, as I trudged slowly home from school.

Children might indicate which sentence reveals a happy attitude and which one reveals the opposite. Groups of children could compare lists of words making them think of pleasant and unpleasant things and the like. A comparison of these lists could then result in a discussion of how the words evoke the feelings they do.

After a brief exposure to sentences clearly revealing the author's attitude, most children will be ready to proceed to short selections which clearly indicate the author's attitude. After reading a selection like "A Day

to Remember" in the Grade IV basal reader Hockey Cards and Hopscotch, for instance, children might be asked to indicate how the author feels about animals and about zoos, especially about Mr. Wills' zoo, or they may be asked how the author wants the reader to feel. During the questioning, teachers should try to elicit from children evidence from the story or selection to support their answer. Children might even be encouraged to write a story giving the opposite feeling.

#### Related Activities

Exposure to content expressing various points of view is basic when one is learning to recognize the author's attitude. Children must be introduced to columns and articles in newspapers and news magazines. Sample paragraphs containing words which reflect bias or opinion can be presented to them. After children have had a chance to read and reflect on the selection, a discussion on whether the statements were biased may be initiated. For variation, two paragraphs printed side by side dealing with a current topic can be presented. One paragraph should be written in a factual manner, the other in an opinionated and biased manner. Children can compare and discuss both approaches, noting how one presented a slanted view (McElwee, 1974).

### Judging the Competency of the Author

A major purpose of critical reading instruction is to help children understand that the printed word is not infallibly derived from some ultimate authority. Children, therefore, need to be taught to examine the author's qualifications. In this regard the author's background, education, reputation, interests, and professional position need to be investigated.

#### Classroom Approaches

Checking the background and competency of an author is not always easy, particularly if he is not well-known. Nevertheless, children in the early elementary grades (4-6) should be taught to look at the title page or book cover for information pertaining to an author's background and experience. Questions can guide their search for this information. Teachers might ask if the author is writing about something of which he has first hand experience. If so, are his experiences recent? Has he written on the topic before? Has he an appropriate educational background?

In the later elementary grades (7-8), children with their teachers might decide upon questions that, if answered, would help them decide on the qualifications of an author.

It is unrealistic to assume that children need to check on the author's qualifications for every selection that they read. The ultimate goal should be to make

children aware of the importance of judging the author's competence in the subject on which he is writing and then, if adequate resources are available, to give them opportunities to practice this skill. Such a goal may be achieved by beginning with basal reader selections, but it is probably best achieved throughout the year with four or five reading selections outside the basal reader program specifically chosen for their disagreement in information.

Checking author competency. Children must be directed to biographical dictionaries and encyclopedias to find answers to their questions on author competency. Journals where an author has appeared, advertisements of his work, the reputation of the publishing house, and the opinions of other writers are equally helpful resources in determining the reliability of an author. Since most of these resources will likely be in limited supply, teachers may need to have a group share one or two references and prepare oral and written reports for the class. As a last resort, children might write to the publisher to obtain information about the author.

If it is impossible for children to secure adequate information about authors, teachers may fruitfully present them with information secured from larger library centres. This information should indicate the author's professional training, interests, and other works.

Selecting most qualified authors. For additional practice in sharpening skill in judging the author's competency, children might be asked to select from a list of three or four authors the one most qualified to write on a suggested topic.

Example: Repairing an automobile

- (a) doctor
- (b) mechanic
- (c) car salesman

For variation, teachers could provide only the list of topics and ask children to write down the person they think would be most qualified to write reliably about each one.

#### Determining the Author's Purpose

Recognizing the author's intent puts the reader in a better position to evaluate the message. Children, therefore, must be taught to determine whether the author wrote the material to present facts about some particular person, thing, or event, to make a specific point he feels strong about, to persuade, to entertain, or for some other purpose. Sometimes the purpose is plainly stated, but most often it is hidden and must be inferred from what is written.

#### Selected Activities

If teaching children to determine an author's purpose the following activities from Harris and Smith (1976) may prove useful:

- Having children select from three or four stated purposes the one that best represents the author's purpose.
- Having children read and discuss selected paragraphs with readily identifiable purposes.
- Having children read selections in which the author's purpose is hidden and discuss why they think the author wrote the selections. It is important that children give reasons or quote passages to back up their opinion.
- Having children write paragraphs on the same subject with different specific purposes in mind and then compare the paragraphs.
- Having children discuss the author's purpose in each of several newspaper and magazine articles shown on the overhead projector.
- Having children determine the author's style of writing. Is it narrative, expository, or persuasive? Children should see that authors use each style to suit their purpose. If they want to explain something in a matter of fact way, for example, they often use the expository style of writing. But when they use connotative and emotionally appealing words to get a reader to see something, their purpose is usually to persuade.

### Judging the Reliability and Validity of Information

Since today's children live in a world of rapidly increasing knowledge, it is vitally important that they be taught to judge the reliability and validity of information.

#### Reliability

This aspect of writing is affected by the competence of the author to write about the subject, and may also be affected by the publication date. Thus, background information may show that an author has written an article on something about which he has no experience, or the copyright date may indicate that the information given is no longer consistent with presently established facts. Children need to understand that the reliability of the statements in such articles is likely to be lower than the reliability of similar articles recently written by qualified people.

#### Classroom Approaches

When determining the reliability of a passage or selection, children should learn to examine copyright dates, to distinguish between primary and secondary reports, and to look for corroborating material. Anyone who reports facts should be challenged to indicate how he knows them. If he has read them, he should be asked how the author knows. Teachers should keep asking "how" again and again.

Examining copyright dates. Children might be asked to look up topics on space exploration and medical research in a book with an old copyright date and in a more recent one, and to compare the two. A comparison of different editions of the same encyclopedia will also clearly demonstrate to children how knowledge changes.

Primary and secondary reports. Primary reports include reports of direct observation or experience, personal testimony, records, and the like. Statements found in these are often more reliable than inferences made from them or reports based on them. Typical secondary reports are found in newspapers and textbooks.

### Validity

Validity is concerned with the purpose of the author in writing, the purpose of the individual in reading, and the internal consistency of the statements or arguments.

### Classroom Approaches

In judging the validity of information, children must be taught a number of interacting critical reading skills. First, they must be made aware of the value of the preface in giving a clue to an author's purpose. Second, they must be taught to distinguish relevant and irrelevant details. Finally, they must be taught to determine whether the conclusions follow from the arguments.

When learning to distinguish relevant and irrelevant details, children should find the main idea



of a selection and then look for details supporting, adding to, or relating to the main idea. Or, they may be given paragraphs containing irrelevant ideas and, after discussing the main idea of each, they can be asked to cross out statements that do not belong.

With much practice under many circumstances children can learn to note omission of information needed for understanding of the whole, to recognize ideas placed out of logical order, and to separate factual statements from those of opinion.

#### Understanding Implied Meanings

Words suggest many things to different people. Skillful writers cleverly make use of figures of speech and the connotative power of words to get readers to feel a certain way, or to stop them from thinking in a different way. Indeed, there are professional writers who spend their whole lives writing to influence others.

The teacher's job is to help children become knowledgeable in the techniques which authors, news media, and the other forms of communication use to get an audience. Children who can evaluate implied meanings are better equipped to make rational judgments about what they are reading.

#### Figures of Speech

In the elementary grades, children encounter more and more instances of words carrying figurative rather than

strictly literal meaning. Heilman (1967) reports that "as early as second and third grade numerous figures of speech and idiomatic expressions appear in basal reader series" (p. 429). Certainly, it is not uncommon to find metaphor, simile, hyperbole, and personification. Children sometimes take these literally and as a result misinterpret the reading selection (Zintz, 1975). Teachers must help children recognize figures of speech for what they are if they are going to understand their figurative meanings and to appreciate their value in written and oral communication.

#### Common Comparative Types

Some commonly used comparative types are: simile, metaphor, personification, irony, and hyperbole.

Simile. A simile expresses likeness between two things that, in most respects, are totally unlike. Example: ". . . a hamburger, as large around as a baseball glove . . ." in the Grade IV basal reader Starting Points in Reading A, first book, p. 11.

Metaphor. Sometimes authors omit like or as and simply state that one thing is another or acts as if it were. This kind of comparison is called a metaphor. Example: "Night is a purple pumpkin" in Starting Points in Reading A, first book, p. 103.

Personification. Frequently, authors use personification to compare things or ideas by giving them life and

personality. Example:

Winter has a pencil  
For pictures clear and neat  
She traces the black tree-tops  
Upon a snowy sheet

in Starting Points in Reading A, first book, p. 200.

Irony. Occasionally, clever writers make their point by deliberately saying the opposite of what they mean. They are using irony. Example: The comment of Dick Gregory, a black American athlete in "Not Poor, Just Broke"--"I should have gotten that little crippled kid's autograph. He was an American," from the Grade VIII text, The Study of Literature, New Edition, p. 454. When one understands the situation--that Dick, despite his athletic recognition, was socially unacceptable--the irony becomes clear.

Hyperbole. When the desired effect is achieved by exaggerating, hyperbole is the technique used. Example: "I saw it was a crocodile, / From the end of his nose to the tip of his tail, / It measured 500 miles" from "The Wonderful Crocodile" in the Grade VIII Study of Literature, New Edition, p. 206.

#### Classroom Approaches

To help children appreciate and understand figures of speech, it may be necessary to start at the concrete--at the child's level of experience--and progress to higher and higher abstractions. As children are led to awareness of figurative language, attention should be drawn to the

comparative nature of the various figures of speech and the similarities and differences among them. In this respect, teachers might consider discussing the examples of figurative language found in the children's own oral and written expressions as well as instances that appear in stories that children hear or read. Using context and the situation or incident described in the story, the teacher can show that the literal meaning does not make sense. This should lead to a discussion of the actual meaning.

#### Related Activities

An interesting activity is to bring in a variety of things whose taste can be related to sweet, or sour, or salty, and have children sample and compare them. Children might also be asked to observe how people, animals, and things move, function, and look. From there they can move into a discussion of the behavioral qualities of various animals that give meaning to phrases such as "fast as a deer," "hungry as a bear," and "strong as an ox." Young elementary children will enjoy pantomiming actions for others to guess. The goal here is to get the actor to state what he did once the action has been identified--"I walked like a bear."

For variation, teachers might introduce opposite qualities like soft and hard with objects such as a cotton ball and a rock. A grab bag with hard and soft objects in it can be used quite effectively for this purpose.

Individual children can feel an object in the grab bag and state whether he feels something hard as the rock or soft as the cotton.

Other activities that should make figurative language meaningful and interesting to children might include: asking them to draw pictures illustrating both the literal and figurative meanings for expressions like:

- The school rocked with laughter.
- It's raining cats and dogs.
- Tom knew he'd be in hot water if he missed his homework, again.

After reading a selection, children could be asked to select from among a list of interpretations the appropriate one for each figurative example. Example: From the story "Sharpur the Carpet Snake" in the Grade IV basal reader Starting Points in Reading A, second book, teachers might select an expression like the following: "And one greengrocer's wife . . . fought her way out of the market, screaming like a fire engine. . . ." Children could be asked to select the appropriate interpretation from:

- (a) The greengrocer's wife imitated a fire engine.
- (b) The greengrocer's wife screamed very loudly.

As children's understanding of figurative language improves, they may be asked to rewrite literal statements as figurative expressions. Example: "A grizzly has sharp claws" may be rewritten as "A grizzly has claws that are as sharp as a razor blade" or "A grizzly has razor-sharp claws."

### Connotations of Words

Children need to be made aware how clever writers not only use figures of speech, but how they also play upon the connotations of words. Undoubtedly, most children will readily understand that words can be used to present facts accurately, to present ideas clearly, and to appeal to emotions legitimately. Children may require help, however, to see that words can be used to distort facts, to confuse ideas, and to arouse emotions for improper ends.

Being aware of the connotations of words is especially important when reading propaganda or advertising. As Spache and Berg (1966) note, "almost every word may be weighed and considered in terms of the reactions it may evoke" (p. 127). Advertisers and propagandists use words with good connotations for their product or cause and words with bad connotations for their competitors or opposition. Being aware of these devices is a step toward reading critically.

### Classroom Approaches

When examining the connotation of words, teachers should point out that connotations can vary for different people but that some words have good connotations for most people. The connotations of "God," "hero," and "truth," for example, are usually good. There are other words whose connotations are usually bad, for example, "dictator" and "communist." Children should be shown that a

writer may lead them to believe that what he says is good by associating something with a good word or by calling something by a good name. Conversely, to lead the reader to believe that it is bad, he may associate something with a bad word or call it by a bad name.

Most reading activities can be used to help children grow in their perceptions of the connotative power of words. After reading a selection such as "The Baker's Daughter" in the Grade IV basal reader Starting Points in Reading A, first book, for example, children might be asked to tell how they feel about the baker's daughter. It is important that teachers try to draw out the terms (proud; points her chin; turns up her nose; very, very superior) that make them feel this way.

#### Related Activities

Two related activities that may help increase children's awareness of the connotative power of words are: providing children with a list of words from which they are asked to select those which make them think a person is mean or happy, and the like, and showing children several pictures and asking them to give words making others like or dislike the pictures.

Newspapers, advertisements, and political speeches are excellent sources for working with connotative language. Children might be asked to underline all the words evoking emotional responses in a selection, to find words appealing

to the senses, to discuss words advertisers avoid, to underline examples of exaggeration, and to find words giving feelings about people or places (Harris & Smith, 1976).

#### Detecting Propaganda Techniques

Propaganda, or systematic efforts to spread opinions or beliefs, is prevalent in many forms. It is found in advertisements, political speeches, editorials, cartoons, and billboard announcements. Propaganda is not necessarily bad but, as McKee (1966) points out, it is often misused. In any case, it should be recognized for what it is. Unfortunately, learning to detect and evaluate propaganda is not easy. Nevertheless, children should be made aware of some of the more obvious propaganda techniques, and learn to avoid being unduly influenced by them.

#### Propaganda Techniques

There are seven undesirable propaganda techniques with which good critical readers should be acquainted (Kottmeyer, 1967).

Bad names. This technique involves indiscriminate use of such labels as "pig" or "red" to create an unfavorable impression.

Glad names. This technique is the opposite of name calling. It is cushioned in phrases that are acceptable and pleasant to most people, for example, "loyalty," "honesty," and



"faith in God." These words are used to make others accept a point of view without examining specifics.

Transfer. This technique capitalizes on the reputation of an organization by using its name for the purpose of selling or promoting a program, idea, or product.

Testimonial. This technique bases its appeal on the endorsement of products by famous people or groups such as movie stars and athletes.

Plain folks. This technique is often used by a public speaker such as a politician or business man to win support by promoting himself as a common man.

Card stacking. This technique tells only one side of the argument without relating the other side. Anyone not familiar with a given subject may be easily misled by a one-sided presentation.

Bandwagon. This technique implies that everybody is doing it.

#### Classroom Approaches

Children must be made aware that the propaganda devices prey on human weaknesses, appealing to emotional needs, prejudices, and social needs for acceptance, status, or security. When guiding children to an awareness of these facets of propaganda, teachers should provide as many concrete examples and applications to actual

experience as possible. Such experiences might include a study of newspaper editorials, articles, advertisements, and cartoons. During the course of the study, it may be necessary to caution children to keep an open mind and to look for opposing arguments.

#### Related Activities

There are many activities teachers can involve children in during their critical analysis of propaganda:

- Analyze political speeches, advertisements, and editorials for the propaganda techniques employed.
- Identify and evaluate the message apart from the devices used to persuade the reader.
- Judge the propaganda good or bad on the basis of the following criteria:
  - good -- it tries to get people to believe or do something worthwhile or helpful to others.
  - bad -- it is a deliberate lie told to get people to accept unlawful or unethical actions.
- Prepare a simple skit using an actual or invented political speech to demonstrate good and bad propaganda.
- Look for positive and appealing words and negative and degrading words in political speeches.
- Examine the promises made in political speeches and discuss why or why not all or any of these can be kept.

- Discuss why people want to fool others and appear to be what they are not.
- Write a report that might be included in a newspaper or magazine known for sensationalism.
- Interpret political cartoons.
- Examine newspapers for examples of extreme or one-sided viewpoints.
- Discuss criteria voters should keep in mind when electing candidates to political positions: candidate's platform, experience, and ability to do the job.
- Make a bulletin board display illustrating all the different propaganda techniques studied.

#### Detecting Advertising Techniques

Advertising represents one of the biggest businesses in the country today. And advertising is the business of persuasion. As Heilman (1967) says, "It is a rare day when millions of people are not taken in by some form of advertising" (p. 437). Since every individual in the country represents a potential buyer, children should be taught to examine critically the advertising claims made for various products.

#### Advertising Techniques

There are 10 basic advertising techniques consumers should be aware of (Schrank, 1975).

The weasel claim. This claim uses what Schrank calls "weasel words," meaning that when critical readers really examine them they are hollow and have no meaning. Example: "Head and Shoulders Shampoo helps control dandruff." Notice the claim is not stops but helps control it.

The unfinished claim. This claim advocates that a product is better than other products, or has something they do not have, but never says what that is. Example: "Twice as much of the pain reliever doctors recommend." Twice as much of what kind of pain reliever is not indicated.

The we're-different-and-unique claim. This claim states that there is nothing else like the advertised product. Example: "Whirlpool - What every other microwave is missing."

The water-is-wet claim. This claim says something true about the product, but it is also true for any other product. Example: "Charley smells different on everyone." Perfumes generally smell different on different people.

The so-what claim. This claim says something about a product that is true, but this has no advantage. Example: "A deodorant strong enough for a man but made for a woman."

The vague claim. This claim makes use of statements that are not clear. Such statements sound good but mean little. They appeal to emotions rather than intellect. Example:

"It's better in the Bahamas." Little is said about the Bahamas. Instead attractive men and women are the main focus of the advertisement.

The endorsement or testimonial. This claim, already discussed in propaganda devices, uses well-known people to advertise products. These personalities claim to use the product but very often they do not use it. Example: Gordie Howe advertising Deep Healing Rub says, "I use Deep Healing because it helps keep me moving." Does he really use it, or is he just reading pre-written lines for an advertisement?

The scientific claim. This claim makes the consumer think the product is best because of some sort of statistic, scientific evidence, or special ingredient. Example: "Easy Off has 33% more cleaning power than another popular brand." What is the other brand? The advertisement does not say.

The compliment-the-consumer claim. This claim takes advantage of the fact that everyone likes to be complimented. Example: "The Parker Arrow Clip - The mark of pride and distinction" and "Alfa owners are among the proudest people in the world. Just ask one."

The rhetorical question. This claim uses the technique of asking a question in such a way that an answer from the reader or listener is not really demanded. The speaker or

writer simply assumes the answer will be the one he wants. Example: "In today's economy, why would a family buy any car other than a Delta 88?"

#### Classroom Approaches

Teachers can guide children to become consciously aware of advertising techniques by examining with them some familiar advertisements. Posing questions that stimulate the children to study the advertisements critically may be all that is needed to get them thinking critically about them. Teachers might, for instance, commence with questions having children recognize the way in which the advertisement tries to appeal. In this sense, children might be asked to select words or phrases which are used to make the reader want to buy. During the analysis, teachers might also ask the children to determine how many of the statements are factual and how many are only assumptions upon which the arguments for buying the product are based. After a discussion of these questions, children could categorize advertisements according to the devices used.

#### Related Activities

After the children have studied the various advertising techniques, teachers might involve them in activities like these:

- Choose a product and write your own advertisement.

- Write several advertisements for the same product using a different technique each time.
- Discuss why a particular brand name was selected for a product.
- Change certain words or phrases to make people dislike the product.
- Set up checklist criteria for choosing products like toys or clothes.
- Compare what different advertisements say about the same product.
- Examine the values of our culture reflected in the advertisements.
- Bring advertised toys and games to class, so that the class can examine them, test out the quality of them, and compare their findings with the advertisers' claims.
- Judge the advertisement as good or bad, depending on whether it advertises some harmless product or things harmful to mental or physical health.
- Write magazines, newspapers, and radio and television stations to approve or disapprove of specific advertisements or commercials.
- Compare and contrast television and newspaper advertisements of particular products.
- Prepare simple skits using actual or invented commercials to demonstrate the good and bad uses of advertisements.

A culminating activity could include making a bulletin board display illustrating all the different advertising techniques studied. Children have fun working with advertisements--learning to analyze them critically--when teachers engage them in activities like those suggested.



## SECTION VI

### EVALUATING CHILDREN'S CRITICAL READING ABILITY

Instruction, if it is to be effective, must be based on a comprehensive assessment of each child's present strengths and weaknesses. Such an assessment requires both informal and formal evaluation that is continuous and consistent with what is being taught (Tyler, 1949).

#### Informal Evaluation

Teachers need to keep themselves informed as to the progress children are making in applying the various critical reading skills. Probably the best way to do this is to observe children's responses during reading and discussion activities. The information supplied from these observations may reveal something of the thinking processes children use as they are engaged in critical reading. In addition, it may provide insight about the learning conditions that foster specific types of behavior.

#### Observation

Observation as an evaluation tool is available to all teachers. It can be employed every day and does not require extra time or materials. It simply involves watching a

child's behavior to note growth or lack of growth in critical reading. The directed-reading lesson, independent work assignments, and all other school activities where children and teachers work together provide situations in which critical reading and thinking behavior can be evaluated. Indeed, many bits of information significant to critical reading growth can be secured only through observation.

Teachers should plan to use every opportunity to observe children daily as they engage in reading and discussion activities. Before undertaking the observation, it is important that teachers outline specific purposes for it. Under no circumstances should they attempt to record observations of all children at one time. Instead, each teacher must decide on which child or children she will focus attention, and during which activities. To some extent this will be determined by the need for further information as indicated by test data and daily work performance.


Observation notes. Once the observation is undertaken, the teacher should note:

- the responses of specific individuals to questions
- the acquaintance of specific individuals with sources of information
- the ability of specific individuals to evaluate and compare sources
- the ability of specific individuals to extract relevant information from sources

- the ability of specific individuals to organize and report information effectively.

Informal records. Teachers should plan to keep an informal record of these day-by-day observations. A file folder on each child is very useful. From time to time, teachers might insert dated anecdotal notes on a child's observed behavior. These may include only a sentence or two for a given day. In the course of time, these records should reveal in what direction the child is moving with respect to significant aspects of critical reading growth.

Checklists. Checklists to record details of reading behavior are quite useful (Janes, 1970). Since these direct the teacher toward the behavior to look for and analyze, they add objectivity to this informal method. At the same time, however, teachers must remember that checklists are not final, complete, or highly accurate. No single instrument is. Each is but a record of observed behavior, or sample of behavior that achieves meaning only in the context of repeated samples. The following checklist is offered as an example of the type teachers might develop. The characteristics of critical reading given on pages 128-130 should also provide some additional behavioral responses to look for when observing critical reading behavior.



## CRITICAL READING CHECKLIST

Student's Behavior	Always	Usually	Seldom	Never
Raises hand to answer question before the question is completed				
Makes hasty generalizations				
Oversimplifies an issue				
Accepts what is read without checking sources				
Resists other ideas just because they are different from his own				
Shows an inability to concentrate				
Is over-dependent on the teacher				
Draws inferences				
Determines the author's purpose				
Examines alternatives before reaching a conclusion				
Distinguishes fact from opinion				
Interprets figures of speech				
Listens attentively and critically				
Develops independent purposes for reading				
Volunteers a response				

Student's Behavior	Always	Usually	Seldom	Never
Detects propaganda devices				
Detects advertising devices				
Recognizes the author's attitude				
Judges the competency of the author				
Judges the validity and reliability of information				

As each item on the checklist is observed and noted for individual children, strengths and weaknesses in specific aspects of critical reading ability as well as general overall critical reading ability will be revealed. A general lack of critical reading ability will be noted by a majority of the check marks indicating "always" and/or "usually" in the first seven items, and a majority of "seldom" and/or "never" check marks in the remaining items. Of course, a checklist profile indicating a majority of "seldom" and/or "never" check marks in the first seven items and a majority for "always" and/or "usually" in the remaining items will reveal general critical reading ability. Specific skill area weaknesses in critical reading will be noted by the responses for each individual item. "Always" and/or "usually" for each of the first seven and "seldom" or "never"

for each of the remaining items will indicate possible weaknesses.

### Children's Self-Evaluation

Children at the elementary level should be expected to assume some responsibility for evaluating their own critical reading ability. Whenever a new skill is taught, children should be encouraged to examine and assess their own understanding of it. To begin, they might ask themselves how well they have applied the skill in daily reading activities. A review of samples of their classwork in relation to stories in basal readers, workbook practice, and selected materials in content area reading should help them answer this question. For a more objective, but still somewhat subjective, analysis of their critical reading strengths and weaknesses, children could be provided at regular intervals with an individual checklist of critical reading behavior similar to that given below:

#### Self-Evaluation Checklist

Name:

Date:

Behavior	Yes	No
1. Do I question vague expressions?		
2. Do I question the author's motive?		
3. Do I question slanted presentations?		
4. Do I pause periodically in my reading to collect and organize my thoughts?		
5. Do I want to seek confirmation of facts?		

These individual checklists could be kept in each child's reading textbook if individual file folders are not kept by the children. At bi-weekly intervals children could be directed to read through the questions on the checklist, placing a check in the appropriate column beside each behavior to indicate his judgment on his own application of the skill. Gradually, additional critical reading behaviors would be added to the checklists. When children have had some experience in using such checklists they might build their own lists of describable critical reading behaviors.

#### Miscue Analysis

Miscue analysis is an oral reading evaluation technique that can provide an insight into the strategies readers use when they are reading as well as provide an assessment of their comprehension. As an evaluation technique, it simply involves looking at the general pattern of miscues or mistakes readers make in a reading passage. It must be emphasized that the number of miscues is not as important as the kinds of strategies each reader is using. The key strategies to evaluate are those concerned with the degree to which a reader's miscues produce a meaningful, acceptable sentence while reading is taking place, or the degree to which self-correction occurs if the miscue is unacceptable. All corrected miscues and attempts at correction should be read as finally resolved by the reader. When there are no attempts at correction the miscues should

be recorded as read. Miscues that are acceptable within the reader's dialect should be considered acceptable (Goodman & Burke, 1980).

Procedure. Individual children are asked to read an unfamiliar passage at their reading level. In this way there can be no possibility that the reader's responses are based on expectations from previous reading. The miscues will indicate ability to anticipate the author's meaning. Since not all passages may be suitable for evaluating some of the critical reading skills discussed in the booklet, teachers will need to be selective. They may want to find passages in which the author is expressing a point of view, is making use of figurative language, and is using propaganda and advertising techniques. When a suitable passage is selected, the child is asked to read it and told to continue reading past any problem.

After the reading, the child's comprehension should be checked by asking him to retell the material. The retelling should include not only a description of the plot but should also contain comments on characters and feelings. These retellings may reveal whether the child is weak in interpreting content, sequence, character development, cause-effect relationships, distinguishing fact from opinion, drawing conclusions, making predictions, interpreting figurative language, judging the characters' actions, and inferring the author's purpose. Following the retelling,



there should be questions requiring an evaluation response. Pages 175-177 of the booklet should be helpful in this regard. Of course, the actual questions asked will depend to a large extent on the content of the passage. Some general question types that may be used are:

- What was the character really like?
- Why did he act as he did?
- What does the author mean when he says (insert a figurative expression used in the passage)?
- Why did the author write this?
- What ideas or facts do you believe? Why?
- Did you enjoy the selection? Why (or why not)?

The whole process can be preserved for evaluation purposes by tape recording the reading. While listening to the tape at a convenient time and place, the teacher can code miscues on a reproduced copy of the story being read. An analysis of these miscues, together with an analysis of the retelling, and the answers to the questions asked, will yield a profile revealing the strategies and critical reading skills the reader used as he interacted with the print.

#### Formal Evaluation

While teachers can do day-by-day observation, it is also important that they make more formal periodic checks of progress. This type of evaluation is best done through written tests which are based on the lessons taught.

### Constructing Written Tests

Written tests devised and used by teachers should be geared to the instructional objectives. Otherwise, they will be ineffective and unmeaningful (Tyler, 1949). Since the prime objective here is to improve children's critical reading ability, assessment of that ability must be the focal point of the evaluation. Tests which simply examine children's recall of specific information will not be valid in this instance.

Test items. Test items should require children:

- to recognize faulty reasoning
- to identify omission of important facts
- to note discrepancies in information
- to judge the trustworthiness and truthfulness of materials
- to judge and analyze statements
- to apply prior knowledge to reach conclusions
- to compare information from various sources for likenesses and differences in content, form, author's purpose, and facts provided
- to identify the author's opinion
- to detect hidden meanings
- to interpret figurative language
- to make generalizations from facts
- to identify persuasive use of words

All of these items might be included among the various questions asked on unfamiliar selections that are similar to those studied. In this way, children will be applying the various critical reading skills that they have learned. This type of evaluation can be carried on at any grade level provided the material and the questions are appropriate to the grade level.

Cloze Procedure. As an evaluation technique the cloze procedure involves presenting children with reading passages at their reading levels in which every tenth word is deleted for factual material and every fifth word for narrative material. The first and last sentences of the selection are left intact. Blank underlined spaces are substituted for the deleted words (Taylor, 1953). Each passage should be about 300 to 400 words in length with sectional divisions conforming to the paragraph divisions in the passage (McKenna, 1978).

Children are given the passage containing the deleted words and are asked to read one section through completely. When they encounter a missing word, they merely say the word "blank" in each place. After they have read through an entire section, they attempt to insert the missing words. When the children have completed one section, filling in all the missing words, they should reread the section as well as the material that immediately precedes and follows that section to determine whether the

words they have inserted make sense. Finally having worked through the entire passage, paragraph by paragraph, they reread the complete passage with their choices to reaffirm their correctness.

The teacher checking the cloze passage should accept as correct any meaningful responses. Later an analysis of these insertions should tell her whether the children are strong or weak in using background information, context clues, and their own knowledge of language to predict meaningful responses for the deletions. For a more insightful analysis of individual children's critical reading ability, the teacher might question individuals concerning the responses they made, why they made them, the cues that helped them, and whether other words might not also have fit.

#### Summary

Critical reading is a developmental process beginning in the initial stage of reading and continuing throughout life. It involves an attitude of inquiry as well as a combination of interrelated skills. While the reader is learning the various critical reading skills, he concentrates on one particular skill, but as he becomes proficient in that skill he incorporates it with all the other reading skills learned. Certainly, to develop it requires a great deal of practice from day to day, over an extended period of time, and on many kinds of material.

Many factors affect critical reading ability.

Among these are intelligence, experiential background, attitude, foundation in basic reading skills, and the environment in the classroom. All of these factors can, to some extent, be favorably influenced by a skillful teacher. In the final analysis, the teacher is the crucial factor in developing critical reading ability. It is her duty to assess reading strengths and weaknesses. This assessment must be continuous and consistent with what she is teaching. Undoubtedly, a comprehensive assessment will require systematic daily observation and written tests devised by the teacher.

Once children's needs are identified, materials within their experiential backgrounds and reading levels must be provided in a warm, accepting environment. In some instances, however, experiential backgrounds and concepts will be inadequate and will have to be extended for full understanding of the materials. This means that field trips and vicarious experiences in the form of films, filmstrips, and stories may be needed. In all instances, the child must find himself in a warm, accepting, challenging, and stimulating classroom. He must feel emotionally comfortable and socially accepted.

Before actual lessons are taught, appropriate techniques must be selected. Among the many techniques or approaches teachers can choose from are: class discussion, placing reading in a problem-solving situation, making

comparisons between abridged stories in basal readers and the originals, and comparing biographies and biographical fiction about the same person. Regardless of the techniques adopted, the questions teachers ask are of vital importance. In addition to "who," "what," and "when" questions, children must be challenged with "why" and "how." Children who are slow to respond will need help and guidance in the form of hints, cues, and suggestions. All must be given opportunities to ask questions, to make predictions, and to gather and process data. Teachers must, therefore, allow plenty of time for discussion.

Finally, teachers must take advantage of the newspaper and other mass media as well as other curriculum areas to teach critical reading. Above all, teachers should be models for the children and, as Stauffer (1969) suggests, they should direct reading as a thinking process.

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