

**Best Practices in Enhancing Critical Reading  
Among EFL LMD  
University Students-An Algerian Experience  
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**ملخص**

يهدف هذا البحث إلى معرفة مدى قدرة طلبة السنة الأولى جامعي على القراءة النقدية الصحيحة وخاصة الأدبية منها وكيفية التواصل معها. وقد بينت الدراسة جملة من العوائق التي تعرض لها الطلبة خلال مرحلة القراءة حيث تعين عدم قدرة الطلبة على استعمال استراتيجيات النقد أثناء القراءة لقصة Ambrose Bierce *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* تخص الدراسة لمجموعة من طلبة السنة الأولى ل م د تتكون من 25 طالب وطالبة وقد تم جمع معلومات عن طريق ملاحظة الأستاذ الباحث و استجوابه للطلبة عبر النشاطات المختلفة في القسم والواجبات المنزلية خارج القسم. وقد أثبتت النتائج إن 25 مشارك ومشاركة قد تجاوزوا مع الأنشطة بطرق مختلفة حسب استعمالهم للتقنيات المختلفة تمركزت حول القراءة النصية المباشرة وغير مباشرة كالقراءة ما خلف الأسطر والقراءة النقدية البناءة والتحليل والاستنباط الفكري. كما تمت معالجة المشاكل التي تعرض إليها الطلبة خلال القراءة وقد توصلت الدراسة الى مجموعة من التوصيات منها دور الأستاذ في تفعيل آليات استعمال النقد أثناء القراءة مع وجوب تدريس طرق القراءة النقدية لتطوير الآليات الذهنية مستقبلا وتحديثها في كل مجالات القراءة المستقبلية.

**Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to examine and investigate to what extent university fresh learners could read critically and respond to what they read namely literary texts and material. The study unveiled the different constraints learners faced when reading. Learners proved to be unable to use critical reading strategies when experiencing a short story

entitled *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* by Ambrose Bierce. The study concerns 25 first year LMD students of mixed genders. The data were gathered through the teachers' observation grids, the interaction with the students throughout the classroom various activities, the assigned works and learners' feedback in the class and at home. The findings indicated that all twenty five participants responded at varying rates ranging between those who managed using some critical reading strategies as reading between and behind the lines, interpreting, analyzing, inferring, and evaluating and those who did not succeed and faced constraints at a deep level reading. The study recommended teachers to implement critical reading strategies to promote sound reading and to enhance the quality of education. Students need to be more familiarized with the assets of reading critically so as to pave their ways for more expressive reading skills.

**Keywords:** *Critical reading, implementing critical reading strategies, reading between and behind the lines*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

According to Custodio and Sutton (1998), literature is a valuable language tool (with authentic texts), so it can help language minority students increase their motivation, explore prior knowledge, and promote literacy development. Abulhaija (1987) further supports that language and literature can not be separated because each has something important to offer in the development of a well-rounded student.

The use of literature can enlarge learners' vocabulary (Povey, 1972; Spack, 1985) and inspire them to take risks in experimenting with the target language (McConochie, 1985). Literature cannot only be used to enrich their vision, fostering critical thinking (Oster, 1989), and

stimulating their creativity (McKay, 1982; Preston, 1982), but also to promote their greater cultural tolerance (McKay, 1982) and sensitivity (Liaw, 1995). In addition, through reading literature, learners are more likely to extend their language into the more abstract domains associated with increasingly advanced language competence (Brumfit & Cater, 1991). Intensive reading and reading for pleasure can even provide an avenue for efficient second language acquisition and reading proficiency (Constantino, 1994; Krashen, 1989; McKay, 1982).

Langer (1997: 607 ) states, "because it taps what they know and who they are, literature is a particularly inviting context for learning both a second/foreign language and literacy. According to Fitzgerald (1993), literature can be the vehicle to improve students' overall language skills. It can "expose students to a wide variety of styles and genres" (p. 643). It is in literature that "the resources of the language are most fully and skilfully used" (Sage, 1987, p. 6). Teaching language in isolation from literature will not move students toward mastery of the four language skills (Abulhaija, 1987).

## **2.Theoretical Background on Reading as a Skill**

Indeed, reading is a very important skill, where everyone is required to read on a number of different occasions and take reading as a vehicle to collect some information ,to enrich one's knowledge of language, to enlarge one's culture about a specific knowledge area or to read for pleasure.

The reading process is made up of multiple components: word recognition, fluency, comprehension, an understanding of vocabulary and language structures, active learning, and enjoyment of reading (Richek, Caldwell, Jennings, & Lerner, 1996). Viewing reading from an interactive angle, it is a combination of identification and interpretation

skills. Grabe (1991) lists the five most important areas of current research which are still prominent: “schema theory, language skills and automaticity, vocabulary development, comprehension strategy training, and reading-writing relations” (p. 375)

In fact, reading is an interactive process combining top-down and bottom-up processing (Barnett,1989); as a result, it is very important for students to use appropriate reading strategies to increase their comprehension. According to Barnett (1989), the term “strategy means the mental operations involved when readers purposefully approach a text to make sense of what they read” (p. 66). Those strategies involve memory,cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, social, and test-taking strategies (Caverly, 1997; O’Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper, & Russo, 1985; Oxford, 1990; Zhang, 1993).

### **2.1. Reading Approaches**

There are two pedagogically effective approaches to teaching first Language (L1 ) narrative texts which have been gaining popularity in EFL and English as a Second Language(ESL literature: the “Story Grammar Approach” (SGA) and the “Reader Response Approach” (RRA).

A recent area of research related to an interactive conceptualization of reading is story grammar (Ripley and Blair, 1989, p. 209). Story Grammar is based on the conceptualization that readers should be consciously aware of text structure. According to this conceptualization, reading comprehension is an interactive process, an interchange of ideas or a transaction between the reader and the text (Harris and Hodges, 1995, p. 203). The reader interacts with the text and relates ideas from the text to prior experiences to construct meaning.

## **2.2. Reading Text Structures**

“Text structure” is a term used to describe the various patterns of how concepts within text are related. Two important types of text structure are narrative and expository. Narrative texts tell a story and are the type usually found in literature selections. Expository texts provide information and facts and are the type usually found in science and social studies selections.

Research indicates that teaching learners strategies for focusing on text structure enhances their comprehension and improves their recall of information presented in text (Taylor and Beach, 1984; Berkowitz, 1986; Wilkinson, 1999). Hence, learners need to be taught how to read different types of texts. They need to learn different strategies for different text types (Beach and Appleman, 1984, p.116).

## **2.3. Learners’ Reading Strategies**

Readers use their schemata and clues from the text in varying amounts as they comprehend (Spiro, 1979). Effective readers use an interactive process that both relies on their schemata and requires them to obtain information from text. Even though these two processes occur simultaneously as readers comprehend, it is the readers’ schemata that provide the structure needed to associate meaning with text (Anderson and Pearson, 1984).

## **2.4. Readers’ Conception of a Story Grammar and a Story Schema**

A story grammar represents the basic structure of a narrative text. It is the system of rules used for describing the consistent features found in narrative texts (Mandler, 1984). Story grammars assume that stories have several unique parts that are conceptually separable, though rarely explicitly partitioned. These parts are usually identified inferentially by

the reader. There is evidence that such a grammar provides the basis for retrieval of information from story (Thorndyke, 1977, p. 77).

Although there are several different conceptualizations of story grammar (e.g. Harris and Hodges, 1995; Leu and Kinzer, 1995; Burns et al., 1999), all of them include the same basic components (Schmidt and O'Brien, 1986). A simple conceptualization of story grammar is presented by Cooper (1986, p. 270-271). According to this model, a story may be composed of several different "episodes", each consisting of "a setting, characters, a problem, action and resolution of the problem". The *setting* is the place and time at which the story occurs. The *characters* are the people or animals who carry out the action. The *problem* is the situation around which an episode is organized. The *action* is what happens, or what characters do, as a result of the problem; it is made up of *events* that lead to the solution of the problem, which is called the *resolution*. A story has *atheme*: the basic idea about which the whole story is written, or the lesson the reader learns at the end of the story. By identifying these elements the reader identifies the story's grammar.

A story schema, on the other hand, is the mental representation that readers have of story parts and their relationships (Lehr, 1987, p. 550). Thus, the basic difference between a story grammar and a story schema is that the story grammar deals with the text whereas the story schema deals with what readers have in their heads about how stories are organized (Amer, 1992).

Instruction begins with explicitly presenting the concept of story grammar (setting, characters, problem, action, resolution and theme). The teacher may use, depending on the learners linguistic ability, the native language. A strategy that teachers may use involves dividing the story into meaningful episodes and developing comprehension questions

they will ask in guided silent reading and discussion. Research has shown that asking questions that focus on the story line leads to improved learner comprehension of the story (Beck, 1984; Leu and Kinzer, 1995; Burns et al., 1999).

The reality is however, many students who enter tertiary institutions are not prepared for the demands placed on them (Pressley, Yokoi, van Meter, van Etten & Freebern 1997). Kanagasabai (1996), Ramaiah (1997) tell us that our learners lack a questioning mind because of the training provided by the classroom.

Hence to instigate readers to read critically, teachers need to use strategies and techniques like formulating questions prior to, during, and after reading; responding to the text in terms of the student's own values; anticipating texts, and acknowledging when and how reader expectations are aroused and fulfilled. Reading comprehension thus depends on the reader being able to relate information from the text to pre-existing background knowledge (Grabe 2004:50).

Readers comprehend texts better when the texts are culturally familiar to them and consequently they tend to interpret Second Language (L2 ) texts according to the most similar schema they have (Grabe 2004:50; Kitao & Kitao 1989:10-11) – which would be First Language(L1) schema. Chamot (2005:112-130) in his turn emphasizes the significance of determining and studying students' learning strategies in the second Language (L2) contexts since this provides insight into the meta-cognitive, cognitive, social and affective processes involved in language learning and reading comprehension and offers teachers the opportunity to improve the pedagogy of teaching in L2 contexts.

### **3. The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine and investigate to what extent university fresh learners could read critically and respond to what they read namely literary texts and material. To validate this objective, the teacher researcher set learners to work so as to experience them with the different types of process reading activities. The teacher asked learners to, first, discover ideas embedded within a text and, then, to evaluate the text according to its pragmatic, communicative, propositional, and conceptual meaning to eventually be able to evaluate and criticize its contents..

Seeing the non critical readers on the other side of the continuum, they seem to have a tendency towards more passivity in reading and almost invariably fail to gain further insight into the language they are trying to read. They tend to memorize what are being “dictated” and take things for granted without even mere fact questioning or cross-referring to facts, rules, or patterns. In short, non- critical readers may accept texts and arguments which are subjectively written.

The objectives behind the study are

- To build on students' educational background and personal experiences based on the topic of the literature
- To help students comprehend the meaning that the author tries to convey in order to enhance their reading ability
- To enhance students' critical thinking and judgmental abilities
- To develop students' writing ability by writing an essay or comments related to the topic of the literature

### **4. The Context of the Study**

The study concerns critical reading implementation at the tertiary level namely with Licence, Master and Doctorate (LMD) system credit.

The New program content emphasizes mostly on the importance of reading as experienced by adult readers. First year EFL students, in their literature reading credit, are pretended to study various literary genres in which they are supposed to extend their reading insights from what the traditional concept of reading stipulates to a more developed view about reading-the reading between and behind the lines, the critical reading, the personal reactions to a given text, the response and the reactions readers give to what seems to be "lifeless text".

Gregory Strong (1996 ) asserts that literature may be part of a communicative method in three ways:

- 1) by providing a context in which to develop student's reading strategies and knowledge of non-fiction and literary texts;
- 2) by being the basis of an extensive reading program, with attendant acquisition of new vocabulary and grammatical forms; and
- 3) by offering the opportunity to explore cross-cultural values (Strong 291).

Literature may motivate students and, hopefully, help them develop the habit of reading both in and out of class (Nasr (2001 :348). Nasr believes that literature is a highly recommended vehicle for a number of reasons (2001: 347).

Through this study, the researcher enhances fresh readers to become good critical readers and hence see their reactions in the classroom and after assignments feedback. The present study thus steps out from the idea of a historical account based on the short **story: An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge by Ambrose Bierce** where students are guided through the different reading stages with plenty of activities to do.\*

#### **4.1. Critical Reading**

Teaching students to think while reading is referred to in the professional literature as "critical reading." It is defined as "learning to evaluate, draw inferences, and arrive at conclusions based on evidence" (Carr, 1988). Learners should learn how to read texts critically and be aware of their thought processes (Fish 1980). Raising the level of metacognitive awareness, as it is recommended, can be one way of helping learners become 'constructively responsive' readers (Pressley & Afflerbach 1995) who read critically and attain higher academic literacy.

Critical reading is a technique for discovering information and ideas within a text. A technique which enables learners to restate what the text says through its author's words, to describe what a text does with what it is intended to and to analyze what a text means for any reader. Critical readers thus recognize not only what a text says, but also how that text portrays the subject matter. Harmer (2001) states that a reader uses a variety of clues to understand what the writer is implying thereby moving beyond the literal meaning of the words to the contextually and conceptually implied meaning.

A critical reader might read the same work as the non critical reader does but with different perspectives; so what is accepted easily and taken for granted as beliefs and interpretations by a non –critical reader is questioned by the critical reader

#### **4.2. The Role of the Teacher in Promoting Critical Reading and Critical Thinking**

Ambruster, Lehr and Osborn's research (2001:53) indicates that explicit teaching techniques are particularly effective for comprehension strategy instruction. In explicit instruction, teachers tell readers why and when they should use strategies, what strategies to use, and how to apply

them. The steps of explicit instruction typically include direct explanation, teacher modeling (“thinking aloud”), guided practice, and application.

The researcher experimentator recommends teachers to carefully teach critical reading and impart it through classroom models and intensify its rationale through realistic implementation among students with the intent to

- Build background knowledge: Before reading the story, teachers can ask students general questions related to the content, in order to have a schematic understanding.
- Arouse learning motivation and interest: Before reading the story, we can ask students to watch the film or the video tape. Students can discuss the content of the film to have a basic understanding of the content.
- Enhance four modes and critical thinking abilities: After reading the story, students can discuss the meaning that the author expresses, share their feedback, or make a comparison with their own lives and experiences. Through the interactive group discussion, students can develop their language fluency and critical thinking abilities

Teachers should create a classroom atmosphere which fosters inquiry and where cooperative learning reigns. A classroom environment where the student is at the centre of all the learning process and through which most of the interaction emanates. Learning that is both personal and collaborative encourages critical thinking and pushes learners to exchange what they know with their peers. Students who are reading, writing, discussing, and interacting with a variety of learning materials in

a variety of ways where they are not inhibited and feel free are more likely to become critical thinkers and problem solvers.

Learners need to be taught how to reflect, analyze, evaluate and refine their ideas or simply critically think about what they are reading. As Hirst (2002) puts it, learners need to be supported in their engagement with literacy practices. Students should be encouraged to question, to anticipate events, to make predictions, and to organize ideas which support value judgments. Beck (1989: ) adopts a similar perspective, using the term "reasoning" to imply higher order thinking skills which ultimately leads to problem solving.

#### **4.3.The Role of the Would be Critical Reader**

In fact, a would be well trained critical reader when appropriately briefed will be active, strategic and process conscious-the questions, confirms, and judges what he reads throughout the reading process. The student engaged in such activities is likely to become a critical thinker, a critical listener and a critical reader. A critical reader may reject traditional ways of reading and opt for the story map approach which Reutzel (1985, p. 401) found to be a good alternative to the traditional question and discussion session following the reading of a story. The method enhances reading comprehension by helping students to store and retrieve information, make connections between previous experience and reading materials, identify relationships among concepts and events, organize specific details, and understand the message embedded in the text.

Wallace (2003:3-4; 7) stipulates that when critical readers engage in literary studies it is assumed that they are equipped not only with adequate literacy or reading skills, but also the ability to interpret and comprehend what is read and since meaning is socially constructed and

text is understood and interpreted within the framework of existing knowledge, what the reader knows is as important as what is on the page (Wallace 2003:9).

Anderson & Pearson (2002:255) believe that it is this interaction of new information with old knowledge that is described as 'comprehension'. (Grabe 2004:50) adds that Reading comprehension thus depends on the critical reader being able to relate information from the text to pre-existing background knowledge. For Wallace (2003:22, 57) schema are cognitively constructed within specific social or cultural contexts, this has specific implications for L2 reading and comprehension where the text that needs to be comprehended, relates to a culture other than that of L1.

## **5. Methodological Implications**

### **5.1. Research Questions**

The problem posed in this study is that The learners do not question what they read because they are not accustomed to, so they generally believe and accept everything they read. Hence, the presupposed research question related to the study is:

*Could learners develop into adept critical readers if they are properly briefed by their teachers?*

### **5.2. Classroom Literature Review critical Reading Implications**

Through this lesson, the teachers tried to include the different strategies that help learners to read critically. These strategies are indirectly included through the different activities and throughout the various stages of pre-reading, the while reading and the post-reading offered in the detailed lesson plan related to the short story by Ambrose Bierce. These previously mentioned strategies can be summarized in five main points

**1. Previewing:**Previewing a text means gathering as much information about it as possible before you actually read it. This could be practically performed in the class through brainstorming, clustering and word association. This occurs in the pre-reading phase and it could be more successful if it is preceded by something to read. (See the case of our lesson with Ambrose Bierce-)

**2. Annotating:** good strategic and critical readers read using a pencil or a pen in their hand, scribbling the text from left to right, making notes, underlining and encircling key words as they read. So, they tend to be more active by creating relationship with what they know and what they want to know.

**3. Summarizing:** Summarizing the text a reader reads is an intellectual activity which demands cognitive and meta- cognitive abilities. Being successful in summarizing and be able to epitomize is not given to non critical readers.

**4. Analyzing:**By analyzing a text we mean breaking it down into its parts and find out how these parts link together. Processing reading top down and down top can help the reader analyzer to step one way further in understanding the text. Being conscious of analysis

#### **5.2.1. The use of the Story Grammar**

This is followed by answering the guiding questions and discussing the structure of the episode. The guiding questions may be similar to the following (adapted from Cooper, 1986, p. 382-384):

**Setting:** Where did the story happen? When did the story happen?

**Characters:** Who was the story about? Who were the people in the story? Who was the most important person in the story?

**Problem:** Did the people have a problem? What was the big problem that story was about?

**Action:** What did the people do to solve the problem? What were the important things that happened in the story?

**Resolution:** How did the people solve the problem? How did the story end?

**Theme:** What lesson could we learn from the story?

### **5.2.2. The use of the Story Map**

A variation of the story map is the story frame. A story frame may be used, as a post reading activity, to test learners' comprehension of the story grammar. Story frames focus on the story structure rather than specific content (Cudd and Roberts, 1987, p. 740). They employ a gap-filling procedure. Instead of only one word being left out of a sentence, key phrases or clauses are left out of a paragraph that summarizes the story or highlights some important aspects of the story. [An example of a story frame (Fowler, 1982) is presented in figure (3)]. Amer (1992) modified the story frame so that every missing key sentence or clause is replaced by a question word. Learners have to answer the questions in the blank lines

In this story, the problem starts when -----.  
After that -----  
----- Next, -----  
----- Then, ----- The  
problem ends with -----  
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### **5.3. Data Collection**

The selected data collection tools were the teachers' observation grids, the interaction with the students throughout the classroom various activities, the assigned works and learners' feedback in the class and at home. And in every stage, students are asked to read and do the activities

step by step. Meanwhile, the teachers are observing and checking whether the students are really reading critically or just accepting and collecting the information as they are subjective and biased. And as critical reading involves **evaluation**. The study speculates on how a text is argued, valued and weighed.

## **6. Results and Discussion**

### **6.1. Teacher's Observation**

Throughout the various sessions, the teachers noticed that the majority of students did follow the teacher's instructions; they listened to the short story in the laboratory, read it at home and did the activities. However, some students found the story too difficult to understand as it led them to the imaginary world, the world of dream where they had to speculate and express themselves.

### **6.2. Students' Reactions**

The idea of critical reading as exploited through the different questions and activities caused for them certain constraints especially those related to literature study. Students were not accustomed to such typology of questions. Hence, they resorted to a lot of questioning, talked with their peers, re-read the story for several times and annotated the handouts.

**Table 1: Constraints faced by students**

<b>Constraints</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Story is long	05
Story difficult to read	10
The theme is complex	07
Difficult to travel with the story	03

**Total 25**

**Table 2: Stylistic constraints**

<b>Constraints</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Difficult vocabulary	06
Too tightened Text structure	07
Minute detail Descriptive style	06
The textual imaginative power	06

**Total** **25**

### **6.3. The Teacher /Student Interaction**

While students were working in pairs and individually, the teacher was moving through the rows, helping and checking. Meanwhile, he interacted with learners here and there asking him about something they did not understand. The teacher's interaction with the students revealed some kind of positive reactions from learners' part. The teacher's orientations and set up purposes as helping readers create predictions and anticipate events through extrapolation was clearly implemented. The teacher empowered the students with some strategic reading insights in how to select, sort out the good information from the trivial and helped learners imagine, speculate and effectively write appropriate answers to rightful questions through the use of visual and graphic representations. When learners learn how to use and construct visual or graphic representations, they learn a reading strategy that allows them to identify what parts of text are important and how the ideas or concepts are related (Vacca and Vacca, 1999, p. 400).

The teacher encouraged learners to read between and behind the lines and while reading they need to find out the supporting arguments. readers are independent makers of meaning. They view text as a construct. They construct their own meaning. They question the author's values against their own values; they differentiate between fiction and

reality; they are able to discuss and evaluate forms of narration and cultural values of the implied author (Thomson, 1987).

The aim of The Reader Response Approach is to encourage learners to *respond* to the text and express their own ideas, opinions and feelings freely. Thus, learners should realize that the main concern is not “What they understand” but “how they feel”. Therefore, the teacher should accept “multiple interpretations” to a text rather than just one “correct interpretation” (Rosenblatt, 1995). From a pedagogic perspective, “multiple interpretations” allow for creative and critical thinking to take place in an atmosphere where there are no threats nor any compulsion to learn for the “correct” answer or to compete for the “best” interpretation. Before using the RRA in classrooms, teachers should first introduce the RRA. They should explain to students the main ideas and assumptions underlying the RRA outlined above.

Teachers should discuss with their students the difference between “reading literature” and “reading for information”. Students should be consciously aware of their contribution to the text. Several activities and techniques have been used to implement the RRA in literature classrooms: *Reading Logs* (Benton and Fox, 1985; Carlisle, 2000); *Response Journal* (Sheridan, 1991); *Writing Prompts* (Pritchard, 1993); *Critical Questioning and Writing* (Probst, 1994; Hirvela, 1996); *Self-questioning* (Davis, 1989); *Role-play, Drama and Letter-writing* (Elliot, 1990; Baxter, 1999); *Rewriting Narratives from Another Character’s Point of View* (Oster, 1989).

#### **6.4. Learners’ Feedback in class and at home**

The learners' feedback fluctuated between those who managed to answer and did the activities and those who half did their assignments. A scrutiny to their assignments, students had shown varying degrees of

understanding. The majority of students did succeed in relating the main events of the story and identified the message the writer wanted to convey and held a discussion about. The issue that remained for sure unexplained was the learners' personal reactions to the knots of the story assuring that critical reading really poses a problem for those who were not briefed adequately.

## **7. Recommendations**

Teachers need to ask learners to read, at home, (as previously mentioned in the tasks set in the lesson plan) , the parts that form an episode and provide them with guiding questions that bring out the elements of the story grammar. In the classroom, learners are asked to read silently the parts of the episode which draw their attention to the story grammar.

### **1.The use of the story grammar**

### **2. The use of the Story Map**

. To resolve the cultural problems that students might encounter in relation to reading literary works, several approaches can be taken.

- Prompting or questioning enables students to make connections between their personal world and the literary text that seems remote to them (Carter & Long, 1991).
- Introducing students to authors' biographies and their relevance to the authors' writings in order to assist them in gaining necessary background knowledge is a promising approach, as is encouraging class discussions about cultural differences before reading literary works (Gajdusek, 1988).
- To make predictions about what will happen next at key points is likely to provide an unthreatening way of bridging the gap

between language study and the development of literary-based skills (Lazar, 1993).

- literature is used as a rich resource of meaningful language input and as a tool from which a variety of motivating classroom activities can be generated, as opposed to being studied in its own right (Carter & Long, 1991).
- literature can be a “resource for personal development and growth, an aim being to encourage greater sensitivity and self-awareness and greater understanding of the world around us” (Carter & Long, 1991, p. 2).
- students are encouraged to draw on their own personal experiences, feelings, and opinions so that they become more actively involved both intellectually and emotionally in learning English, and hence this aids acquisition (Lazar, 1993).
- *The use of the personal growth model* which focuses on assisting students in reading literature more effectively so as to help them develop and grow “as individuals as well as in their relationships with the people and institutions around them” (Carter & Long, 1991, p. 3).

#### **Hence**

- Students need to deepen their notions about reading through intensive actions of give and take techniques-ask themselves what they should give to texts and what should they take from.
- Reading any texts should be seen not as a linear act but a non linear meta-cognitive act which demands mental effort and a combined reasoning, predicting, readjusting and awareness rising.

*It is recommended that awareness raising about learning strategies can raise the learners' level of metacognition and as such should be a*

*regular feature in language classrooms. This can be done easily and efficiently by simply training instructors to conduct these awareness raising sessions.\**

Learners should learn how to read texts critically and be aware of their thought processes (Fish 1980).

- Learners need direction to review their progress in reading and being metacognitively aware can help them understand how they learn (O'Malley et. al 1985).
- When learners employ suitable strategies effectively they are able to read and understand texts much more efficiently (Nambiar 2005).

## **8. CONCLUSION**

Through the study envisaged, the researchers teachers intended to reveal the importance of critical reading namely at the university level. They consolidated the idea that through reinforcement and classroom modeling that learners will be able to read critically and see by themselves the knacks of the latent meanings and discover how to respond as mature and conscious thinkers for there would be no room for grant taking beliefs.

As Rosenblatt (1978) depicts, reading is a process of transacting, instead of simply interacting with texts, where readers, taking an active role to construct meaning from the texts (Beach, 1993), are provided with an experience that they can live through. Readers can find meanings in the texts based on their own ideas, interests, and needs.

Advocators (e.g., Ali, 1994; Davis, 1989, 1992; Elliot, 1990 ) of the reader-response approach claim that literature in a foreign language

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classroom can make the learning experience much more enjoyable and stimulating for learners than classroom instruction that requires mere acquisition of the linguistic components of the text. Most importantly, integrated with such an approach, literature reading is not necessarily intimidating for non-native language learners (Liaw, 2001).

Due to individual traits, students could derive diverse messages from reading a particular novel, play or poem (Brumfit & Carter, 1986). Gajdusek and Van Dommelen (1993) assert that guiding students to do the necessary critical thinking is essential since it is at the heart of the writing process and critical thinking contributes to triggering students' formation of judgments . Whole language and cooperative learning techniques are deemed satisfying vehicles to cultivate students' automaticity in processing written language and fostering critical thinking skills (Sage, 1993).

EFL teachers should collaborate content-based instruction and literature study. Brinton et al (1989) list several benefits of collaborating CBI and literature teaching. For example, students can gain knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and paragraph structure, interactive communication skills, and types and styles of writing. Besides, In addition, Erkaya (2005) states that by integrating literature in the curricula, students can learn the four skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing – more effectively because of the literary, cultural, higher-order thinking, and motivational benefits. To achieve these benefits, EFL instructors should design the collaborative content-based literature class carefully to meet the needs of their students.

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## **Best Practices in Enhancing Critical Reading Among EFL LMDTayeb Bouazid**

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