



Literacy Connects

A Content Literacy Newsletter from Regional Professional Development Program-Issue XXXII



Critical Stance Across the Curriculum

When readers demonstrate a critical stance, they must be able to stand apart from the text, see it objectively, and evaluate it. These skills can be developed across the curriculum using student text books, trade books, newspaper and journal articles, short stories, novels, and even picture books. Teaching students to critically examine print will develop the high level, critical thinking skills they need to succeed both inside and outside of the classroom. (*See Literacy Connects XXVIII for more on teaching critical thinking*)

Following are the skills needed to critically evaluate text, as well as example questions teachers can ask to help their students demonstrate a Critical Stance across the curriculum and across the grade levels:

Making Predictions:

- What will happen next?
- What is the author implying?
- Does the author offer hints of things to come?
- What conclusions can you draw?
- Can you predict the outcome if...?

Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion:

- What is fact in the text? How can you tell?
- Does the author make statements without supporting them?
- Does the author base any part of the argument on feelings rather than fact? How can you tell?
- Does the author generalize rather than support with specific details?

Using Relevant Information when Responding:

- Support your answer with facts from the text.
- List the reasons for your answer.
- How do you know?
- Cite examples to support your answer.

Synthesizing and Extending Information:

- How would you improve ...?
- Propose an alternative to
- What changes would you make to solve...?

Awareness of Values, Customs and Beliefs Represented:

- Who is the speaker?
- What does he/she believe?
- What is most important to the author/speaker?
- How does the author describe women/children/minorities?
- What groups are not represented in this writing?

Analyzing the Author's Craft:

- What literacy devices does the author use (metaphors, similes, irony, personification...)?
- What is the author's purpose (to entertain, inform, persuade...)?
- For what audience is this piece intended? How do you know?
- Analyze the sentences in this piece (long, short, formal, informal...).
- In what format (essay, letter, editorial...) is this written? Why?
- Classify the words the author uses (long, difficult, short, easy, common, specific to a region or profession...).

Visit the RPDP website (www.rpdp.net) for a complete selection of *Literacy Connects*.