CRITICAL COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES OF CHILDREN

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Critical comprehension difficulties were also found to be evident among the grade six section 5 pupils who participated in this study. These difficulties may imply that in this grade level, the degree or level of complexity of reading instruction evidently increases or advances. Instructional contents in reading would be more in-depth compared to the earlier grades, thus it could be expected that higher level of comprehension like the ability to interpret text critically would also be required. Unfortunately, several grade three learners find difficulty in reading and analyzing text critically specifically by way of relating the message of the selection to life-relevant scenarios. Failure to connect the message of reading instruction to life is like engaging in meaningless habit or activity. Most of these learners are able to read and understand the text literally, but they often struggle in recognizing the logic, essence and relevance of the selection to life and self.

There are variety of factors that could explain why several grade six learners would find it hard to analyze and interpret the contents, theme and essence of a text or their failure to master early critical comprehension skills. There could be five major reasons why learners in this grade level struggle in early critical comprehension skills. First, when many of these learners have not yet fully developed its other basic reading skills and competencies like phonemic awareness, it is highly expected that their comprehension would be also delayed. Learners who fail to accurately recognize and master phonemic patterns and elements of the text would find it also difficult the abstract meanings of the text. Secondly, several learners would have limited vocabulary knowledge or vocabulary-related skills. A reading text may employ simple to complex
vocabulary depending on its instructional contents. Thus, when learners have limited vocabulary, comprehending the entire text would be also rigorous.

Thirdly, poor critical reading comprehension stems from learners’ poor reading habits, practices and motivation. When learners have limited reading engagement, their exposure to opportunities to hone their comprehension would be also limited. Learners who are reluctant towards reading would be also less motivated to appreciate and comprehend the text critically. Pupils who rarely find time in quality reading would have limited trainings that are supposed to hone their early critical comprehension. Likewise, the kind of approach or strategy utilized by the teacher in teaching reading comprehension, for instance, the art of questioning could be one major factor that influences the development of learners’ ability to comprehend text critically. It is important that the teacher reinforces its art of questioning or uses inquiry approach as an opportunity to link the message of reading instruction to life-relevant scenarios to further foster the establishment of learners’ early critical reading comprehension. Furthermore, the type of reading material, tool or resources employed by the teacher during reading instruction could also pose impacts on the learners’ level of reading comprehension especially in the critical comprehension level. The use of contextualized and localized reading materials would certainly pose a different impact on learners’ comprehension compared to the utilization of conventional/ non-contextualized reading text.

References:

https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/misunderstoodminds/readingdiffs.html