

# Critical Literacy for Achieving World Peace: Students' Views and Perspectives

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## ABSTRACT

Peace is very important to all the people across the globe because peace can heal the world. In fact, peace begins from the person's inner self like having good attitude that will lead to harmonious relationship among social groups. Thus, no more violence and conflict. Being a teacher in the teacher education program of Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology, we have observed from the different places in Mindanao, Philippines and even throughout the world, there is no peace at all. A lot of violence, crimes and conflict among the people. Thus, this study aimed to analyze how to achieve peace through critical literacy. Since we are also teaching in the college of education, MSU-IIT, Iligan City Northern Mindanao, Philippines, we tried to use teaching pedagogy that develops the critical thinking skill of the pre-service students. And somehow this critical thinking skill of the students becomes the "critical literacy" that can hopefully contribute in achieving world peace. This study used discourse analysis qualitative design in analyzing the perspective views of the pre-service education students of MSU-IIT, during the first semester 2015-2016. In-depth interview, was used in gathering the data on the perspectives and views of the students regarding "critical literacy for achieving world peace. Thematic analysis was also used in determining the findings and results of this study. Based from discourse and thematic analysis, the findings reveal that "critical literacy helps in achieving world peace through extensive and intensive reading process in analyzing the information about the genuine news of what is going on in local, national and international arena. According to the twelve pre-service education students who served as participants to this qualitative study, through reflecting, interacting and evaluating the text they read either from hard copy or e-books, critical thinking skill has been already used in analyzing the content particularly in analyzing the phenomena around the world.

**KEY-WORDS**—Achieving World Peace, Critical Literacy, Comprehension, Curriculum, Peace Education

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The critical literacy classroom is characterized by an emphasis on students' voices and on dialogue as a tool with which students reflect on and construct meanings from texts and discourses. Is it appropriate, however, to teach critical literacy in settings such as penal institutions where student voices are deliberately discouraged and silenced (Beck, 2005). Critical literacy is now well established as a major ideological construct influencing literacy education (Behrman, 2006). Critical literacy can be used to make both digital literacies and standards seem more relevant to students (Avila and Moore, 2012). Critical Literacy as Comprehension: Expanding Reader Response (McLaughlin and DeVoogd, 2004). Identify four dimensions that define critical literacy and then use these as a framework for examining the beliefs and practices of a specific group of teachers beginning to implement a critical literacy curriculum (Lewison, Flint and Van Sluys, 2002). Suggests that a critical vision of information literacy provides the most appropriate approach to help meet campus goals of educating students for transcultural competence (Hicks, 2013). The use of critical literacy in reading helps establish equal relationship between the author and the reader and create better understanding of the text (Molden, 2007). The use of critical literacy in reading helps establish equal relationship between the author and the reader and create better understanding of the text. Moreover, an overview on how critical literacy can be incorporated into the curriculum is presented, which could include national and state standards, subject areas, and technology integration (Molden, 2007). An extended classroom example and analysis taken from a broader research project focusing on early multiliteracies, illustrates the ability of young students to ask critical questions, explore alternative perspectives, and engage in multimodal responses to construct and communicate meaning as they take social action (Silvers, Shorey, Crafton, 2010), the

investigation shows that the following features of reflective teaching connect with and form the core of critical literacy, and are vital to the teaching of critical literacy: giving careful consideration or thought in order to create meaning and pass judgment; questioning personal assumptions, values and beliefs; taking initiatives and using intuition; taking part in development and change; and the use of journal writing (Minott, 2011). Schools have the potential to be places where students can come to understand how and why knowledge and power are constructed (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993 cited by Gregory and Cahill, 2009). Critical literacy is the ability to read texts in an active, reflective manner in order to better understand power, inequality, and injustice in human relationships. This article outlines the history and theory of critical literacy and details its application in the classroom (Coffey, 2010). From the different authors' ideas regarding the importance of critical literacy as expressed in their research articles, we become very interested of coming up with this qualitative study about how critical literacy be useful in reflecting, analyzing and evaluating the phenomena that happened in this world like conflict throughout the world. Being the teachers in the department of professional education, college of education, we have jointly come up with this study "critical literacy for achieving world peace". We do believe that through comprehension of the people, there will be respect, love and understanding that will lead to world peace. This endeavor can be attained through pedagogy in teaching critical literacy skill.

## 2. Method

### *Selection of Participants*

The participants of this qualitative research were the twelve freshman students from the "Social Dimensions of Education" class during second semester 2015-2016. They were chosen as participants based from their ethnic groups. There were maranao, surigaonon, Cebuano and Subanin students from Mindanao, Philippines. In choosing these participants we considered the idea of (Patton 2002 as cited by de Guzman and Fabian, 2008) "there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know; the purpose of inquiry; what's at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources" (p.25).

### *Data Gathering Procedure*

The twelve participants of this qualitative research were given semi-structured question about "how critical literacy can achieve world peace". In-depth interview was used to gather the different perspectives and views of the students considering their beliefs, principles a philosophies and experiences. Their answers were recorded using USB audio-recorder.

### *Mode of Analysis*

According to Clandinnin and Connelly (2000 as cited by de Guzman and Fabian, 2008) interview transcripts or field texts were carefully read and reread to enable the researchers to identify statements, verbalizations, and musings that collectively described what was common in the participants' views and experiences.

### **Participants' views and perspectives about "how critical literacy can achieve world peace"**

1. **Mansor Salik**- "Through critical literacy, one may develop peace in himself because peace will start on him/her. In other words, peace starts within the inner self of every individual like peace of mind and peace of heart, no feelings of hatred and wrath. But what is inside of the heart is love to one another. If there is love and understanding, there is also peace and good relationship among people".
2. **Juhainie Omra**- "yes, I do believe that critical literacy can help solve the existing conflict here in this wonderful world. With the proper knowledge of the people, peace is halfway to humans life. If only people will learn how to think critically regarding the different people around them, there is peace in the environment. I think that the very cause of conflict is that the people who are not well educated when it comes to diversity of beliefs, ethnicity and other matters which can solve by proper education and critical literacy of every person".
3. **H. Sarip Mohaima**- "Yes, If everybody will apply critical literacy in their lives there will be peaceful living. If everybody will have to associate, communicate, and understand each other then no more conflict. We can solve this major problem if only everyone cooperates if only everyone cares for the country. We can solve conflict if only every citizen will apply critical literacy on analyzing the situation".
4. **Alysha Madane**- "In my own point of view, I think critical literacy can achieve world peace. Why? Because if you have this critical literacy, then you know the individual differences among people in society, there will be respect. Like the differences in culture, religion, tradition, practices, beliefs etc. then when a person knows how to analyze, think, evaluate and understand each person in the society who has different philosophies in life then I'm

*sure no conflict in our society. Through critical literacy, people can able to think properly on what is the best or appropriate things to do and not to do” in order to live peacefully”.*

5. **Geraldine Tharra Eltanal-** *“For me based on my own understanding and point of view conflict can be solve through critical literacy. You know why? It’s because through understanding one another, we can reach the goals for peace and harmony. Through respecting and loving ,we can have this peace in every heart of people and we can have the peace of mind and we can have the freedom”.*

6. **Shaira Lyne Guba-** *“Indeed, critical literacy is one way to solve the raging conflict throughout the world. As I’ve mentioned earlier, it allows learners to judge appropriately and if we act on it, then peace wouldn’t be impossible. As we all know, conflicts arise due to misunderstandings. Critical literacy helps promotes understanding to opposing parties if given the chance to. The problem is, not all people adhere to this concept”.*

7. **Michelle Van Raven Cajetas-** *“yes, it is really true that critical literacy can solve conflict in Mindanao. In a way that if all of the people residing in the said place think deeply(meaning, they understand, they evaluate) consensus can be achieved”.*

*Talking about peace education, through critical thinking one can reflect. If they follow and understand peace education properly.... Really conflict can be solved, not only here in Mindanao but also in the whole world.*

8. **Erniel Ghrizcer Ecle—** *“Critical literacy is not just a big help in terms of academic aspect but rather it has the capabilities of solving conflicts. Through scrutinizing every single thing, one can discern that a thing may give a bad or good effect. Having this skill, then people occupying Mindanao will first think to whether their action gives good or bad effects and that they will be able to clarify all things before making any move. With discernment we get from critical literacy then there is understanding and unity. And later on, peace and harmony will exist”.*

9. **Ilyn Lanaja----** *“Yes, critical literacy can solve conflict around the world probably because people will then think first before doing an act. Many will understand each other. Reflection is going to be a first priority of those who literally are the starters of arguments. People will argue according to what is right and what is best for a certain place and for the people occupying it”*

10. **Regine Rose Omictin—** *“yes, I think critical literacy can solve conflict around the world. Critical literacy can solve this conflict because they will be able to evaluate the conflict. Like what causes it, what do we need to do in order to eliminate and come up with understanding that both parties can agree. People will be to develop ways or strategies, even develop understanding for each other. When there is understanding there is harmony and we will be able to live together peacefully”.*

11. **Aubrey Belle Nahuman---** *“yes, I think that critical literacy can solve the conflict in the world. A conflict can be solved by a solution in which it is a product or the result of critical literacy/thinking. Critical Literacy can solve the conflict with the help of the people living in this world. Cooperation with one another can resolve a conflict. Of course, we should think about the solution of the problem (that is called critical thinking) and after that we should exert effort for the conflict to be solve”.*

12. **Geraldine Trillo----** *“Yes, for me it is possible that critical literacy can solve conflict. As what I’ve understood, critical literacy is somehow the foundation of every individual to analyze, evaluate on a certain topic or situation. We have this critical thinking skill, and we can use it by producing and practicing the peace that we want to achieve. Our thoughts and ideas become reality if we truly accomplished what we wanted. And perhaps through this we can lead into a united people who need to be heard. We somehow use our thinking skills to unite everyone, especially in preventing conflict in our places”.*

### 3. Findings

The above qualitative data, depicted relevant and interesting themes emerged from the students’ views and perspectives. First theme is, *“ Critical literacy may help in achieving world peace through reflection and analysis of the issues.”* This means that in achieving world peace, comprehension is very important tool in analyzing the situation. Second theme is *“ Critical literacy is the foundation to analyze then evaluate the phenomena in a certain situation”.* Semantically, there is really a need to emphasize in education curriculum the methods and techniques of developing critical thinking skills of the learners so that they will be become critical literate and ready to analyze and evaluate problems that come along their way as they live in this wonderful world. The third theme is *“ there is discernment in critical literacy that will lead to the concept of understanding and unity”.* It means that analyzing the causes of conflicts, and understanding the different cultures of the people then integrating values across curriculum while developing critical literacy skill, then peace throughout the world can be achieved. Thus, the concept of peace education is also needed in critical literacy.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based from the analysis of findings, we have conceptualized our thoughts and ideas about the relevance of critical literacy in all aspects of human life. Hence, it is very important to integrate the pedagogy of teaching critical literacy to the young learners who are the hope of our nations in this 21st century education. People with different cultures need to know and understand the concept of critical literacy in order to achieve peace. It is therefore the great challenge to the teacher education in higher education to produce teachers who have critical literacy so that they can also teach the K+12 learners on how to become critical literate in achieving world peace.

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