

Facing The Challenge Of Teaching And Learning EFL Reading: Beyond The Language Of Critique

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This article summarizes my experience with the challenge of teaching EFL reading in Morocco. To meet this challenge, I focused not only on my ability to teach effectively and make sound pedagogical decisions (language of critique), but also on my ability to defend these pedagogical decisions in front of administrators and colleagues (language of possibility). I argue that in addition to having a comprehensive theory of the learning-teaching process, a rich instructional repertoire and a clear understanding of the nature of reading and teaching/learning to read, we also need teachers who are not only critical intellectuals but transformative intellectuals as well. We need teachers who are able to change and reconstruct their own realities through sound pedagogical practice and effective leadership. The article provides an example of such leadership by describing how and why I created classroom libraries and founded the Regional Resource Center of English (RRCE) in a small Northern town in Morocco, as an attempt to face the challenging aspects of teaching EFL reading in my country. The article also provides a description of the social context of EFL literacy among other literacies in Morocco as well as a description of different uses of EFL literacy among EFL learners and teachers in the RRCE.

INTRODUCTION

"It's Saturday 6:00 a.m. I'm on the bus, on my way to the capital city. It's a five-hour drive. I have to be there before 12:00 a.m. Under normal circumstances Saturday is my day off. Yet, instead of going to the beach or enjoying the family gathering, I'm going to get some 1000 books and reading materials for the Regional Resource Center (RRCE). Nobody forced me to do this. This trip to Rabat is not part of my job description, either. So, why am I doing this?" I wondered. Before answering this question and in order to tell the whole story, let's define what I mean by "language of critique" and "language of possibility". Then I will describe the setting, the characters involved in this story, its rationale, the problems, and its moral lesson.

THE LANGUAGE OF CRITIQUE AND THE LANGUAGE OF POSSIBILITY

According to Giroux (1992), when teachers are able to teach effectively and make sound pedagogical decisions, they use the language of critique, but when they are able to defend these pedagogical decisions in front of others, for example administrators and colleague, to bring about change, they use the language of possibility.

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