### What’s below the surface? Lesson 3

#### Critical Learning
- Reading below the surface enhances how a reader understands a text

#### Guiding Questions
- What does it mean to understand a text “below the surface”?
- How are surface questions different from questions that require the reader to go deeper below the surface?

#### Curriculum Expectations

##### Reading for Meaning
1. read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of informational, literary, and graphic texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning;
   - 1.8 identify the perspectives and/or biases evident in simple texts and some teacher-selected complex texts and comment on any questions they may raise about beliefs, values, and identity

##### Understanding Media Texts
1. demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts;
   - 1.5 identify the perspectives and/or biases evident in a few simple media texts and teacher-selected complex media texts and comment on any questions they may raise about beliefs, values, and identity

##### Reflecting on Skills and Strategies
4. reflect on and identify their strengths as media interpreters and creators, areas for improvement, and the strategies they found most helpful in understanding and creating media texts.
   - 4.1 describe a few different strategies they used in interpreting and creating media texts and explain how these and other strategies can help them improve as media interpreters and producers

#### Instructional Components

##### Prior Knowledge and Skills
- Gathering ideas and brainstorming
- Using open sort, clustering
- Collaborative norms and skills, e.g., taking roles, taking turns, disagreeing agreeably
- Reading/listening for purpose and audience

##### Terminology
- purpose
- audience
- comprehension questions
- critical literacy questions

##### Materials
- A selection of images which show what is visible and what is not readily visible (e.g., picture of an iceberg, above and below the surface)
- Sample songs and lyrics
- Audio player (if songs are played)
- Critical literacy questions on slips of paper and additional blank slips
### What’s below the surface? Lesson 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minds On</th>
<th>Approximately 10 minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pairs/Whole Class ➔ Accessing Prior Knowledge</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display a selection of images which show views of an object or place above and below the surface (e.g., an iceberg, a tree with its roots, an ant colony). If possible, show two views of the same object (e.g., a photograph of the eye and a cross-sectional diagram of an eye). In a Think-Pair-Share, students suggest what is common about the images (e.g., what’s below the surface, more than meets the eye) and share responses with the whole class. Using a rapid write, students reflect on how the images which showed what’s not apparent on the surface may have changed their understanding of what is on the surface (e.g., How did the cross-sectional diagram of the eye add or change your thinking about the photograph of the eye?) Students share their responses in a Think-Pair-Share. Debrief by inviting responses, and point out that we can also look “below the surface” of other kinds of text to gain a deeper understanding of a text.</td>
<td>A L Check for understanding Monitor students use of the strategy, and provide feedback as needed. <strong>QuickTip</strong> See Strategy Implementation Continuum.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Whole Class ➔ Distinguishing Types of Questions** | Approximately 55 minutes | **QuickTip** See Listening Guide |
| Students listen to the lyrics of a song to answer posted questions: What is the title of the song? Who is the author? What is the song’s theme? What is the purpose? Who is the audience? Pose another set of questions: What do you think the artist of the song believes? What does the artist want you to feel? What values does the song hold? Who would share these values and who wouldn’t? Read aloud song lyrics or play the song a second time. Discuss responses to the second set of questions. In a Think-Pair-Share, students discuss the differences between the two sets of questions. Facilitate a discussion about literal questions and questions that require the reader to go deeper below the surface, and how to distinguish the two kinds of questions. Point out how the second set of questions may prompt a rethinking of the first set of questions (e.g., examining the values in a text may shift the understanding of the purpose of a text). | A L Check for understanding Observe and monitor to provide feedback, noting the following: • Can students tell the difference between “surface” questions and “below the surface” questions? • Are students writing critical literacy questions? • Do responses require that students look at the meaning of the song more deeply? **QuickTip** Think Alouds can be supported visually by using a strategy called syntax surgery. A L Observe and monitor students’ understanding of critical analysis. If needed, pose additional questions to support students to go deeper with their analysis. |

| **Small Groups ➔ Sorting Critical Literacy Questions** | | **Consolidation** |
| Select a second song and distribute a series of critical literacy questions, one question per slip of paper to each group. Students read aloud (e.g., Round Robin) the questions and each student selects one or two questions to focus their listening. Students listen to a song but do not answer the questions at this point. Students brainstorm additional critical literacy questions and write them on the blank slips of paper. They do an open sort of their questions and create headings for their clusters. Once groups have organized their questions under their headings, students write the questions in a note or on a group anchor chart. As each group shares its headings, list noting similarities and differences. Invite groups to comment on their thinking behind how they grouped their questions, emphasizing that there is not one way to categorize. Point out that by sorting the questions into meaningful categories, they are organizing their knowledge. **Whole Class ➔ Modeling taking a critical stance** |
| Play the song a second time and display the lyrics. Model critical analysis of the song in a Think-Aloud by using some of the critical literacy questions. Discuss reasons for choosing particular questions (e.g., based on interest, content of the song), and reinforce how this may be different from answering comprehension questions. **Small Group/Whole Class ➔ Engaging in Critical Literacy Questions** |
| Using some of their critical literacy questions as they organized them, students do a critical analysis. Debrief by having each group report on the critical literacy questions they chose, the reasons for their selection, and responses for two of the questions. | **Individual ➔ Reflection** |
| Students respond to one or more of the following questions in their journal: What are the benefits and challenges of looking below the surface? How does looking below the surface deepen your understanding? How does working with these critical questions help you understand in a way that is different from answering comprehension questions? | A L Check for understanding Check that students are working with appropriate questions and information sources; provide feedback as necessary. A L Check for understanding Students describe their learning. Collect journal entries to provide feedback to students and to inform instructional decisions. |
Minds On ...

Think-Pair-Share
Bennett and Rolheiser (2001) describe Think-Pair-Share as “one of the simplest of all the tactics” (page 94). As pointed out by Bennett and Rolheiser and Think Literacy (page 152), students require skills to participate effectively in Think-Pair-Share:

- active listening
- taking turns
- asking for clarification
- paraphrasing
- considering other points of view
- suspending judgement
- avoiding put-downs.

These skills can be modelled and explicitly taught. During group work, teachers can provide oral feedback and reinforce expectations.

Bennett and Rolheiser (2001) note additional considerations:

- the level of thinking required in a Think-Pair-Share
- accountability and level of risk, e.g., are all students expected to share with the whole group? (page 94).


Rapid Writing
Rapid writing is sometimes referred to as “automatic writing” or “freewriting.” This strategy is writing as quickly as possible in response to a stimulus without pausing or editing. Students are advised not to lift their pen from the paper/fingers from the keyboard and to repeat the same word if they’re stuck until thoughts flow again. See Think Literacy Cross-Curricular Approaches, pp. 98-101.
Critical Literacy Questions

- Who authored this text (e.g., song)?
- Why do you think the author wrote this text?
- What values do you think the author holds?
- What point of view does the text hold?
- Who benefits from this text?
- What voices are being heard?
- Whose voices are left out?
- Who is and who is not represented in the text?
- How do your values and beliefs affect how you listen to this text?

Additional resources on critical literacy include the following:

- Critical Literacy Guide
- Grades 7 and 8 Differentiated Instruction Educator’s Package Enhancements, 2008, Literacy Strategy Cards
- Grades 7 and 8 Differentiated Instruction Educator’s Package Enhancements, 2008, Facilitator’s Guide: Literacy

Brainstorm

Students often assume that brainstorming is the generation of random ideas. Rather, brainstorming is an intense thinking process used by creative teams to generate ideas. Brainstorming requires attention, energy, persistence, and divergent thinking. It also requires silencing the internal editor and building on the ideas of others. Divergent thinking strategies, (e.g., reversing concepts or combining unlike ideas) are helpful.

Closed and Open Sorts

Sorting, or clustering, requires students to order or categorize a collection of words into meaningful groupings. It engages students in the meaning and connections of words, and supports organization, reasoning, and critical thinking. It also supports their understanding of the broader ideas rather than simply on individual items.

In a closed sort, the categories are defined, and students use deductive reasoning to cluster words under the given headings. In an open sort, students determine for themselves how to categorize the words. This encourages divergent thinking and inductive reasoning.

Think-Aloud

A Think-Aloud is an instructional scaffold that models thinking processes, making the invisible visible. In a Think-Aloud, the teacher verbalizes how effective readers process the text, e.g., by monitoring comprehension and using strategies to construct meaning. While teachers can Think-Aloud at any point in an instructional sequence, Think-Alouds are used frequently during the modelling phase of the gradual release model and during Read-Alouds. (See Think Literacy Subject-Specific Examples: Language/English, Grades 7-9, Engaging in Reading: Reading Between the Lines/Inference, page 3.

A Think-Aloud is a form of explicit instruction that requires teachers to be aware of their own thinking processes and that helps student think about their thinking. Developing metacognitive awareness is an important aspect of learning. See Metacognition Guide.

Syntax Surgery

Syntax surgery is demonstrating visually through notations, on the text, what may be said in a Think-Aloud. Syntax surgery supports what students are hearing in a Think-Aloud by visually annotating a text while talking through the thinking. As students listen, they see the thinking as it is mapped out on the text.


Think Literacy Subject-Specific Examples: English, Grades 10-12, Engaging in Reading: Syntax Surgery, pages 24-26.