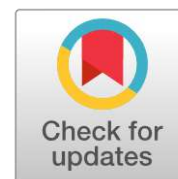# A MODEL FOR TEACHING CRITICAL READING IN AN ESL CURRICULUM

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Abstract

This case study explores one Bhutanese ESL teacher's implementation of Freebody and Luke's (1990) four resources model (FRM) to teach critical reading (CR) in his grade-9 English classroom. A semi-structured interview was conducted with the teacher and thematically analysed to understand his initial perspectives on CR and teaching strategies. Based on his initial interview data, the researcher recommended him implementing the FRM to teach a poem of his choice from the grade-9 English curriculum in three lessons. The FRM is organised around four reader roles that engage and empower readers as text decoders, text participants, text analysts and text users. A thematic approach was used to analyse the audio recordings of the teacher's FRM implementation and written lesson reports. The study also analysed his post-implementation interview data to examine the implications and challenges of using the FRM in ESL classrooms. The study showed that the teacher found the FRM effective and practical, allowing him to scaffold and enhance his students' knowledge and skills to engage in various forms of meaning construction, learn and analyse language usage, critically engage with the text and promote literacy practices.

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Critical reading (CR) is a complex concept and ability that involves using readers' cognitive, sociocultural and critical literacy skills to interpret and analyse critical messages that are explicit, implicit and connotative. Macknish (2011) interprets CR as a "social practice that engages the reader's critical stance" (p. 445), while DiYanni (2017) asserts that it serves as a foundation of higher-level thinking skills, which is pivotal in "analysing texts", understanding textual "logic", evaluating the "evidence" found in the text, interpreting the text "creatively", and asking probing "questions" (p. 3). The OECD (2019) suggests CR as the reader's ability to "understand, use, evaluate, reflect on and engage with texts to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential and to participate in society" (p. 28). Thus, it is helpful to understand and approach CR through the lenses of the cognitive view, the sociocultural view and critical literacy.

Literature Review

Approaches to Reading

The cognitive view considers reading as a cognitive process that depends on word recognition, phonological awareness, problem-solving, prior knowledge and experiences, as well as metacognitive skills such as monitoring reading progress, using reading strategies and thinking (Kendeou et al., 2014; Kroll et al., 2005; Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Cognitive skills are essential for readers to integrate language skills, prior knowledge and experiences into reading (Harris, 2006; Kendeou & O'Brien, 2018; Perfetti & Stafura, 2014; Rush, 2004; Underwood et al., 2007). It is also argued that cognitive processes help readers create a "coherent mental representation of the text" in their "memory" (Kendeou et al., 2014, p. 10) and provide self-directed reading skills and strategies (Blachowicz & Ogle, 2017). Some scholars have discussed the cognitive aspect of reading from bottom-up and top-down perspectives (Harris, 2006; Kintsch, 2005). The bottom-up theory suggests that meaning resides in the text and needs to be unpacked upwards from smaller to bigger units of the language (Harris, 2006). However, top-down theory is associated with using readers' prior knowledge, lived experiences (Harris, 2006), and beliefs (Ruddell et al., 2019) in the reading process.

Based on Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism, the sociocultural perspective views learning as a product of social interactions, collaboration and active inquiry (Good & Brophy, 2008; Hill, 2006, 2012). Some of its underlying principles are (1) knowledge can be socially constructed, (2) learning is vital to learners' intellectual and emotional

development, (3) real learning occurs in learners' social contexts, (4) language is instrumental in learning and social interaction, and (5) learners' zone of proximal development determines their learning progress (see Adams, 2006; Good & Brophy, 2008; Hill, 2006, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Tracey & Morrow, 2006; Tracey & Morrow, 2017). As such, teachers are encouraged to use teaching strategies that Benson (2012) refers to as "learner-centered teaching" (p. 30), including teaching for situated, inquiry-based and scaffolded learning (Good & Brophy, 2008), group-based and cooperative learning supported by higher-order thinking skills (Larson & Keiper, 2007; Orlich et al., 2010), questioning and student-directed investigation (Larson & Keiper, 2007), dialogic learning (Manalo, 2020), and engaging students in collaborative and small-group discussion (Gillis et al., 2019).

Besides the cognitive and sociocultural views, some scholars approach reading through the lens of critical literacy (Freebody & Luke, 1990; Luke, 2019; Vasquez, 2017). Critical literacy encompasses a range of reading strategies that involve "scientific rationality, deep thinking, or problem solving", as well as critiquing "social life, material conditions, and political ideology" (Luke & Woods, 2009, p. 10). In other words, critical literacy is vital in engaging and empowering readers to "analyze, critique and transform the norms, rule systems and practices governing the social fields of everyday life" (Luke, 2012, p. 5). It is also argued that engaging readers with critical literacy affords them the "spaces, places, and opportunities to belong" and "participate differently in the world" (Vasquez, 2017, p. 2), thus empowering readers to examine themselves and others to "become aware of self and others, express emotion and needs, and create conditions and schema for maximizing potential for an optimal life" (VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2021, p. 1). Hence, critical literacy encourages readers to "see and respond to instances of injustice … and participate in communities in service of social change" (Riley, 2015, p. 417).

A Hybrid Approach to Critical Reading

One model that effectively integrates the three aspects of reading discussed earlier is Freebody and Luke's (1990) four resources model (FRM). The FRM is organised around four reader roles that engage and empower readers as text decoders, text participants, text analysts and text users (Freebody & Luke, 1990). Given the complex nature of reading and the demand of the 21st century, this model can be a creative and reflective pedagogical framework for English teachers, especially in ESL classrooms, to engage their students in comprehending, interpreting, analysing, evaluating and using literary texts

prescribed in the English curriculum. It can also help readers resist and work towards changing the power dynamics and cultural, social and political hegemonic views in the text (Boronski, 2022). The following sections discuss the four reader roles in the FRM.

Text Decoders

Texts include various codes that can generally be categorised as alphabet-based and phonemic-based. Alphabet-based codes are governed by written language systems such as grammar, punctuation, spelling and vocabulary (Harris, 2006). On the other hand, phonemic-based codes are related to phonemic awareness of how sounds in spoken language function, such as "listening for words, syllables, rhyme, alliteration and phonemes" (Hill, 2006, p. 173) and analysing their relationships with written conventions (Harris, 2006). Thus, it is expected that critical readers understand and apply various language resources related to semantics, syntax, pragmatics and paralinguistics to break textual codes (Freebody & Luke, 1990; Tompkins et al., 2019) to engage with texts using different reader roles while reading.

While the knowledge and application of both codes are helpful to learners of English, they are broad and complex for teaching. Thus, it might be helpful to approach text decoding from two levels: initial decoding and subsequent decoding. Decoding at the initial level may include analysing the "fundamental features and architecture of written texts" (Luke & Freebody, 1999, p. 7) that are "necessary but not sufficient" for holistic decoding purposes on their own (Freebody & Luke, 1990, p. 9). Initial decoding may focus on, but is not limited to, alphabet use, sound systems in words and spelling patterns (Rush, 2004), phonemic awareness and phonics (Hill, 2006), relationships between spoken sounds and written symbols (Flint et al., 2019; Harris, 2006). Extant literature shows that much research on the four resources model has considered these elements (Latham, 2014; Linda-Dianne, 2015; Rush, 2004; Simandan, 2012).

On the other hand, once readers become familiar with the basics of initial text decoding, teachers may introduce them to the subsequent level of decoding, which is mainly aimed at the text feature level (Santoro, 2004; Wilson, 2009). Focus areas for this decoding may include but are not limited to "patterns of sentence structure and text" (Freebody & Luke, 1999, p. 7), grammar, punctuation and vocabulary (Harris, 2006, p. 118), and transitional markers (Santoro, 2004, p. 10). Given that this study's focus was on teaching English for grade 9, it was assumed that the students at this level were

familiar with the initial level of text decoding. Hence, this study focused on the subsequent decoding level to engage and empower readers as text decoders of grammar, punctuation, vocabulary and poetic devices in the poem.

Text Participants

As text participants, readers are expected to utilise a range of text based as well as resources drawn from their sociocultural contexts to engage in constructing various forms of meanings in both texts and multimodal materials (Luke & Freebody, 1999; Luke et al., 2011; Rush, 2004). In other words, readers are encouraged to participate, "understand and compose meaningful written, visual and spoken texts from written, visual and spoken texts from within the meaning systems of particular cultures, institutions, families, communities, nation-states and so forth" (Luke & Freebody, 1999, p. 7). Through such participation, readers are expected to work towards achieving semantic competence using the resources and knowledge to unpack layers of text-embedded and associated meanings (Rush, 2004; Serafini, 2012; Underwood et al., 2007).

Hill (2012) suggests three ways of engaging in text participation with a focus on literal, interpretive and inferential meanings. Text participation for literal meanings involves constructing meanings based on explicit textual information such as words, diagrams and other textual evidence. It is also known as reading "on the line" (Hill, 2012, p. 199). Reading for literal meanings is similar to what Rosenblatt (2019) calls efferent reading in her transactional theory of reading. Her theory talks about two types of reading stances: efferent and aesthetic. Readers should take an efferent stance when they read texts for information and procedural purposes, as opposed to an aesthetic stance, which is associated with multiple interpretations and inferences. When readers read for interpretive meanings, they may have to synthesise clues and information that is not explicitly presented, also referred to as reading "between the lines" (Hill, 2012, p. 199). Readers as text participants of inferential meanings may use their lived experiences and personal, cultural and historical backgrounds to provide critical responses to the text or produce new texts. Also known as reading "beyond" the text (Hill, 2012, p. 199), it is grounded in the social constructivist view of learning.

Text Analysts

Freebody and Luke (1990) argued that "texts are crafted objects, written by persons with particular dispositions or orientations to the information, regardless of how factual or neutral the products may attempt to be" (p. 13). In other words, texts are not neutral, and writers produce their works with "values, ideologies, and beliefs about how the world should be organised and operate" (Flint et al., 2019, p. 18). Hence, it is crucial for readers to look for writers' agendas (Rush, 2004) that attempt to present their ideology, silence others' views or defend the status quo (Luke & Freebody, 1999; Rush, 2004; Underwood et al., 2007). As text analysts, readers must explore how CR is "context-dependent, non-quantifiable, continually changing and inevitably value-laden" (Flint et al., 2019, p. 18), using a repertoire of available resources such as "cultural and ideological bases on which texts are written" (Freebody, 2007, p. 34). Engaging readers as text analysts may involve helping students and scaffolding their efforts to uncover the writers' "conscious choices or unconscious assumptions" (Tompkins et al., 2019, p. 6), such as their intentions, ideologies and values.

Text Users

As text users, readers are expected to demonstrate pragmatic competence to use texts effectively and practically in social contexts (Freebody & Luke, 1990; Rush, 2004; Underwood et al., 2007, p. iv). In doing so, text users may employ various reading and externalising strategies to engage with the text, such as setting reading goals, situating texts in cultural and social contexts and applying textual knowledge and skills to new contexts (Rush, 2004). According to Flint et al. (2019), text users must know that texts are cultural and social products with specific goals and purposes, which may guide readers to adopt "learned behaviours" (Tompkins et al., 2015, p. 4).

Another way to engage readers as text users is through what Donnelly (2007, p. iv) calls the "translation, innovation and transformation" approaches. Readers are said to be using a "translation" approach when they use it to create new texts based on the original content and genre. In an "innovation" approach to the text, readers are encouraged to produce a new text by replicating the original genre but using different content. Finally, "transformation" occurs when readers create new texts by keeping the original content but changing the genre. These three approaches can be helpful to scaffold beginning text users to tackle complex texts and prepare them to draft their own creative pieces. In addition, one may add one more approach the Donnelly model, as a "production"

approach, where readers use the original text as a model to create their own texts without using any original text feature.

Despite the FRM's practicality and effectiveness as a flexible and creative pedagogical tool to teach reading and literacy, it has never been used in a Bhutanese ESL classroom context. Hence, this study has been proposed to explore and understand its implications for teaching CR in a Bhutanese middle secondary school with the following questions.

1. What perspectives does a grade-9 Bhutanese ESL teacher have on critical reading (CR)?
2. How does using the four resources model influence a Bhutanese ESL teacher's approach to teaching CR?

Method

Context and Participant

This study used a qualitative case study (Bryman, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018) to explore and understand how Lhatu, a grade-9 Bhutanese ESL teacher, implemented Freebody and Luke's (1990) FRM to teach CR in his English classroom at Nima School, a middle secondary school in south-east Bhutan. Lhatu was a trained teacher with a Bachelor of Education and a Master of Arts in English. While he had more than 14 years of teaching experience, he received no training or professional development in teaching CR.

Before implementing the FRM, I conducted a five-hour online CR induction workshop to orient Lhatu towards CR. In the workshop, we discussed the basics of CR and teaching strategies based on Freebody and Luke's (1990) FRM. The FRM was aimed at helping Lhatu engage and empower his students as text decoders, text participants, text analysts and text users while reading texts. We also developed an implementation guide for him to plan and use CR lessons, instruction and activities.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data for this study were collected in three phases. First, I conducted a semi-structured interview with Lhatu to understand his initial perspectives on CR and teaching strategies. Second, Lhatu implemented the FRM to teach Maya Angelou's *The Caged Bird*, a poem of his choice from the grade-9 English curriculum. Third, after his FRM implementation, I interviewed Lhatu using a set of semi-structured interview questions

to analyse his perceptions about using the FRM to teach CR. The sources of data included audio recordings of the two interviews and Lhatu's lesson interactions, besides his written reflective reports on the three lessons. The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim.

This study's data were analysed thematically (Clarke & Braun, 2017) to understand Lhatu's interpretation of teaching CR using the FRM. According to Clarke and Braun (2017), thematic analysis provides a framework to identify, analyse and interpret "patterns of meaning" embedded in "qualitative data" (p. 297). The key to this approach is using codes and identifying themes to analyse and interpret participants' experiential and behavioural meanings. Codes are meaningful portions of text in the qualitative data in words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs (Hesse-Biber, 2016; Saldana, 2016), while themes are significant ideas in qualitative data formed by related codes (Clarke & Braun, 2017; Creswell & Guetterman, 2021).

Findings

Lhatu's initial perspectives on CR and teaching strategies

Lhatu's initial perspectives comprised his definition of CR and its importance. He defined CR as a strategy to read between the lines to get the text's multiple meanings instead of reading for its literal meaning. His definition also suggests multiple ways of understanding and interpreting the text, depending on readers and contextual factors. "When we read a literary text, we don't go into a literal meaning, but we connect to different perspectives, society and personal lives" (Lhatu, Interview 1, 23/4/21).

Lhatu argued that CR was necessary to maximise readers' holistic learning and knowledge development. "It allows the students to read beyond the literal meaning and analyse the multiple concepts, meanings and ideas in the text" (Lhatu, Interview 1, 23/4/21). He implied that CR helped readers understand and reflect on social issues through the text and its writer. "I emphasise the impact of the text on society, personal level and the community. I want them [the students] to connect the text with them, community and larger societies" (Lhatu, Interview 1, 23/4/21).

In addition, Lhatu's reportedly used various strategies to teach CR, such as teaching students to read for the text's literal meaning. "I normally make the students read and understand the text and some keywords … first" (Lhatu, Interview 1, 23/4/21).

He also suggested helping them consider various social and cultural backgrounds while reading. "When [I] teach a text from different cultures, we may interpret the issue differently. For example, American perspectives differ from our Bhutanese context. We use that strategy to interpret literature" (Lhatu, Interview 1, 23/4/21). Further, he mentioned helping students to analyse the text's literary features to develop critical understanding. "When I teach a poem, I [focus on] elements of poetry … for example, the alliteration and the rhyming pattern" (Lhatu, Interview 1, 23/4/21). He also reportedly taught his students to connect their reading and understanding to their lives. "I emphasise … how to connect the text's impacts on their lives, communities and larger societies" (Lhatu, Interview 1, 23/4/21).

Lhatu's implementation of the FRM

This section reports Lhatu's implementation of the FRM to teach Maya Angelou's *The Caged Bird,* a poem of his choice from the grade-9 English curriculum, through four reader roles: text decoders, text participants, text analysts and text users as shown in Figure 1

Figure 1

Four Resources Model with Four Reader Roles
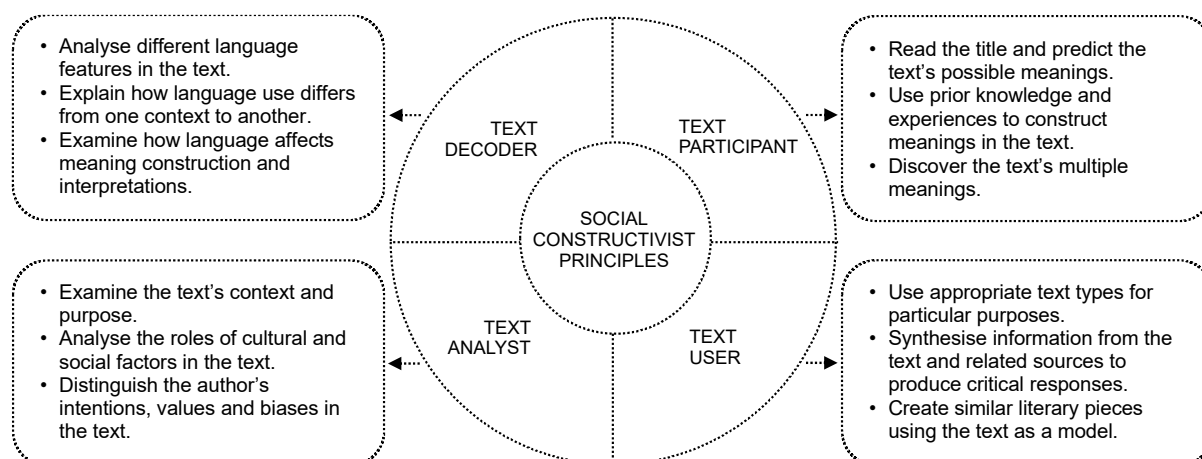
Note: Adapted from Freebody and Luke (1990), and Vygotsky (1978)

Readers as Text Decoders

In one of his lessons, Lhatu engaged his students as text decoders of the poem by helping them unpack the vocabulary. In particular, he instructed them to identify and analyse descriptive words with positive and negative meanings related to the two birds in the poem.

Lhatu:	*Now, let's [look at], the words … we have to see positive and negative. OK? So, which one would be positive – the caged bird or the free bird?*
Class:	*Free bird*
Lhatu:	*Free bird. OK. Then, positive for free bird (wrote on the board). Negative for …?*
Class:	*Caged bird*
Lhatu	*What words do you think is positive?*
Class:	*Leaps, free, floats …*

At the same time, Lhatu explained that some words could be positive or negative depending on contextual use. For example, he said that while the word "down" could be negative, it was positive in the poem as it was related to the freedom to move. With Lhatu's help, most students could decode the vocabulary, as evident from the following responses.

Lhatu:	*Let's stop here for a while … Who wants to share? … I've given some examples … Can you share?*
Class (Boy):	*(Negative words): Stopped, seldom, rage, clipped, tied, fearful, unknown, down, grave, nightmare, scream, shadow.*
Lhatu:	*Very good. Does anybody want to share positive words?*
Class (Girl):	*(Positive words): free, leap, freedom, float, sing, dream, open.*

In the next activity, Lhatu engaged his students in decoding Angelou's use of grammar and punctuation. With his scaffolding, most students realised that Angelou had deliberately used minimal punctuation marks, only capital letters and full stops, to indicate the catharsis of her pent-up anger and frustration after many generations of suppression and social rejection at the hands of her White counterparts. They also discussed why Angelou repeatedly used the conjunction "but" in the poem, arguing that it helped her create contrasting images of American society.

Readers as Text Participants

Lhatu engaged his students as text participants by making them read and discuss the poem in groups, limiting his interference to providing suggestions where required. As the following reports show, most students could collaboratively participate in the poem's meaning construction.

Group 1:	*The poem is written by Maya Angelou. It mainly talks about comparison between two birds. Free bird and the bird in the cage. The free birds enjoy the life where they can do anything … such as enjoy the beauty of sunset. Visiting the new … places and experience new things. He has the freedom to find his own food and go as far as he likes. Unlike the caged bird do not have*

any freedom … they lived a life with fears for the harassment and, torture, even death. But he continues to sing of his desire of freedom and opportunities ….

Group 2:   *… the poem describes the experiences of two birds, and one bird is able to live in natural freedom, and another bird is in cage. This bird was fearful, and because his feet were tied and he wants to be free, and he opens his throat to sing freedom song.*

Group 3:   *The author talks about two birds. One who was free and one who was caged … the caged bird sings in the cage, and other bird sings in freedom. (The rest is inaudible).*

Lhatu: *OK, when I listen to your group discussions, I can understand that generally, now we can understand the poem. The poem talks about caged bird and free bird. So, this poem is about the free bird and the caged bird.*

Readers as Text Analysts

The following interactions show how Lhatu scaffolded his students as text analysts of the poem, using prompting and probing questions.

Lhatu: *So, this poem is about the free bird and the caged bird. OK, if you were the caged bird, what would you feel?*

Student 1:   *Lonely.*

Lhatu: *Lonely, yes you feel lonely any other?*

Student 2:   *Fear.*

Lhatu: *Why fear? I think there is no fear because you're protected by the cage.*

Student 3:   *Sad.*

Lhatu: *Even if you want to sing, how will you sing?*

Class: *With fear.*

Lhatu: *With fear because you are under the control of somebody else, caged. If you were given a choice, what kind of bird would you like to be? Free bird or the caged bird?*

Class: *Free bird (in unison).*

In the next activity, Lhatu instructed the students to analyse and discuss the characteristics of the free bird and the caged bird in pairs. The following are some responses which Lhatu read to the class.

Response 1:   *(Free bird): The bird leaps on the back of the wing and floats downstream till the current ends. Free bird sings with freedom. (Caged bird): bird that stalks down his narrow cage. His wings are clipped, and his feet are tied. The caged bird sings with fear. These lines … give us information that caged birds do not have [the] freedom to sing, though they sing, but they sing with fear.*

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Response 2:　*A caged bird that is timid and afraid to do things. The caged bird sings with a fearful trill, unable to do anything. Clipped wings. Tied feet. (Free bird): A bird that is dare and brave to take risks sings with freedom. Ability to do anything. That means free bird has lots of freedom.*

The final task for readers as text analysts was connecting the themes in the poem with the poet Angelou. Lhatu gave some background information about the African-American community in the United States of America, which helped the students draw parallels between the poem and the black community. Also, through his prompting and probing questions, most students could justify why Angelou wrote this poem. For example, they learned that the birds were metaphorical representations of injustice and freedom in American society.

Readers as Text Users

Lhatu used a hybrid approach to engage his students as text users by combining Donnelly's (2007) "translation, innovation and transformation" strategies of text using (p. iv), where he instructed them to produce a one-stanza poem using free-verse style without focusing on language, punctuation and other poetic skills. This activity excited and inspired many students, as evident from the rush to show their poems to Lhatu.

Poem 1

The trees and leaves are like an umbrella to us,
Which gives us shades.
The branches are like a group of snakes,
Which are in all directions.
Near the tree,
the fresh breeze flows towards us.

Poem 2

The yellow sunshine shines in the morning –
I don't know why.
It sets in the evening.

Meanwhile, the others appeared busy writing their own, partly motivated by the friends who had shown their poems to Lhatu.

Poem 3

I slept at night and woke up in the morning.
Slept with tension, I woke up with a smile …

Poem 4

Whenever I see him, it feels like
Someone is looking at me,
With a beautiful smile –
So bright and white!
Surrounded by many twinkling … stars!
Lhatu: Wow
Class (boy):   Nice! (Others talked to themselves in the background).
Lhatu: Yes, it is!

Readers as Text Decoders and Text Analysts

Lhatu's implementation of the FRM also revealed its intertwined and overlapping nature among the four reader roles. For example, the activity for unpacking the poem using the poem's figures of speech involved decoding as well as analysis, as shown below:

Lhatu: What would be the figure of speech? It's mentioned here, which thing is
*   compared to another thing.*
Class: Metaphor.
Lhatu: Metaphor. It has used metaphor. So, what this free bird is referred to
*   somebody else. To whom is it referred?*
Class: White people.
Lhatu: White people, that's American, is it? That's why this poem is a metaphorical
*   representation, as we've discussed earlier … This poem is full of metaphors.*
*   So, we'll find out. Now, the next activity is we'll find out the metaphors that*
*   are used in this poem. Understood?*

Then the students read the poem individually, looking for other metaphors used in the poem.

Lhatu: (After a while). OK. Now, anybody wants to share? … For example, the caged
*   bird, it's referred to …?*
Class: Black people.
Lhatu: Black people or the Africans, is it? Next? If I say what is referred to a cage,
*   the metaphorical representation of cage is:*
Class: Society.

Likewise, they identified and discussed the poet's use of alliterations.

Lhatu: What is alliteration? (Some students were heard saying "same meaning")
*   Same meaning?*
Class: The use of the same letter sound, sir.
Lhatu: Sound, consonant sound.
Class: Rhyming sound.
Lhatu: Yes, use of similar sound, consonant that is coming one after another. For
*   example?*
Class: Seldom see, worms waiting, shadow shouts

Readers as Text Decoders and Text Participants

Lhatu explained that good poetry contains sensory images and descriptions besides poetic language and devices. As such, he asked the students to examine how Angelou used some words to paint sensory images, which involved text decoding and meaning construction. The following interactions show such examples.

Lhatu: *If I … look carefully here, we can see all the senses are involved. How many senses do we have?*

Class: *(Someone said) Seven senses.*

Lhatu: *Seven senses? Oh my god.*

Class: *(Many said) Five senses.*

Lhatu: *Five senses? Eight senses? Six senses? What are they? OK. Let's see one by one.*

Class: *(Many said) see, feel, hear, taste and smell.*

Lhatu: *Any other? Some of you said eight senses. Six senses? One is nonsense, no? This poem arouses all senses. Can you give some lines that arouse our senses? For example, hearing.*

With Lhatu's help, most students identified the sense-related words such as "sing", "tune", and "scream" for hearing. Also, they claimed that words such as "sunray", "hill", and "worms" were related to seeing, while "fear", "tied", and 'breeze" were related to feeling in the poem. Although Lhatu said the poem contained words related to all senses, the students could find descriptive words for only three senses.

Readers as Text Analysts and Users

Lhatu also engaged his students as text analysts and users. For example, he assigned group presentation topics that required them to analyse and relate the poem to their lives, thus interweaving the knowledge and skills of text analysts and users.

Lhatu: *How do you relate this poem to our real-life context? How would you feel if you were like Maya Angelou? What does the author try to talk about, and what do you understand from the poem?*

As shown below, most students displayed a critical understanding of the poem in their presentations.

Group 1:   *The poem teaches us that we shouldn't differentiate between white and black people. The poet … wrote this poem because she wanted freedom and equality between Black African and White Americans. Maya Angelou says that everybody should have equal rights.*

Group 2:   *In this poem, it talks about two birds - a free bird [and] a caged bird. The*

> *caged bird doesn't have any freedom to fly. It could just stay in fear, begging for its freedom, whereas the free bird can sing and fly freely and dance in the sky without fear.*

Group 3: *The poem describes the opposite aspects between the birds – the caged bird sings because it is the only way it knows to express itself. And the fact that the bird has never enjoyed the freedom before …*

Group 4: *This poem talks about free birds and caged birds, related to the author's own life, how Maya Angelou has suffered like the caged bird or treated and not treated equal as other Americans.*

Lhatu's Reflections on Implementing the FRM

This section presents Lhatu's reflections on using the FRM to teach CR, focusing on the reported successful outcomes and challenges. In particular, the FRM as a pedagogical tool was vital to provide pedagogical support, engage students in the CR process and develop their critical skills.

Lhatu reported that the FRM gave him pedagogical support to make his teaching productive and exciting. "The lesson was quite interesting as the students were … aware of the strategy, and the classes became more interesting than earlier classes. Students could participate very actively" (Lhatu, Lesson report 2, 12/5/21). He added that his students were making progress and showing interest in learning. "While implementing the [model], I could see them learning and using various skills such as verbal, group discussion … and writing skills … in a systematic way" (Lhatu, Interview 2, 22/5/21). He also felt that such support boosted his confidence to teach better than before. "I'm more confident now and can teach them a little differently than I used to. The [model] will help them think and learn better" (Lhatu, Interview 2, 22/5/21).

Moreover, Lhatu stated that since the FRM required them to play various roles while reading, his students were productively engaged in the reading process. "When I implemented the [model], my students actively participated and were fully engaged. They didn't have time for leisure or to waste" (Lhatu, Interview 2, 22/5/21). He added that the FRM enabled them to take on more personal responsibilities to learning compared to previous teacher-centred learning. "This … ensures that the readers do more reading activities and tasks, thus promoting 21st-century student-centred pedagogy and

learning … Now, we don't have to teach like before using teacher-centred strategies" (Lhatu, Interview 2, 22/5/21).

In addition, Lhatu argued that the FRM could foster students' critical thinking skills. In one lesson report, he wrote how his strategies allowed them to think and discuss critical responses with their friends. "This strategy gave more opportunities for the learners to think and discuss with their friends while carrying out the activity" (Lhatu, Lesson report 1, 11/5/21). He also mentioned his students' use of creative ideas and skills to write one-stanza poems. "The most satisfying activity was students were able to write a poem of one stanza. Students were trying to express their feelings in words" (Lhatu, Lesson report 3, 12/5/21). Hence, he felt the FRM could foster students' CR and thinking skills. "I feel the framework will help students read and think more critically" (Lhatu, Interview 2, 22/5/21).

However, Lhatu encountered three challenges while using the FRM. First, most of his students were unfamiliar with his new strategies, thus requiring more time and constant scaffolding. "Students were not doing much. They couldn't do much because students were a bit stuck, and the teacher had to go and help them, provoke them. That's what I've experienced" (Lhatu, Interview 2, 22/5/21). Similarly, he reflected on that challenge in one of his lesson reports. "The lesson was delayed because the students were unfamiliar with reading strategies" (Lhatu, Lesson report 1, 11/5/21).

Second, Lhatu found that using the FRM required more planning and delivery time. "Overall, I thought such a lesson needed more preparation and time" (Lhatu, Lesson report 2, 12/5/21). Thus, he proposed to have professional development for teachers to use the FRM and student-centred strategies. "If we [continue] teaching with such a strategy, teachers must be well trained to actively carry out the lesson delivery" (Lhatu, Lesson report 2, 12/5/21).

Discussion and Conclusion

This study's findings show that using the FRM as a pedagogical tool can potentially enhance what Shulman (1986) called a teacher's pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). In particular, Lhatu's use of the FRM to teach poetry helped him scaffold his students'

grade-appropriate knowledge and skills to construct meanings, analyse language usage, engage with the poem critically and promote their literacy practices.

Although Lhatu's initial teaching strategies reportedly focused on teaching literal comprehension and text-based meanings, there was a visible shift from his earlier practices to engaging and empowering students as text participants of various meanings. For example, he displayed an increased ability and curiosity to engage his students in constructing the poem's literal, interpretive and inferential meanings. As evident from his lesson interactions, teaching CR based on the FRM afforded discursive possibilities of meaning construction, especially if approached the text from sociocultural perspectives, reflecting CR as a social and cultural practice (Luke et al., 2011). In particular, the FRM can potentially enable students to explore, construct and negotiate various meanings based on "their own particular repertoires of languages, cultures, and histories of experiences that shape their ... knowledge, understandings, values, and practices" (Scarino, 2014, p. 386).

This study also showed that Lhatu used the FRM creatively to scaffold his students' efforts to analyse how Angelou used language in the poem, thus effectively integrating language teaching into a literary text. As seen previously, his integrated approach to teaching language and literature also allowed him to engage his students innovatively in learning complex language areas such as grammar, punctuation and vocabulary, which otherwise were challenging to teach and study. Moreover, such integration was helpful for him and his students to use the poem as a good example of language learning and use. Interestingly, this is consistent with a similar finding by Viana and Zyngier (2020) in their study on an integrated approach to teaching language and literature in EFL contexts. Such integration ensures learning autonomy and disrupts the ready acceptance of received wisdom from the teachers, besides enhancing students' language skills.

Lhatu's increased PCK was also clear in his efforts to engage his students critically with the poem. In his CR lessons, he ensured that his students investigated Angelou's ideologies, views and values in the poem, *The Caged Bird*. This reflected his growing understanding of critical and ethical awareness of helping students to read texts from critical perspectives, allowing them to disrupt what Boronski (2022) calls "hegemonic views of contemporary social, political and economic issues" (p. 1) in the text. This also

indicated Lhatu's confidence and sophistication in helping students use CR as a creative strategy to unpack the poem from diverse angles (e.g., Rasse, 2022), not simply accept meanings and interpretations at face value. In short, unlike his initial perspectives on CR, he displayed an increased ability to teach and empower students to view texts critically and take a critical stance on the poet's views, thus helping them investigate the power dynamics and contending assumptions in the poem (Winch et al., 2020).

As clear from this study, using the FRM helped both Lhatu and his students take a critical approach to teaching and practising CR. The FRM helped Lhatu improve pedagogical knowledge and skills, resulting in his improved PCK. Because of this, he could help his students externalise what they learned from the poem. For example, they were exposed to what Gibson et al. (2019, p. 29) call "living knowledge" of cultural and social identities and representations in the poem. This allowed them to use the poem to foster critical and emotional development, besides helping them acquire text-based and associated knowledge and skills. Moreover, the FRM helped them foster a sense of urgency to assess their personal, cultural and social values, attitudes, assumptions and ideologies (Tracey & Morrow, 2017) in light of contrasting images in the poem. Hence, the students were made to identify, position, shift or reaffirm their individual and collective values, assumptions and attitudes with Lhatu's scaffolded support and four reader roles.

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