

Critical Learning

- Understand the connection between perspective and identity

Curriculum Expectations

2. Speaking to Communicate: Use speaking skills and strategies appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes

2.4 use appropriate words, phrases, and terminology, and a few different stylistic devices, to communicate their meaning clearly to their intended audience

1. Reading for Meaning: read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary, informational, and graphic texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning;

1.4 make and explain inferences about both simple and complex texts, supporting their explanations with stated and implied ideas from the texts

1.8 identify the perspectives and/or biases evident in both simple and complex texts and comment on any questions they may raise about beliefs, values, and identity

2. Using Knowledge of Form and Style: draft and revise their writing, using a variety of informational, literary, and graphic forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience;

2.5 explain how their own beliefs, values, and experiences are revealed in their writing

Learning Goals (Unpacked Expectations)

Students are able to:

- make inferences from texts about interests, values and beliefs
- use writing to express a variety of perspectives
- use purposeful talk to analyse texts and write collaboratively
- reflect on how their own writing reveals their beliefs, values and experiences

Planning with the End in Mind

Criteria for Level 3 Performance (Achievement Chart Category)

This lesson is preparing students to successfully meet the following criteria from the summative evaluation that follows this series of lessons:

- Demonstrates considerable understanding of perspective (Knowledge and Understanding)
- Makes inferences from text with considerable effectiveness (Knowledge and Understanding)
- Analyses perspective with considerable effectiveness (Thinking)
- Evaluates information sources with considerable effectiveness (Thinking)
- Communicates a perspective with considerable clarity and persuasiveness (Communication)
- Reflects with considerable effectiveness on strategies for deepening understanding (Thinking)
- Applies critical questions to a familiar text type with considerable effectiveness (Application)

Evaluation

Tasks

- Critically analyse a text (e.g., local website, article about teens, advertisement)
- Respond to the text, in writing or oral presentation, as an action in response to the text (e.g., write a letter to the editor, reformulate the text, make a speech)
- Keep a journal about how their own perspective, values and beliefs shape how they read and respond to text
- Present thinking from their journal in a conference

Tools

The **rubric** should be shared and/or collaboratively developed with students early in the instructional trajectory.

Instructional Components and Context

Readiness

- Writing starters
- Collaborative writing

Literacy Strategies

- Rapid Write
- Four Corners
- R.A.F.T.S.
- Anchor Chart
- Writing-in-role
- Think-aloud

Assessment Tools and Strategies

- Check for understanding

Terminology

- position
- identity role
- stakeholder
- stereotype
- making inferences
- position statement

Collaborative Skills

- Ensure equal voice by taking turns
- Use active listening strategies
- Take individual accountability

Next Steps

- Take multiple perspectives on an issue
- Use questions to critically analyse texts

Guiding Questions

- How does who I am shape my perspective?
- How can I increase my understanding of the perspectives of others?
- What does it mean to *take a position* on an issue?
- What are some possibilities for action *with* or *against* a situation?
- How do we write a position statement or a position letter?

Minds On...

Approximate time: 10-15 minutes

Whole Class → Introducing the Concept

Choose a relevant issue, e.g., school uniforms, cell phone use in schools, school dance policy. Post **Four Corners** statements expressing four dimensions of the issue, e.g., cell phones are good for students and their school; cell phones benefit students but not their school; cell phones benefit the school but not students; cell phones don't benefit anyone.

Students move to the corner statement best representing their position on the issue. In their corner groups, students share the reasons for their choice to understand a range of possible reasons for a single position. Students might shift corners as a result of the discussion. Invite a spokesperson from each corner to share highlights with the whole group.

Note that their *perspective* resulted in their taking a *position* on an issue. Clarify the meaning of these words. Individually, students jot down 8-10 other words that describe who they are, e.g., teen, male, son, friend, and share these with an elbow partner. Ask how many described themselves as a "sister" or "brother." Explain that each family relationship provides an "identity role." Brainstorm a list of identity roles suggested by their identity words. Note that identity is complex and fluid, consisting of many such roles. Note that like Four Corners positions, identity roles position us socially and influence our response to issues.

Individually, students engage in **rapid writing** in response to these questions: What is your position on the cell phone issue? Which identity roles may be influencing your position?

Action!

Approximate time: 25-35 minutes

Small Groups → Developing Position Statements

Collaboratively identify an authentic and current scenario, e.g., Their school is considering a change in its current policy on cell phones. Brainstorm who, besides students, would have an interest in this policy. Introduce the term "stakeholder."

Distribute the **Stakeholder Profiles** handout. Groups reach agreement about which profiled character might select which Four Corners position. Acknowledge the challenge of knowing others, avoiding stereotypes, and making inferences. Each group selects one profile and elaborates, e.g., by using prior knowledge and imagining the character's identity role and past experiences. If possible, provide access to relevant resources, e.g., technology use by adolescents, possible physical impact of cell phone use. The purpose is to generate a complex understanding of the character's position.

Whole Class → Metacognition and Reading

Provide groups with several examples of **position statements**. Students apply **questions for taking a critical stance** to the statements and compare the statements to identify purpose, audience, form, topic, mode, e.g., using a **R.A.F.T.S.** Debrief, creating an **anchor chart** on position statements. Note that position statements often articulate the position of a group or organization for the public. Model how to plan and then compose a position statement using the R.A.F.T.S.

In-role, groups collaboratively write a position statement on cell phone use for their profile character. Provide a starter, e.g., "I believe that cell phones..... This is my position because... ". Groups share by reading their position statements aloud.

Consolidation

Approximate time: 10-20 minutes

Individual → Reflection

In a **double-entry journal** and after teacher modeling with a **think-aloud**, students write their own position statement on the issue and reflect on it by explaining how their position is similar to or different from their group's stakeholder position, and how their values, beliefs, and experiences are implicit in their position statement

Pause and Ponder

Materials

- Stakeholder Profiles
- Sample Position Statements
- R.A.F.T.S. template

Connections Menu

- Rubric**
- Connecting Practice and Research:**
- **Critical Literacy Guide**
- **Strategy Implementation Continuum**
- Strategy Instruction**

Critical literacy in these lessons focuses on Reading 1.8, understanding multiple perspectives.

A^{top}L Check for understanding, e.g., using signals such as coloured sticky notes

D^{top}I Depending on prior instruction and student readiness, some students may be able to attend to in-role word choice and language register (Writing 2.2 and 2.3)

A^{top}L Collect position statements and commentary in order to provide feedback and to inform instructional planning and shared practice.

D^{top}I and **A^{top}L**: **Guided Practice**

Connections Menu

Learning Goals

Rubric

Connecting Practice and Research: Critical Literacy Guide

Connecting Practice and Research: Strategy Implementation Continuum

Minds On ...

Four Corners

Strategy Instruction

Questions for Thinking about Strategy Instruction

Action!

Stakeholder Profiles

Samples Position Statements

Traffic Light

Questions for Taking a Critical Stance

R.A.F.T.S.

Consolidation

Double-entry Journal

Think-aloud

Guided Practice

Wait Time

CRITICAL LITERACY RUBRIC

	Level 4 Advanced	Level 3 Proficient	Level 2 Developing	Level 1 Beginning
Knowledge and Understanding				
Demonstrates conceptual understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates thorough understanding of perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates considerable understanding of perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates some understanding of perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates some understanding of perspective
Thinking				
Use of processing skills, e.g., inferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes inferences from text with a high degree of effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes inferences from text with a high degree of effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes inferences from text with some effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes inferences from text with limited effectiveness
Uses critical/creative thinking processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyses perspective with a high degree of effectiveness Evaluates information sources with a high degree of effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyses perspective with considerable effectiveness Evaluates information sources with considerable effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyses perspective with some effectiveness Evaluates information sources with some effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyses perspective with limited effectiveness Evaluates information sources with limited effectiveness
Reflects on strategies for deepening understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflects on strategies for deepening understanding with a high degree of effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflects on strategies for deepening understanding with considerable effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflects on strategies for deepening understanding with some effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflects on strategies for deepening understanding with some effectiveness
Application				
Applies knowledge and skills in familiar situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies critical questions to a familiar type of text with a high degree of effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies critical questions to a familiar type of text with considerable effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies critical questions to a familiar type of text with some effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies critical questions to a familiar type of text with limited effectiveness
Communication				
Responds to a news report by clearly and persuasively presenting a perspective in a self-selected form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates a perspective with a high degree of clarity and persuasiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates a perspective with considerable clarity and persuasiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates a perspective with some clarity and persuasiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates a perspective with limited clarity and persuasiveness

Learning Goals

See, the *Grades 7 and 8 Differentiated Instruction Educator's Package Enhancements*, 2008, **Facilitator's Guide: Assessment for Learning**, pp. 7–9 for an explanation of learning goals.

Minds On...

Strategy Instruction

The research consensus is that “strategies make a difference in learning” (Alexander & Jetton, 2000).

Effective use of strategies requires:

- using strategies, not as *algorithms*, but rather as *heuristics*. In other words, they are guidelines that contribute to, but do not guarantee understanding of how strategies support learning and literacy development
- recognizing and building the cognitive, social-emotional and literacy skills students need to become proficient at using strategies
- refining purposeful use of strategies, adapting to specific contexts and purposes
- linking strategies to ongoing assessment for learning.

Teachers need not only to incorporate strategies into instruction, but explicitly teach strategies: model their use, e.g., with a think-aloud, provide opportunities for practice and reflection, discuss the purposes of strategies, and help students self-regulate their learning by selecting strategies that work for them.

See the **Strategy Implementation Continuum** for the gradual release of responsibility model.

Alexander & Jetton (2003) identify six attributes of effective strategy use – procedural, purposeful, effortful, willful, essential, and facilitative. As Garner & Alexander (1991) indicate, there must be *skill*, *will*, and *thrill*. The RAND report (2003) defines engagement as the use of cognitive strategies, intrinsic motivation, use of background knowledge, and social interchanges.

All of this suggests that particular strategies be integrated regularly for students to gain sufficient understanding and proficiency for independent use and application across contexts.

Questions for Thinking about Strategy Instruction

- How do I effectively use learning strategies to develop literacy skills and conceptual understanding?
- How do I match the choice of literacy strategy to the learning goals, subject content, and particular students?
- What knowledge, skills, and dispositions must students have prior to using the strategy?
- What literacy knowledge, skills, and dispositions are students practising when engaged in this strategy?
- How can I teach students to apply strategies to other learning situations?
- What conceptual understandings are these strategies building?
- Does the strategy or structure inherently support differentiated instruction? If so, how?
- How might the literacy strategy itself be differentiated, e.g., scaffolded to respond to a range of readiness levels?
- How can I combine strategy instruction with ongoing assessment?
- How do we “build our teaching [of language and literacy] around difference?”

Additional resources on critical literacy include the following:

- *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**
- **Dr. Allan Luke: The New Literacies**, 2007 webcast

Rapid Writing

Think Literacy Cross-Curricular Approaches, Grades 7-12, pp. 98-100.

Action

CHANGES TO SCHOOL CELL PHONE POLICY—STAKEHOLDER PROFILES AND BRAINSTORMING	
Subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are this subject’s interests? • What might affect this subject’s perspective? • What might be her/his position?
<p>Student 1 Female. Grade 9 student. Parents gave her a cell phone, but she never uses it; she sees her parents constantly on their cell phones and feels they don’t communicate with anybody face to face any more, including her; she has little tolerance for her friends’ “obsession” with cell phones.</p>	
<p>Student 2 Male. Grade 10 student. Believes that he uses his cell phone responsibly and maturely and that attempts by the school to control cell phones are just one more way the adults in the school restrict young people.</p>	
<p>Principal New to the school, but was previously a vice-principal at a school that had a complete ban on cell phones. He has heard from parents who like their children to have cell phones at school. He knows cell phones have benefits, but believes most or all of the teachers have major concerns with cell phones.</p>	
<p>A parent/guardian She is a single parent with three teenagers, each of whom carries a cell phone; she has strong anxieties about not knowing where her children are and feels less stressed knowing she can reach them at any time.</p>	
<p>A teacher Has had a long career at the school and is well-respected by students and colleagues; believes that teens already have too many distractions which erode classroom learning; also believes that cell phones reinforce self-centred learning and self-absorbed attitudes; has had a segment of a lesson recorded by a student’s cell phone and posted on the internet for public viewing.</p>	
<p>A community member Owns a business close to the school; has had some confrontations with students from the school; says teenagers need more structure and discipline; believes teenagers in the past were much more respectful, polite and obedient; says that schools should “clamp down on those kids” and ban cell phones, as well as audio devices, video games, etc.</p>	
<p>School trustee A dedicated supporter of the school; thinks students should have access to all kinds of technology, including cell phones, to engage in learning.</p>	

Action

Sample Position Statements:

Position statements vary considerably in degree of formality, length, and form. Select examples that are appropriate for your students and that demonstrate the length and features that are the focus of instruction.

Amnesty International on sexual and reproductive rights

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/POL30/019/2007/en/dom-POL300192007en.html>

IRA on High-Stakes Assessment http://www.reading.org/resources/issues/positions_high_stakes.html

Heart and Stroke on Access to Medicine http://ww1.heartandstroke.ca/images/BC_MedAccessPositionStatement.pdf

Women's Sports Foundation on Sexual Harassment

http://ww1.heartandstroke.ca/images/BC_MedAccessPositionStatement.pdf

Entertainment Consumer's Association position on the Internet http://www.theeca.com/position_statements

Diabetes UK position on animal research

http://www.diabetes.org.uk/About_us/Our_Views/Position_statements/Animal-research/

Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, e.g., position on capture of wild animals for the pet trade

<http://canadianveterinarians.net/publications-informations-position-animal.aspx>

Questions for Taking a Critical Stance

- How is your understanding of the text influenced by your background?
- How is the text influencing you, e.g., does the form of the text influence how you construct meaning?
- How does the language in a text position you as reader, e.g., Does the use of passive or active voice position you in a particular way?
- What view of the world and what values does the text present?
- What assumptions about your values and beliefs does the text make?
- What perspectives are omitted?
- Whose interests are served by the text?

See also questions in the *Antidiscrimination Education Handout*, English, 9-12 Resources, Resources from the Ontario Curriculum Unit Planner website, **The Ontario Curriculum Unit Planner** (OCUP), Ministry of Education.

Traffic Light

See the *Grades 7 and 8 Differentiated Instruction Educator's Package Enhancements, 2008*, **Assessment for Learning Strategy Cards** for an explanation of this strategy.

R.A.F.T.S.

The R.A.F.T.S. strategy establishes a context for writing by focusing on the dynamic connections between author, audience, topic, form, and purpose that are at the heart of communication. Just as important is the relationship between these elements.

As for all graphic organizers, this one provides opportunities to work with the relationships between components. If using a R.A.F.T. to provide controlled choice, ensure that roles are meaningful to the discipline; that forms, e.g., letters, reports, press release, have been taught to students; and that students write about topics pertinent to the big ideas in the subject.

Consolidation**Double-entry Journal**

There are several variations of double-entry journals. Students can:

- use the left-hand side of the page to narrate and describe, and the right-hand side to make connections, question the text, make inferences, and draw conclusions.
- use the left-hand side to capture ideas or information graphically, and the right-hand side to compose a verbal explanation
- use the left-hand side to respond to question prompts during or immediately after learning, and the right-hand side to revisit the same questions after further learning.

This double-entry journal requires students to understand how to:

- independently write a position statement (Some students may require scaffolds such as graphic organizers or guided practice)
- reflect on the statement (Some students may require scaffolds such as question prompts or sentence starters)
- identify similarities and differences
- explain similarities and differences. i.e., clarify, elaborate, and explicitly address the issue of likeness or difference
- analyse their own position statement for interests, values, and beliefs - some of which may be implicit (Some students may need support with inferencing and may still be developing vocabulary for describing their thoughts and feelings).

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. A think-aloud is a form of explicit instruction that requires teachers to be aware of their own thinking processes and that helps students think about their thinking. Developing metacognitive awareness is an important aspect of learning.

This think-aloud is part of an instructional sequence based on the gradual release of responsibility model. See **Strategy Implementation Continuum**

Guided Practice

Observe writing process and assess journals to determine which students need guided practice. Teachers may already have identified such students and may work with a group of students on a particular, targeted focus while others work independently. Such groupings are flexible and fluid, changing in response to students' needs. Well-established classroom routines make this possible.

Wait Time

Attention to wait time during discussion that involves making sense of high-level concepts, making personal connections, and taking a critical stance toward potentially sensitive or emotional issues can support thinking and oral communication. See the *Grades 7 and 8 Differentiated Instruction Educator's Package Enhancements, 2008*, **Assessment for Learning Strategy Cards** for an explanation of wait time.