INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Human beings have entered the Age of Information where thousands of books and newspaper are published world wide everyday, and news is updated every second. It is, therefore, necessary for people especially youngsters to read in a great deal in order not to be backward. However, among the amount of information needed the questions of what to read and what to believe are worthy of readers’ consideration. In such situation, critical reading, ‘a process of making judgments in reading, evaluating relevancy and adequacy of what is read, an act of reading in which a questioning attitude, logical analysis and inference are used to judge the worth of what is reading according to an establish standard’ (Harris and Hodges, 1981), is an essential skill.

Critical reading is even more significant to English Foreign Language students, for mastering critical reading skills will provide students with the ‘right tool’ (Milan, 1995), in short term, to enhance their process of
studying at university and, in long term, to serve them well for the rest of their life.

Over the past few years, there have been several studies conducted to find out strategies to enhance critical reading as well as to give solutions to the existing problems confronting teaching critical reading. However, there has been no research done on the matter of students’ perception of critical reading and the effectiveness of the application of teaching and learning critical reading among first year students, which gives us the desire to conduct our research.

**Aims of the study**

The purpose of this research is to have a closer look at students’ perception of critical reading among first year students. It aims specifically at (1) investigating students’ perception of critical reading and reading reflection, Bookworm project; (2) identifying the relation between their perception and application of critical reading shown through their reading reflections; (3) pointing out the existing problems confronting students in studying and applying critical reading and suggesting feasible solutions to their problems.

**Research questions**

The research is carried out to answer following questions.

1. What is student’ perception toward critical reading and its effectiveness?
2. How are they applying critical reading over their Bookworm project?
3. What are problems confronting students in studying and applying critical reading?
**Scope of the study**

The research will work on the current situation of practicing critical reading skill among first year students in FELTE (Faculty of English Language Teacher Education). The subjects of this study include 116 first year students and four teachers of reading in FELTE, ULIS. The study investigates students’ perception and the effectiveness of their exploitation of critical reading as well as the problems confronting them when applying this method.

**Methods of the study**

**Research design**

To address the above research questions, the researcher conducted survey questionnaires. This design is suitable for this research for two main reasons. Firstly, a survey which is time-saving if the best choice when it is expected to carry over a considerably large number of participants (Grillham, 2000 cited in Hoang and Nguyen, 2006). Secondly, in order to find out students’ perception of critical reading it is a practical way to survey students themselves.

**Research population**

The study is planned to conduct among one hundred and sixteen third year students of FELTE, ULIS, VNU. Such participants, 86 of whom among 370 students are being trained to become English teachers while the others 30, among 125 students, are to become interpreters, would be chosen among more than 450 first year students of the faculty. All of them have already got used to writing reading reflection from the second semester of their first year. Four teachers of reading are also chosen to give further detailed ideas of the issue.

** Instruments**
In order to collect data and information there are a number of methods exploited.

- **Questionnaire:** This would be the major method applied for this study in order to find out students’ perception of critical reading. The questionnaire which is based on related materials including articles, online journals and books is planned to concern three matters namely: students’ perception of critical reading, their implementation and difficulties when reading critically. Before being conducted to target participants questionnaires are piloted on four chosen students in order to avoid ambiguity.

- **Semi-structured interview:** Direct talks with both teachers and students are, then, used to exploit ideas and further detailed information that has not been fully covered through questionnaires.

**Data collection procedure**

The data collection procedure was done as follows. First, the first version of questionnaire will be conducted to four first year students in order to collect feedbacks about how the instruments work and whether they perform the work they have been designed for. Once having been piloted and revised, the final version was delivered to students directly in class. A short introduction following the title on the top of the questionnaires together with oral instructions was made to lessen misunderstanding and ambiguity.

With respect to the interviews, in order to avoid potential problems, interview questions are piloted with one teacher before being used. This will give the researcher the opportunity to find out if the questions are yielding the kind of data required and to eliminate any questions which may be ambiguous or confusing to the interviewees.

**Data analysis procedure**

As regards to data analysis, appropriate information from different questionnaire and the interviews are extracted and put under suitable
categories. Additionally, tables and charts will be applied to illustrate and systematize the statistics.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Reading in a foreign language

Reading itself includes numerous issues. Therefore, I do not intend to completely cover such a vast topic. In this chapter, I would like to focus mainly on different definitions of reading, the role of reading and classification of reading.

1.1.1. Definition

While studying a language, what students understand about reading skill will help improve the efficiency of their reading skills and other skills as well. Thus, for students a careful look at definition of reading is of great importance. However, making clear what reading is is not an easy task though a lot of attempt has been made. Different people define the term reading in different ways. Widdowson’s definition- “the process of getting linguistic information via print” (Widdowson, 1979 cited in Keneath, 1995) - is an attractive one and a useful corrective to more restricted approaches. But as it stands, it is probably too general and all embracing to be of much practical value (Keneath, 1995). Robinson and Good (1997), differently, described reading as an understanding between the author and the reader. Reading is believed to be ‘an interaction’ between the writer and the reader (Robinson and Good, 1997; Keneath, 1995; Milan, 1996; Nuttal, 1996). If the writer has tried to encode
thought as language, the reader, vice versa, tries to decode language to thought to work out the full amount of information (Milan, 1996).

Gould, Di Yanni, Smith and Standford (1990), on the other hand, defined this term by looking at its scope. According to them, reading is a creative act, interaction, interpretation, a social act and responding. Although “no definition of reading can possibly include all view points and features” (Robinson and Good, 1997), for the sake of teaching and learning reading skill critically, I prefer Milan’s definition (1996, p. 27):

“Reading is an almost magical process that includes more than merely decoding print, it requires internal translation. In other words, you must internalize the author’s words, so that you understand not only their surface meaning but also what the word suggests beyond that…The words on the pages are nonetheless there to be analyzed, interpreted, questioned perhaps even challenged. In this way the active reader engages in a kind of silent dialogue with the author”

In general, reading is an interactive process that goes on between the reader and the text, resulting in comprehension. The text presents letters, words, sentences and paragraphs that encode meaning. The reader uses knowledge, skills and strategies to determine what that meaning is.

1.1.2. The importance of reading

Reading, along with writing, one of the two biggest technologies human beings has ever invented (Hedge, 1998) is undeniably important to our life. Lin Yu-T’ang once said:

“The man who has not the habit of reading is imprisoned in his immediate world, in respect to time and place. His life falls into a set of routine; he is limited in contact and conversation with a few friends and acquaintances, he sees only what happens in his immediate neighborhood. From this prison there is no escape.” (Lin Yu-T’ang cited in Milan, 1996, preface)
Reading in foreign language learning is of no less importance. For many students reading is even by far the most significant of the four skills in second language learning, particularly in English, for reading well allows them to travel, to learn and most crucially, as a college student, to think. Indeed, McGregor (1977) once pointed out some roles of reading. Firstly, where there was little reading, there would be little language learning. Secondly, further education depends on quantity and quality of reading. Finally and importantly general knowledge depends on reading. Indeed, possessing good reading skills not only makes students good readers but it also helps to facilitate the students’ ability in background knowledge, language areas such as vocabulary, grammar and language skills such as writing and speaking. It is crucial for language teacher to strive to help his students to improve reading so that they will be better able to benefit from their schooling.

1.1.3. Types of reading

Reading is a purposeful activity. Some people read in order to gain information or verify existing knowledge. Some others may read for enjoyment or to enhance knowledge of the language being read. The purposes for reading influence the reader’s selection of texts. Different types of texts require different knowledge, skills and strategies that the readers need to apply to achieve comprehension. According to Carrell, and Carson, (1997) in terms of different purposes, skills and strategies used by learners while reading we have two main types of reading which are intensive reading and extensive reading.

Intensive reading denotes careful reading aiming at discovering exactly what the author seeks to convey. Often reading for information
readers need to understand linguistic and semantic details and pay close
attention to the text. ‘Intensive reading involves approaching the text
under the close guidance of the teacher or under the guidance of task
which forces the students to pay great attention to the text’ (Nuttall,
1996).

‘Extensive reading means reading in quantity and in order to gain a
general understanding of what is read’ (Richards, 1992). Extensive
reading is often reading for pleasure. With respect to the importance of
extensive reading, Grable (1995) has drawn up on the work of, among
other, Elley (1991); Krashen (1989, 1993); Stanovich and Cunningham
(1993) that extensive reading can or may contribute to effective reading.
According to Grable (1995), extensive reading helps develop ability in
word recognition both in quantity and quality. The more extensively
students read, the larger and more automatic recognition vocabulary
students will gain. Additionally, extensive reading is considered a key
resource for building students’ motivation once students are ‘hooked’
(Grable, 1995). Once students are motivated to read they read more and
more new materials in other domains and learning new information.
Consequently, their general background knowledge would be positively
influenced. This is a two-way process described as the Matthew effects:
“the rich gets richer”. Grable (1995) believed that reading extensively
promotes students’ reading comprehension proficiency as well as other
language skills especially writing. Reading in a great deal, moreover,
may be the only genuine way for students to develop and maintain
reading strategies and become more strategic readers. To conclude, in
broad terms extensive reading is essential for developing the ability ‘to
read to learn’, a major goal for academically-oriented instruction and a
key means for students to continue learning a second language on their own when their teachers finish instruction.

Intensive reading and extensive reading, however, are not exclusive. Nuttall (1995) reminded us that “intensive reading and extensive reading are complementary and both are necessary” (Nuttall, 1996, p.23). According to Carrell and Carson (1997) Intensive reading with a focus on skills/strategies instruction has been shown to yield positive effects on second language reading. At the same time, students need the practice of extensive reading in order to orchestrate, coordinate and apply intensive acquired skills/strategies over the larger texts and multiple reading sources that are required in all academic course work

1.2. Critical Thinking

1.2.1. Definition

Critical thinking is the central intellectual skill that university education seeks to develop in students. Yet, critical thinking is not an easy concept to define as it can mean quite different things to different people in different contexts and cultures. This includes taking an attitude of reflective skepticism toward what you read, hear and know. Maiorana, Victoria (1992), Commayras (1990) and Stahl and Stahl (1991) agreed in one thing that critical thinking involves reasoning process. Particularly, the purposes of critical thinking are to achieve understanding, evaluating points and solving problems (Maiorana, Victoria, 1992). Since all three areas involve in the asking of questions, it can be said that critical thinking is the questioning or inquiring we engage in when seeking to understand, evaluate or resolve. Halpern, Diane (1996), differently, viewed critical thinking as being problem-solving-oriented which is
purposeful, reasoned and goal-directed, the kind of thinking involved in formulating influence, calculating likelihoods and making decisions.

Generally, to think critically about an issue is to consider that issue from various perspectives, to look at and challenge any possible assumptions that may underlie the issue and to explore its possible alternatives. Critical thinking helps us uncover the bias and prejudice, leads us away from half truth or deception (Milan, 1996). This requires that readers develop sound criteria and standard for analyzing and assessing their own thinking and routinely use those criteria and standard to improve in quality.

1.2.2. Attributives of a critical thinker

According to Ferrett, (1997), a critical thinker is expected to possess some typical characteristics. First, a critical thinker is supposed to have a sense of curiosity. He, therefore, has a strong desire to examine beliefs, assumptions and opinions, and to weigh them against facts all the time by consistently asking pertinent questions. In other words, a critical thinker is eager to understand things thoroughly. Second, a critical thinker is not only an eager one but also a man of action. When dealing with anything, he looks for proof and evidence to support assumptions and beliefs, so he can examine problems closely. Furthermore, after collecting proof and facts, one thinking critically can be able to reject incorrect and irrelevant information and suspend judgment until all facts have been gathered and considered. Finally, it is suggested that a critical thinker is able to evaluate statements and arguments. In conclusion, possessing the above attributes, a thinker will thoroughly understand the problem and find the best solution to it.
1.3. Critical reading

1.3.1. Definition of critical reading

In addition to acquiring good comprehension skills, becoming a good reader means developing a critical sense, a means of judging the worth of what you read. This requires keeping an open mind, not accepting unquestioningly what you read just because it is in print and also not rejecting ideas simply because they are different from your beliefs (Milan, 1995).

Critical reading has been used and defined by writers in a number of ways. Most of them shared the same view that it refers to the process of making judgments in reading evaluating relevancy and adequacy of what is read (Harris and Hodge, 1997).

The term critical reading in this case does not mean “critical” in the sense of tearing down or fault-finding; rather it means using careful evaluation, sound judgment and our reasoning powers (Milan, 1995). Fowler (1997) and Knott (1996) also added “critical reading involves higher level skills: interpretation and analysis.

It has been claimed that reading comprehension calls for critical thinking (Norris and Phillips, 1987 cited in Commayras, 1990). The claim that critical reading is closely related to reading comprehension is similar to the view that reasoning is an integral part of reading. This view has been acknowledged by many who have theorized about the process of reading (Betts, 1950; Gray, 1949; Huey, 1908; Russell, 1961; Thorndike, 1917 cited in Commayras, 1990). The comprehension of text requires the reader to use reasoning to evaluate possible interpretations to

To conclude, critical reading actually means thinking critically while reading or applying critical thinking to reading.

1.3.2. Attributives of a critical reader

When studying the matter of the attributives of a critical reader Sunda and Brisas (2002) and Schumm and Post (1997) have suggested different characteristics resulted from their different approach toward critical reading. However, they agreed on one thing that to be a critical reader, one, firstly, must be a critical thinker. Obviously, a critical reader possesses the characteristics of a critical thinker’s such as curiosity, ability to look for proof and evidence, and to judge and to evaluate statements and arguments. However, one important characteristic that specifies critical readers from critical thinkers, according to Schumm, and Post (1997), is that a critical reader is able to see the connections between topics and use knowledge from other disciplines to enhance their reading and learning experience. Personally, a critical reader is expected to see controversies existing in the area and be able to judge the validity of the author’s conclusion in the light of the evidence presented.

1.3.3. The importance of critical reading

It has been recognized for many years that one of the primary aims of education, especially at college level, is to foster students’ ability to think critically, to reason, and to use judgment effectively in decision making (Milan, 1987). Indeed, critical reading requires students to evaluate the arguments in the text, weigh the evidence and develop a set of standard
on which to base their evaluation. Student’s needs are to distinguish fact from opinion, and a thorough look at arguments given for and against the proposition. Consequently, reading critically helps students meet their author’s most important points, recognize how the texts fit together and to note how they can turn it into their own knowledge. Learning and teaching critical reading should, indispensably, receive deserved concern from students as well as the teachers.

1.3.4. Critical reading skills

One of the most important aspects that all the researchers put great consideration into is critical reading skills, for to become a critical reader also means to develop such kinds of skills when reading. However, different researchers approach the term differently. From the researcher’s own observation and synthesis basing mainly on the work of Peirce (1998) and Barbara Fowler (1998), the following strategies can be learned readily and applied to college reading in general and critical reading in particular.

1.3.4.1. Previewing: the step to learn about a text before really reading it.

To start with, it is important to find out anything about the author such as who he is, what else he has published, what work he does. This kind of information can be gained from the foreword, introduction or the back of the book, or at the bottom corner of the first page of an article. Through this kind of information, some indication of the author’s purposes, intended audience, perspective and approach and his ideological orientation or conceptual framework may be given. It is also important to learn something from the head notes or other introductory materials and to skim to get an overview of the content and organization of the text,
and to identify the rhetorical situation as well. Previewing, indeed, enables readers to get sense of what the text is about, how it is organized in order to have an overview.

1.3.4.2. Contextualizing

It is significant to understand the historical context in which a text is written because it can influence the author’s thinking and preoccupation, and can indicate how up-to-date the material in the text is. In addition, the gender and cultural background of the author may also have a bearing on the author’s perspective. Also, to read critically, it is necessary to contextualize to recognize the differences between the contemporary values and attitudes and those represented in the text.

1.3.4.3. Questioning and annotating to understand and remember

While reading, it is essential for students to challenge their thinking with several questions in order to understand the content and the ways things of the text fit together. In order to adequately understand the text, from time to time, consciously or unconsciously, readers answer several questions about their purposes to read, types and subject of text, the author’s purposes of and attitude towards the topic (Reed, 2004; Sunda & Brisas, 2002), the effectiveness of evidence, writer’s exploitation of other related texts, the conclusion drawn and the validity of this conclusion and controversies existing in the areas (Kirszner and Mandell, 1992)

For the memory of each person is limited, one cannot depend on just reading through the text. Readers, therefore, should annotate the text, underlining or matching written notes in the margins of the text to
identify the most important ideas and also the way the text works. To annotate effectively, firstly, each should devise his own notation system. Wesley (2001) suggests double underlining the author’s explanation, underlining each major new claim, circling major point of transition, asterisking major pieces of evidence like statistics or stories or argument, writing ‘concl’ beside major conclusions, putting an exclamation point next to passages, attaching a post-it note next to trigger passages, or putting a question mark next to points that are unclear and note whether you need more information that the author has been unclear.

Those are some ways to annotate the source text, but the more important thing is what to annotate. First, note the author’s thesis, primary assertions and primary means of support. It is suggested to mark the author’s thesis, highlight and summarize each major point the author makes, and how the author supports each idea, argument, or finding and whether the thesis and primary assertions are clearly stated and supported or not. Second, note the author’s use of graphics, headings and subheadings (if there is). This is to understand the kind, the function and also the effectiveness of the heading and graphics produced by the author. It also aims at researching the way the headings and subheadings organize the piece. Third, note the author diction and word choice. For students are language learners, it is important to carefully consider the kind of language and the way the writer is employing it to find out whether it is formal or informal, over technical and appropriate or not. Beside strengths, it is suggested to note any weaknesses in the author’s language. In addition, note the author’s tone. Because the writer’s attitude toward the topic can directly or indirectly affect readers’, it is fundamental to consider whether he is serious, comical or satiric. Furthermore, note the writer’s purpose and audience. Bear in mind the
primary aim of the piece, and consider the kinds of audience the author is to aim at. This is to understand if the author is attempting to entertain, inform, or persuade readers. This, in fact, is simply to judge how successful all the work of the author is.

1.3.4.4. Outlining and summarizing

After having read and studied the text, Sunda & Brisas (2002) suggests outlining and writing a brief summary of the piece either at the end of the reading or on a separate sheet of paper. These are especially helpful strategies to thoroughly understand the content and structure of a reading selection and to distinguish main ideas with supporting ideas and examples. Outlining may be considered a part of annotating process or done separately. While outlining, it is better not to use the text’s exact words. Summarizing, then, is based on the outline. However, instead of listing the main ideas, a summary recomposes them to form a new text. Whereas outlining depends on a close analysis of each paragraph, summarizing also requires creative synthesis. This is regarded as a closer step toward a creative writing by putting ideas together again, however, in readers’ own words and in condensed form. In deed, this step shows how deep one understands after having read the text critically.

1.3.4.5. Analyzing and evaluating

However, never is critical reading only to understand the text, it goes further. After reading, annotating and understanding, critical readers analyze and evaluate the reading and comparing it with their beliefs and values. For a reading’s evidences and reasoning hugely determine its efficiency, it is advisable for students to identify, analyze and weigh these two separate but related aspects of the text. To weigh the evidence
an author provides to support or illustrate his assertion is, firstly, to identify the types of evidence: whether its form is statistics, expert testimony appeals, historical analysis, precedent case histories or analogies. Then, try to clarify the place in the article each types of evidence used to support certain types of claims. The next step is analyzing the author’s reasoning process. This step is more difficult because it is more abstract. Firstly, students should identify how he develops and explains his ideas. Second is to examine the assumptions an author makes concerning his topic and readers. In order to analyze the author’s reasoning process the questions of the order that ideas are presented, the logical connections between the major assertions, the assumption about the topic or the readers is the author making as well as place in the text that these assumptions are explained should be taken into consideration (Reed, 2004; Sunda & Brisas, 2002; and Kirszner and Mandell, 1992).

Another good strategy to employ when critiquing a reading is to determine the adequacy of its evidence. To carry out this step, it is suggested to thoughtfully answer such questions as if the author support his contentions or findings, whether or not the support adequate, if the author has ignored evidence or alternative hypotheses or explanations and while developing his or her position, are there any problems with unstated assumption (Sunda & Brisas, 2002), or if these problems are with logical fallacies such as hasty generalizations, false dilemmas, or appeals to false authorities (Reed, 2004), and whether the author has addressed the ethical implications of his position or not and if the author’s reasoning process a notable strength in the piece (Kirszner and Mandell, 1992).

**Analyzing and evaluating a reading’s organization**
In the analyzing and evaluating process, it is fundamental to identify how the writer orders the materials contained in the reading. Whenever one offers findings or ideas, he has to reason them to the readers, offer examples and explanation, decide what to come first, second and then third. This process, hence, contributes largely to understanding the coherence and convince of the reading. When analyzing the organization of a reading readers are advised to bear in mind the questions about author’s indication stating that he is moving from one point to another point, the relationship between the thesis of the piece (stated and unstated) and the other in which the ideas or findings are presented, the way the writer has tried to help the reader understand the organization of the reading such as transition words or phrases, transition paragraph, repetition of key terms, repetition of language from the thesis, repetition of names or title (Kirszner and Mandell, 1992).

To find out whether the organization is especially strong and whether it significantly enhances the text’s clarity or effectiveness or not while evaluating the source text’s organization, it is advisable for readers to find out answers to several questions if there is a clear connection between the major assertions of the essay or paragraph, whether or not all the assertions are clearly related to the overall thesis of the piece, if the author has provided headings or subheadings to help readers to follow his or her line of thought and if the author has provided adequate transition to help readers move through the writing and see the logical connection between the assertions he is making (Sunda & Brisas, 2002 and Reed, 2004)

**Analyzing and evaluating reading’s style**
For the scope of this study is to gain a move toward effective integration between reading and writing, this step, analyzing and evaluating a reading’s style, is of great importance. To analyze and evaluate the style of a text is, firstly, to explore whether the author’s language, tone and syntax are appropriate for particular type of writing or field of study or not. In order to carry out this step it is suggested to answer the questions about the characterized diction of the piece: formal, informal or somewhere in the middle, its appropriateness, the characteristic of the tone of the piece: inviting, satiric or humorous and the clarity and effectiveness of the author’s word choice or answer such questions as if the author’s word choice is needlessly inflammatory or emotional whether or not the sentences are clearly written the sentence’s types varied and if the syntax is appropriate given to the audience (Kirschner and Mandell, 1992).

1.3.4.6. Reflecting on challenges to your beliefs and values

After thoroughly understanding the text, students, should reflect on challenges to their beliefs and values. Readers are not advised to believe and admit everything that the author said. They, in contrast, are encouraged to have their own point of view toward an issue. Hence, it is critical reading that helps students decide what to believe and what not to. Another post reading step is to compare and contrast related readings. This is the step of exploring likeliness and differences between texts to understand them better. Many of the authors are concerned about the same issues or questions, but they approach those topics in differences ways. Reading several texts about one topic, comparing and contrasting them with each other is a very good way to have an over view of the topic as well as to develop critical thinking.
To conclude, the above suggestions are to help students become more critical when dealing with a reading text. These strategies, indeed, contribute much to the understanding and evaluating the material.

1.4. Current related research

There are some pieces of research relating to the topic chosen: Critical Reading. In ‘Developing Reading Skills’ Milan (1995) has studied ways to develop students’ good reading comprehension skills. He believes that ‘in addition to acquiring good comprehension skills, becoming a good reader means developing a critical sense, a means of judging the worth of what you read’. In order to develop such skills, Milan (1995) has presented several useful skills which are locating arguments; detecting unstated assumptions behind an argument; judging the quality of the evidence supporting an argument; distinguishing between deductive and inductive reasoning; telling a valid argument from an invalid one; detecting false appeals and logical fallacies; and recognizing bias and the misuse of authority. The book, however, does not only deal with theoretical pattern but also offers a number of practice exercises. Though also dealing with the topic of developing reading skills, Nguyen, Le, Lai and Hoang (2006) and Tran (2006) approached the studied matter from the perspective of teachers of English. Yet, while in the research ‘Developing critical thinking skills for first year students through four skills’, Nguyen, Le, Lai and Hoang (2006) took the application of critical reading in designing tasks and teaching reading lesson into account, the main focus of Tran (2006) in ‘A study on how to enhance first year students’ critical reading skills’ was to assign reading reflection as homework requiring students to read extensively and critically. Not until the past two years have first year students of the Faculty been required to write reading reflection on what they have extensively at home in the Book Worm project. However, the questions of how well first year students perceive critical reading and the
effectiveness of students’ application of critical reading through their portfolio have still been left, which leaves room for my research.
CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

2.1. INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL ENGLISH and BOOKWORM PROJECT (extracts from Course guide)

In the Faculty of English Language Teacher Education, Vietnam National University, Hanoi, English-majored students of the first and second year study Academic English and Social English simultaneously. The aim of Social English is to expose students to English social setting in which students act as a member of society and enhance their ability to use English in everyday life.

The bookworm project runs through semester 1 and semester 2 of the first year. Besides reading the reading passages that are compiled from different textbooks, students have the chance to be exposed to different reading genres that are relevant to their ability and interest. Reading materials for Bookworm project range from adapted novels, short stories, book chapters to young adult novels. The adapted novels are selected from Oxford Bookworm collections. At home, students read the assigned at home individually. Then, they work in groups of four and prepare for the oral presentations and the written reflections.

Objectives
The Bookworm project aims to
- Expose students to famous literature masterpieces and reading for leisure through which students develop their vocabulary and become more conscious about creative writing.
- Assess students’ understanding of literary prose through the exploration of some literary works that are adapted to their level.

Description
The works selected are famous classic masterpieces that have motivated generations of readers in the world. All the texts have been adapted to suit students’ level of proficiency. Each story creates a rich context for language activities, and provides an infinite resource for language work (discussion, role play, creative writing, etc.)

Procedure
Students read what is assigned at home and are recommended to take notes of the chapters’ main ideas.
In the classroom, teachers organize some pre-reading and post-reading activities and quizzes to aid and check students’ understanding. Students must complete the quizzes individually.
Requirements

Content of Oral Presentations and Written Reflection

- **Short summary of literary works (OBLIGATORY)**
- What they like or dislike
- Favourite character + Explanation
- Change / Adaptation of plot or details + Explanation
- Change of the ending + Explanation
- Comparison between written work and film version (if any)
- *Students’ own ideas*

Length

- Oral Presentations: 10-15 mins
- Written Reflection: About 400 words

2.1. Participant selection

This study was conducted to find out how first year students of FELTE – ULIS- VNU perceive critical reading, its effectiveness and the real situation of teaching and learning critical reading. Therefore, 120 participants of two target groups, 116 students and 4 teachers of the Faculty were chosen. All students chosen are in their first year of college. They are all native speakers of Vietnamese and have studied EFL through formal instruction at school for at least five years. All of them have already got used to writing reading reflection from the first semester of their first year. Although their academic major are English, 86 of them, among 370 students, are being trained to become English teachers while the others 30, among 125 students, are to become interpreters. However, the data from these two groups are analyzed in the same way. The other group of participants is four teachers all from FELTE- ULIS-VNU who have taught ESL for at least five years. Gender is not taken
into consideration, however, it turned out that all of the four teachers are female. One important feature that leads the researcher to such decision of choosing them among many other is that they all have been carrying out an extensive reading schedule on their students. They have asked their students to hand in their reading reflection on a theme every two weeks. The survey was conducted to 120 participants because of the fact that this number can provide both the variety and the objectiveness of the result I can get from the trial period. It also meets with the practicality of my study. If I involved more participants, the reliability of the data collected would be greater, but the number then would become too big and go beyond my management.

2.2. Data collection

Questionnaires and interviews are used as the main instructions for my data collection.

Questionnaires are claimed to be ‘easy to construct, extremely versatile, and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily processable’ (Dornyei, 2003). According to Jo and Steve (1997) questionnaires afford a good deal of precision and clarity because the knowledge needed is controlled by the questions.

The questionnaire is designed by pooling items from self-experience and reference materials relating to the topic including articles, online journals and books. In terms of format, the questionnaire mainly utilizes multiple choice questions, open-ended questions and ranked questions. However, most of the questions do not belong to sole kind of the three mentioned above, but are intended to be the combination of, usually, two kinds: multiple - choice and open-ended questions. With
regards to the content, the questionnaire is divided into three parts which are in accordant with three focuses I hope to investigate. Those are students’ perception of critical reading, the real situation of teaching and learning critical reading and students’ application of critical reading skills and its effectiveness.

Even though the questionnaire is able to give the researcher valuable data on the overall picture of the studied matter, interviews are needed for deeper and profound information about students’ and teachers’ opinions, experiences and recommendations on critical reading application and reading portfolio as well. Thus, I used interviews to gain this valuable information.

2.3. Procedure

The study is planned to be conducted in the following steps. First, related documents including articles, online journals, research and books is collected and synthesized so that researcher can have an over view of the matter being studied. From collected materials, the researcher can make hypothesizes on the students’ perception of critical reading and the effectiveness of teaching and learning to read critically, based on which the questionnaire, the guided questions for the interviews and the observation checklist are formed. Afterwards comes the stage of piloting the first version of the questionnaire on four third year students to test its comprehensibility and feasibility. Once the first version has been reviewed and completed, a survey of 120 participants, 116 students and 4 teachers, was conducted on first year students of FELTE- ULIS - VNU. After that four informal interviews with selected teachers were carried out. Based on the data collected from interviews, questionnaire results,
the researcher would synthesize and interpret, and then a comprehensive picture of the matter is drawn. After that, 30 reading reflections are collected to be analyzed and scored independently by the researcher and two other teachers of reading. The final results of the reading reflections are the average score of the three above assessments. This is to ensure the objectiveness of the results. The results, in turn, are to make better comparison with students’ reading approach.

2.4. Data analysis

The data collected from questionnaires and interviews are analyzed both statistically and interpretively. With the first two parts of the questionnaires the researcher follows the statistical procedures from coding questionnaires data to summarizing and reporting the data in the most reader-friendly way. Especially, in these parts, both teachers and students’ opinions of critical reading and the frequency of teaching critical reading strategies are demonstrated in parallel so that a clear comparison between the two groups in terms of opinions will be made. Dealing with the final part of the questionnaire, students’ reading approach is categorized into three groups, which are surface, medium and deep approaches. This categorization is based on the classification of Norton and Scantlebury (1995). If ‘yes’ is answered to all or most of questions: 1, 2, 6, 10, 11, 12, 15, students are adopting a ‘surface approach’ to their learning. They are organizing their learning in order to be able to remember facts and figures to use in essays and exams. If ‘yes’ is answered to all or most of questions: 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, students are adopting what is termed a ‘deep approach’ to their reading. They are thinking critically about the information they read and trying to make sense of it in the wider context of your studies. This approach to learning and studying shows initiative and understanding and an ability to
undertake independent study. Many tutors when questioned would include this in their definitions of an ‘ideal student’. The last reading approach is medium. That is when students answer ‘yes’ to the questions of the two above approach (surface and deep approach) equally, it means sometimes they approach surface reading, other times they approach reading deeply or with certain types of text they approach differently. In order to assess the effectiveness of students’ critical reading skills 30 reading portfolios are collected and weighted in favor of three levels which are literal, evaluative and applied level, adopted from Rivers (1979). At literal level, students are able to select the main idea or central thought to extract the most important thought from a mass of ideas and subordinate ideas or illustrative materials. Students can see readings not as a series of isolated bits of information but see through details being in relation to the main concepts that they help develop and are able to clarify illustration, definition, description, discussion and explanation in the reading to discover the organization of the reading. One student is considered to be at evaluative level when he/she has ability to evaluate the effectiveness of the author’s arguments and do not believe in everything she/he reads. Students understand the underlying ideas of the authors. Finally at the highest level of reading, applied level, students are supposed to relate the theme to present day events and to carry out an evaluation of what people in their own culture attach to the words and groups of words they are reading. They are able to apply what they are reading to their own situation. In order to interpret the effectiveness of students’ critical reading with the highest accuracy, with regard to the content, reading reflection is seen from two different perspectives which are life lessons – lessons they have learnt after reading a story or a book, and academic issues dealing with scientific knowledge they learn from text and related materials.
With the above data analysis, researcher hopes to draw a comprehensive picture of the matter studied.
CHAPTER 3: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and the researcher’s interpretation of these findings. The researcher does not discuss the results of questionnaires and interviews separately, but appropriate information from these instruments is extracted and put under suitable categories with possible interpretations. Additionally, it is in this chapter that some explanation for the current situation of application of teaching and learning critical reading are included. Indeed, findings from questionnaires would be better supported by the deeper look into the problems gained from in-depth interviews.

In order to find out the answer to the research question, a combination of the questionnaires for both teachers and students and informal interviews is exploited. As planned, the questionnaire was conducted to 150 first year students of FELTE - ULIS-VNU but only 116 of them handed in their answers. Hence, the total number of participants stands fixedly at 116.

There are four main parts in this chapter which respectively discuss teachers’ and students’ opinions about critical reading, the current situation of teaching critical reading, the effectiveness of the application of critical reading to third year students in our department and finally teachers’ difficulties in teaching critical reading and some suggestions.

Altogether, findings, reasons, evaluations and suggestions will draw a clear picture of the teaching and learning reading critically among first year students in the faculty.
3.1. Opinions about teaching critical reading to first year students

Importance rating

![Pie Chart: Students' Assessment](image1)

![Pie Chart: Teachers' Assessment](image2)

*Figure 1: Students' Assessment  Figure 2: Teachers' Assessment*

Seen from the charts above, the importance of critical reading is ranged as three-point scale which are quite important, important and very important. It is easy to realize from that both teachers and students are aware of the significance of critical reading, however, the proportion and level of necessity different from one group to another. One hundred percent of teachers think that developing critical reading to first year students is significant and this percentage from students is 98.1% which is considerably high. As showed in the chart, one half of teachers consider critical reading important and the other half believe reading critically even very important. This leads to the fact that teacher’s assessment stands at the very high rate, between important and very important, in the rating scale. No teachers claim that critical reading is less or no important. The result obtained from students’ side, though, slightly different from that of teachers, shows positive signal.

Only approximately two out of a hundred (about 1.9 %) assert that teaching critical reading is of little importance, while the number of students thinking that teaching critical reading is crucial is 32, which is equivalent to 31.2%. Finally, the largest proportion of students, 67.9 %,
rates teaching critical reading as very important. Students’ assessment, therefore, stands at considerably high point, between important and very important, which is only slightly lower than that of teachers. However, 98.1% of students believe critical reading is an important skill for their studying.

From the researcher’s point of view, different assessments of teachers and students in rating the importance of teaching critical reading might result from different awareness and personal point of view of teachers and students. Teachers who have already had practical teaching experiences and a deeper understanding of critical reading, no wonder have fully appreciated the importance of critical reading and of teaching critical reading to students. On the other hand, to some students the concept of critical reading is quite new and to some other reading in traditional way, doing reading test which they are used to is much more important. It is, therefore, understandable that critical reading has not been fully recognized its importance by first year students.

3.1.1. Reasons why teaching critical reading to first year students is important

![Figure 3: REASONS WHY TEACHING CRITICAL READING TO FIRST YEAR STUDENTS IS IMPORTANT](image)
A. It motivates students to read actively and independently.
B. It helps students well in their critical writing (e.g., writing argumentative essays/article)
C. Critical reading skills enhance students’ ability to think critically—an essential skill for students to study well at University.
D. Critical reading skills help students to be independent and confident in this Information Age.

The data presented in the above chart has shown the judgment of teachers and students in the reasons for teaching critical reading to first year students. One more time, teachers asked have an absolute appreciation of the four mentioned reasons which are to motivate students to read actively and independently, help students well in their argumentative essay, enhance students’ ability to think critically. Differently, two first of the students evaluate critical reading in its developing their critical thinking abilities. Meanwhile, 62 students accounting for 58.5% believe reading critically motivates them to read actively and independently. Nearly a half of students asked think critical reading would result in their better argumentative writing. Lastly, 41% of student sees critical reading contribute much to their independence and confidence in this Information Age. Beside the above reasons, 7.5% of students also add that critical reading in short term develop students’ reading ability which help them to read with interest and deep understanding, in long term, do much help when they go to work.

The different perception of critical reading of teachers and students can be explained by their different experience, knowledge and opinions. Though there are reasons more or less largely perceived by both teachers and students, it is hard to say which attributives critical reading develops most or contributes most to students.

3.1.2. Why critical reading to first year students is of little or no importance
Only 1.8% of students, two students, asked think critical reading is only of little or no importance. The number is relatively small in comparison with the number of students being aware of its importance. However, this proportion is still worth considering. These two students explain that their reading tests do not require critical reading and that critical reading involves higher level of thinking skills which are not suitable to first year students.

3.2. Situation of teaching critical reading to first year students

3.2.1. The frequency of teacher’s focusing on developing critical reading skills to first year students

The two figures above show the frequency of teaching critical reading to first year students. Both target groups of participants assert that developing critical thinking for students is usually focused. This can be seen from the high level of average frequency which are ‘often’ according to teachers and between ‘sometimes’ and ‘often’ according to students.

Particularly, an absolute proportion of teachers, 100%, assert that they often foster students’ critical reading skills. Differently, this proportion in students’ assessment ranges widely from ‘rarely’ point to ‘always’ one in the scale. There are no students affirming that their teachers never enhanced critical reading. The number of students rating the frequency of teaching critical reading at extreme point, ‘rarely’ or ‘always’, is relatively small, only six one accounting for 5.7%. The largest proportion of students, 47.2%, affirms that they are enhanced to read critically sometimes. The last considerable number of students, 46 totaling up to
43.4%, asserts that the application of critical reading is often. It, then, can be inferred that while teachers think they used critical reading strategies more frequently, students might not be fully aware of that. This low assessment of students in comparison with teachers’ expectation may be explained by the reason that students are not fully aware of what critical reading as well as its strategies are so they did not realize such skills being taught are critical reading.

However, it cannot be denied that teachers could not focus on critical reading more frequently. In the interviews, teachers blamed this for the fact that critical reading in our university was not an independent subject like in other universities in the world. Realizing the importance of critical reading, some teachers had integrated critical reading activities into the reading curriculum; however, the frequency of critical reading strategies could not surpass the other reading skills.

3.2.2. Frequency of teaching critical reading strategies in classroom and at home
### Table 1: STUDENTS’ ASSESSMENT OF THE FREQUENCY OF TEACHING CRITICAL READING STRATEGIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(C1)</em> Require students to preview the reading (e.g. the headline, title, subtitle)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(C2)</em> Provoke students’ background knowledge about the topic</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(C3)</em> Establish students a purpose for reading</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(C4)</em> Ask students to determine text structure and organization.</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(C5)</em> Ask searching and thoughtful questions which require students to argue for their own answer</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(C6)</em> Ask students to paraphrase and summarize the author’s ideas.</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(C7)</em> Help students to determine the author’s purpose and attitude.</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(C8)</em> Require students to relate ideas from one reading to other ideas.</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(C9)</em> Help students to evaluate the validity of the author’s claims (looking at the evidence and assertions that the author makes.)</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(C10)</em> Help students to make comparison and connections between the subject and matter in the reading text and the real situation in the real world.</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(C11)</em> Get students to talk about their own thoughts of the subject matter in the reading text.</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(C12)</em> Encourage questions from students about the subject matter in the reading text.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(C13)</em> Collaborating with other readers to work with the ideas in the reading.</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(H1)</em> Organization note: provide students with a reading text with questions to be answered then ask students to organize their notes around these questions.</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(H1)</em> Writing comments: provide students with a reading text and ask them to write comments on the problems raised in the reading text.</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(H1)</em> Establishing arguments: at the end of the reading lessons, raise an open question which is related to the issues in the reading class, ask students to read related articles and then write a small essay to establish their own arguments based on these articles.</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(H1)</em> Comparing arguments: give students a theme, ask them to read some article on that theme and write a card note to compare the arguments in the articles( Which arguments sounds better, more reasonable and why, etc…)</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2: TEACHERS’ ASSESSMENT OF THE FREQUENCY OF TEACHING CRITICAL READING STRATEGIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1. Require students previewing the reading (e.g. the headline, title, subtitle)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2. Provoking students’ background knowledge about the topic</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3. Establish students a purpose for reading</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4. Ask students to determine text structure and organization.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5. Ask searching and thoughtful questions which require students to argue for their own answer</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6. Ask students to paraphrase and summarize the author’s ideas.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C7. Help students to determine the author’s purpose and attitude.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C8. Require students to relate ideas from one reading to other ideas.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C9. Help students to evaluate the validity of the author’s claims (looking at the evidence and assertions that the author makes.)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C10. Help students to make comparison and connections between the subject and matter in the reading text and the real situation in the real world.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C11. Get students to talk about their own thoughts of the subject matter in the reading text.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C12. Encourage questions from students about the subject matter in the reading text.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C13. Collaborating with other readers to work with the ideas in the reading.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1. Organization note: provide students with a reading text with questions to be answered then ask students to organize their notes around these questions.</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2. Writing comments: provide students with a reading text and ask them to write comments on the problems raised in the reading text.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3. Establishing arguments: at the end of the reading lessons, raise an open question which is related to the issues n the reading class, ask students to read related articles and then write a small essay to establish their own arguments based on these articles.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4. Comparing arguments: give students a them, ask them to read some article on that theme and write a card note to compare the arguments in the articles( Which arguments sounds better, more reasonable and why, etc…)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 and 2 give a comprehensive picture of the strategies used to enhance critical reading for students and the frequency of application. The slight dissimilarities between teachers and students’ opinions about critical reading is partly revealed in the five above figures, it, however, is not until coming to this pattern are the differences clearly portrayed. While students put high appreciation into the constancy of critical reading techniques exploited during class time and do not take full advantages homework techniques, teachers believe they ask students to exploit homework techniques more regularly. Due to the limitation of reading class time, only two periods a week totaling up to 90 minutes, and the large items needed focusing, reading teachers usually only leave some minutes for only one or two students talking about what they have learned and searched in front of class and leave no time for other things like establishing and comparing arguments This may be the explanation for students’ unsatisfaction with the establishing of teachers’ homework techniques.

3.2.2.1 Frequency of classroom techniques

Figure 6: STUDENTS’ ASSESSMENT
As can be seen from table 2 & 3 and table 7 & 8 both teachers and students have a positive view on the application of critical reading in and out class. They agree on that (C3) and (C5) are most frequently used. Besides, regarding to the last items of critical reading techniques in classroom, two target groups of participants show some dissimilarities. While students affirm that they are asked to use such techniques as (C1), (C4), (C6) and (C7) frequently, teachers assert that they often apply (C2), (C10) and (12) techniques. The average score of both students’ and teachers’ assessment is above the third point, equivalent to “sometimes”, which means that the frequency of classroom strategies is quite high.

3.2.2.2. Frequency of homework techniques
With regard to home work techniques, as having said above, while students see that homework techniques is not applied regularly, teachers believe they have fully, to some extent, take the advantages of them. Hence, teachers assert that they often utilize techniques (H3) and (H4) and sometimes use (H2), while to most of the students the frequency of techniques use is only somewhere between rarely and sometimes. The only one point they hold in common is about the techniques (H1) which they rarely exploit.

Generally it can be seen that classroom techniques has been utilized relatively efficiently among first year students, which bring satisfaction for students and the effectiveness of reading class in general.

3.3. Students’ reading approach and the effectiveness of their reading reflections
Students’ reading approach is categorized into three types: surface, medium and deep approach. If ‘yes’ is answered to all or most of questions 1,2,6,10,11,12 and 15, it means that students are adopting a surface approach to their reading. They tend to complete task requirements, memorize information needed for assessments. They fail to distinguish principles from examples and treats task as an external imposition and focus on discrete elements without integration. They seem unreflective about purpose or strategies. On the other hand, if ‘yes’ is answered to all or most questions 3,4,5,7,8,9,13, and 14, it means that students are adopting what is termed a deep approach to their learning. These students have vigorous interaction with content. They relate new ideas to previous knowledge, concepts to everyday experience and evidence to conclusions. They examine the logic of the argument. This approach to learning shows understanding and an ability to undertake independent study. The last approach is the medium. When students answer ‘yes’ to the questions of the two groups (surface and deep
approach) equally, it means sometimes their reading approach is surface, other time they read deeply or with certain kinds of text they approach differently.

Figure 8 Shows a positive signal in students own way of reading. Only 24 students, building up to 22.2%, approach reading surfacely. 22 other students are moderate readers with medium approach towards reading. More than a half of students, 57.2% approach reading deeply. When dealing the text they tend to read critically. Not only do they try to understand the underlying message of the texts and books, but also they keep on asking themselves and stop from time to time to reflect on what they are trying to learn from it.

The above approach is, however, just what students think about their own ways of reading; the real effectiveness of their reading is only shown through analyzing their reading reflections, a systematic and organized collection of a student’s work in reading which exhibits to others the direct evidence of a student’s efforts, achievements, and progress over a period of time (adapted from New Horizons for Learning, 2002). With regard to content, reading reflection is seen from two different perspectives which are life lessons – lessons they have learnt after reading a story or a book, and academic issues dealing with scientific knowledge they learn from text and related materials. Their reading reflections are categorized into three levels: literal level, evaluative level and applied level. In order to ensure the objectiveness of the result, the researcher and two other teachers of reading categorized the above 30 reading reflection separately into three mentioned level, without knowing the name of these students. The final result of each reflection, then, will
be the average score of the three assessments. Figure 7 and 8 show the difference in effectiveness when students dealing with different types of reading. Regarding to life lesson, most of students, 52.4%, shows good skills, when reading they are at applied level. A considerable percentage of students, 28.6%, are in evaluative level and only eight students stand at literal level. However, thing seems to be different event opposite in terms of reading reflection on academic issues. The largest proportion of students, 40.9 %, only stops at literal level. The number of students in evaluative level is 10 and the last 16 students, equal to 36.4 %, are considered applied readers.

This can be inferred that first year students can apply their knowledge they read when the topics are familiar or close to their life. Students tend to stop at understanding details, summarizing and repeating the information when dealing with scientific knowledge. This can be explained by several reasons. Firstly, first year students of FELTE-ULIS-VNU in particular and Vietnamese students in general lack critical reading skills when dealing with academic issues. They seem to get used to repeating the information only. Secondary, these first year students may not be used to this type of reflection, for they have not accustomed to writing reading reflection in the first semester of their university. Finally, lacking teachers’ instruction, guidance and a model may also result in their low effectiveness of their reading reflection. From the above tables and figures there is one more thing needed considering. That is there is considerable gap between what students believe about their reading approach and the real effectiveness of their critical reading application. The fact can be interpreted that the matter does not lie on
students’ abilities but in the ways they are instructed and the ways they unchange their habits.

3.4. Teachers’ difficulties and suggestions

3.4.1. Teachers’ difficulties in teaching critical reading to first year students

Figure 9: DIFFICULTIES CONFRONTING TEACHERS

A. Low level of students
B. Strict time schedule (i.e. lack of class time for critical reading activities)
C. Reading materials in the textbook are not suitable for designing critical reading activities
D. Work overload of first year students (i.e. third year students are overloaded with homework, assignments and presentations)

The above figure shows the major difficulties confronting teachers. As can easily see from the chart, 100% of teachers asked find strict time schedule and reading materials in the textbook problematic. They complain that two periods, totaling up to 90 minutes per week, are not enough for them to cover so many tasks in text book and then to organize class activities for critical reading. Reading materials are also blamed for such problem of the infrequency of teaching critical reading. Half of the teachers asked believe that workload of first year students is a big
problem confronting them. First year students are supposed to be in from upper-intermediate to advanced level of English, so they are assigned a lot of homework to do. They have 9 subjects with 27 periods each week in the first term and 10 subjects with 29 periods each week in the second term of their first year. Beside, with each subject they have to prepare at least a presentation and an assignment a semester. This is, indeed, a burden for them to carry out a part from reading reflection, if obligatory, which they have to hand in every two weeks. There is, therefore, no surprise that students are overloaded to do any extra reading. It is, however, surprising to find that no teachers think that level of students is troublesome. They believe that it is high time students got used to reading critically. It seems that it takes time and efforts to solve such problems and to get students acquire these good reading skills.

3.4.2. Teachers’ suggestions

Most teachers did encounter some difficulties when teaching critical reading to first year students; however, they have their own solutions to overcome those difficulties. Some started with introducing students with critical reading skills. This is a very important step, for only know what they are going to do can student do it well. Then students are given different types of texts to get used to. Some other suggested that students should be motivated first by being given texts about the topics they concern. Especially, most of the teachers interviewed said that they would integrate critical reading activities into the reading curriculum by inserting open questions, argumentative questions. In order to overcome the lack of time, some teachers ask students to read the text at home and reading some other related materials the class time will be left for
discussion. All of the suggestions are useful techniques to overcome difficulties in teaching critical reading to first year students.

Overall, teaching critical reading to first year students is not an easy matter. However, through the survey results and data analysis reasons for drawbacks have been found then hopefully would lay the foundation for recommendations to enhance critical reading skills for first year students.
CHAPTER 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

 Needless to say, teaching critical reading to students is crucially important but difficult, which takes a lot of time and effort. The results of my survey is relatively positive; however, according to third year students as well as teachers, teaching critical reading has not been fully exploited. In the process of fostering critical reading for first year students, there is still room for improvement. Based on the previous literature and data analysis chapter, the following recommendations are provided in the hope to help improve the application of teaching and learning critical reading to first year students.

According to Beers (2005), when teaching critical reading, teachers should be sure they always include three critical steps to facilitate and enhance students to learn. Firstly, teachers should provide students with basic critical reading techniques, Secondly, they are advised to give students numerous opportunities to apply the techniques to real tasks and then talk about how the techniques worked or did not work. Finally, teacher should check what students have achieved in reading, using provided techniques. The process requires the teacher to be a skilled observer who knows when to teach specific strategies, how to teach them, and how to learn through observation of what students do. Basing on the three steps suggested but differently, the researcher suggests two big steps which in turn are subdivided into several smaller ones as follow.
4.1. Facilitating the application of teaching and learning critical reading in reading classes

4.1.1. Finding out students’ needs and interests and helping them to set a goal

In the learner-centered teaching and learning approach which we seek to develop nowadays, students’ need is taken into great consideration. It is, therefore, advisable for teachers to initiate any course in reading in particular and in any subject in general with an investigation into students’ needs and interests. This information can be easily gained through a small survey, from five to ten minutes, asking students to write down their expectation for their studying reading and from their reading teacher, or by asking students to take turn and raise their voice. The information received from this short survey at the initial step of teaching critical reading will be useful for teachers to formulate a plan for what to teach and how to teach. After having a closer look at students’ needs and interests, teachers should help students to set up their own purposes and goal for their studying reading taking the university requirement and program into consideration. Having good purposes and a reasonable goal which are based on their own abilities and interests students will better know how far they are going with critical reading and reading in general. These set purposes and goals also enable teachers to check students’ progress.

4.1.2. Introducing students critical reading strategies

It is obviously true that we cannot ask students to read critically when students do not know what critical reading and its strategies are. Hence, it is important for teachers to explain clearly and thoroughly about the
concept of critical reading and things included. Yet, they should not merely show students what the strategies are and how to use it, they also need to share their own thinking and experience as they apply these strategies. Moreover, students should be given chances to talk about their own reading strategies, why they use them and how effective they are.

4.1.3. Designing task-based activities across curriculum and integrating extensive reading in task-based curriculum

Task-based activities are activities organized around tasks rather than in terms of grammar or vocabulary (Longman dictionary of Language Teaching and applied Linguistics). It has been argued that this is a more effective way of learning a foreign language since it provides a purpose for the use and learning of a language other than simply learning language items for their own sakes. Once task-based activities are designed across curriculum, the matter of long and boring curriculum will be resolved. Task-based activities, however, should not be limited to designing tasks across curriculum; it is strongly recommended that there should be integration between an extensive reading scheme and task-based curriculum. Task-based approach’ requirement that all language learning activities have clear and attainable purposes stands in sharp contrast to extensive reading scheme, which often fails to provide a clear learning purpose for learners. Basing on students’ interests and needs which have been obtained at the first step of the semester with consideration to students’ language proficiency, short but suitable writing should be given to students to read, synthesize and argue. Students should be encouraged to explore texts to raise their awareness of the features and the grammatical, lexical and discourse systems in the texts.
According to Green (2005), lexis-related awareness raising may be well focused on identification of collocations and lexical sets, while discourse-related analytical activities might focus on the pragmatic variation of a particular language item in a text. In order to remove the teachers’ workload in preparing suitable materials, the work should be shared by students. If properly designed, task-based activities will create students’ motivation in learning reading and facilitating their time at reading class.

4.2. Enhancing students’ application of critical reading at home

In order to solve the difficulties confronting teachers and students in teaching and learning to read critically during classtime, all of the teachers asked believe that assigning reading portfolio to check and motivate homework is a good way. The more extensively students read, the more critical reader they may become. This is because when students deal with different articles, books with different opinions on a theme they have to compare contrast and decide what to believe. Moreover, among the huge amount of information available they have to develop such critical reading skills as scanning, previewing and taking note to decide what to read. The degree of effectiveness in an extensive reading scheme students can gain from depends on the degree of students’ involvement.

4.2.1. Making students want to read

Increasing the number of reading assignments will not only increase the amount of reading done but also make students want to read. It is best when students change from ‘need to read’ to ‘want to read’ (Nuttall, 1996). Enjoyment, in this situation, is the key. Students are motivated firstly when they understand the importance of extensive reading. Only
when they know what they can have through extensive reading do they have the desire to read extensively. Secondly, the teachers of reading themselves must also be a model of extensive readers. Final is the consideration of materials. Where reading is actively promoted and plenty of enjoyable books are available; it is common to find students reading a book a week or more. A great dealt depends on the difficulty of the materials. To become an effective reader, it is far more useful to read a lot of easy materials than a few difficult ones. The matter of choosing the right materials is of great importance.

4.2.2. Guiding students to choose and share good materials

According to Nuttall (1996), the criteria for selecting texts are readability, whether the materials suit the linguistic level of readers, and suitability of content, whether the materials suit students’ interest and class context.

We can use the acronym SAVE to summarize the main criteria for choosing extensive reading materials (Nuttall, 1996): S for being short enough, A for appealing, V for varied and E for easy.

For the sources of good materials in English are limited and suitable books are even less, it is necessary that students share the books they have with each other. The class can make a list of books each student has and then deliver the copied list to everyone. Under the guidance of teachers, some interesting and useful books are selected and exchanged among students to write reading reflection on.

4.2.3. Asking students’ to fill in note card everyday

Having said above, checking in students’ amount of work is of worth considering. A good way of assessing the term of quantity is asking
students to fill in a note card everyday (Appendix 3). Through the information in the card teachers will know exactly what books, of which author, about which themes, of what sources, how many pages done as well as difficulties students encounter while reading the materials. Moreover, for the form of the card has been printed already, it takes students no more than five minutes to fill in it each day, which is very time-saving but, indeed, effective.

4.2.4. Using reading reflection to enhance first year students’ critical reading

In the situation of teaching critical reading to first year students in our department, reading reflection has been introduced since the last two years to surmount the difficulties that teachers encounter and meet the expectation of more practice on critical reading of almost all third year students. However, the effectiveness of it tends not to be up to teachers’ and students’ expectation. There are some more things should be taken into consideration. Sometimes students should be given texts and themes to write reading reflection on. Other times students should be free to choose to read and write portfolio about anything they like. Students should also have time to organize notes, write comments on problems raised in the text before they give their reading reflection to their friends to correct. That students are paired and portfolios are exchanged in class is a very important step. This is because peer reviewing is supposed to offer several advantages. In the case that these two students do not read on the same themes, the reviewer will enjoy a lot of things namely new knowledge and writing style. When they read and write about the same thing, it would be even more advantageous for they would have a
comparative look on their friend’s work and find the gap of their knowledge if there is. Their friend, in another way, will benefit from their friend’s comments and then develop the weak points of their own. After portfolios are exchanged back and the reviewee has written his final thoughts, the reading reflection is handed in to teachers. This, however, should not be the final step of the reading reflections. Regarding the quite high level of first year students, supposed to be in pre-intermediate to intermediate level, the researcher highly recommends some time for students to raise their voice of the problems they all or most concern in front of the class. These arguments will be the very good chance for students to not only show what they have gained during the fortnight but also argue and persuade other students with different opinions on the themes. Through this kind of activities teachers will also stop some students from copying without any understanding what they have read and others’ work.
CONCLUSION

From this study, it can be concluded that both target groups, teachers and students, are aware of the importance of critical reading in college education. However, the important rating varies from one group to another. It can also be inferred from the research that different strategies have been exploited in order to enhance critical reading skills of first year students. Yet, due to such problems as shortage of time, strict syllabus and workload of students, the frequency of employing critical strategies did not come up to students’ expectation. The result of this research also reveals that while teachers claimed that they applied critical reading strategies more often; students’ perception of the frequency of using the techniques is slightly lower. Also, at the level English from pre-intermediate to intermediate level students’ reading approach and effectiveness of their reading reflection do not come up to the researcher expectation when most of the first year students stop at evaluative level.

Basing on the findings of the research, reliable recommendations have been proposed in the light of improving the process of teaching critical reading as well as taking full advantage of reading reflection. However, this research has failed to thoroughly investigate the effectiveness of separate techniques used in enhancing critical reading. As a result, the researcher cannot point out which techniques are most effective and give recommendations to better the use of those techniques.

Further study investigating the effectiveness of separate techniques in enhancing critical reading is encouraged.

Though this research is planned to take initial step towards finding out third year students’ perception of critical reading, it is beneficial to any other research related to critical reading in general and enhancing critical reading skills in college education in particular.
REFERENCES


Critical reading is a process of making judgment in reading, evaluating relevancy and adequate of what is read; an act of reading in which a questioning attitude, logical and inference are used to judge the worth of what is reading according to an established standard.

I. Your opinion about teaching critical reading skills for first year students

1. Develop critical reading for third year students is necessary
   Yes □ Little important □ No □

* If your answer to question 1 is “yes” answer question 2 and question 3

2. How do you value the importance of teaching critical reading skills to first year students? (Please circle no more than one choice)

   1   2   3
   Little important Quite important Important

3. Develop critical reading skills is important to first year student because (You can circle more than one choice)
   E. It motivates students to read actively and independently.
   F. It helps students well in their critical writing (e.g. writing argumentative essays/article)
   G. Critical reading skills enhance students’ ability to think critically- an essential skill for students to study well at University.
   H. Critical reading skills help students to be independent and confident in this Information Age.
   I. Others (Please specify): …………………………………………………………………………

* If your answer to question 1 is “no” or “little important” answer question 4

4. Develop critical reading skills is not important to first year students because:
   (You can circle more than one choice)
   A. Critical reading involves higher level of thinking skills which are not suitable to third year students.
   B. Reading tests do not require critical reading skills therefore it is not necessary for first year students to study these skills.
C. Others (Please specify):

II. Situation of teaching critical reading skills in your class

5. Does your reading teacher focus on developing critical reading skills in reading lessons? (Circle one number on the rating scale)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. What strategies have your teachers used to enhance critical reading? How often does she/he use these strategies (please put a tick in the box to indicate the frequency)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Require students previewing the reading (e.g. the headline, title, subtitle)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provoke students’ background knowledge about the topic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Establish students a purpose for reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ask students to determine text structure and organization.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ask searching and thoughtful questions which require students to argue for their own answer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ask students to paraphrase and summarize the author’s ideas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Help students to determine the author’s purpose and attitude.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Require students to relate ideas from one reading to other ideas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Help students to evaluate the validity of the author’s claims (looking at the evidence and assertions that the author makes.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Help students to make comparison and connections between the subject and matter in the reading text and the real situation in the real world.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Get students to talk about their own thoughts of the subject matter in the reading text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Encourage questions from students about the subject matter in the reading text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Collaborating with other readers to work with the ideas in the reading.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In reading classes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home work</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Organization note</strong>: provide students with a reading text with questions to be answered then ask students to organize their notes around these questions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Writing comments</strong>: provide students with a reading text and ask them to write comments on the problems raised in the reading text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Establishing arguments</strong>: at the end of the reading lessons, raise an open question which is related to the issues in the reading class, ask students to read related articles and then write a small essay to establish their own arguments based on these articles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Comparing arguments</strong>: give students a theme, ask them to read some article on that theme and write a card note to compare the arguments in the articles( Which arguments sounds better, more reasonable and why, etc…)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. Your own ways of reading

7. Put a tick in the box which is likely to be true to you
(Based upon the ASSIST Approaches to Studying Inventory
http://www.hope.ac.uk/gnu/stuhelp/reading.htm)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I tend to read very little beyond what is actually required to pass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I concentrate on memorizing a good deal of what I read</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I try to relate ideas I come across in other topics to what I read</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>When I read an article or book, I try to find out exactly what the author means</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Often I find myself questioning what I read</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>When I read I concentrate on learning just those bits of information I need to pass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>When I am reading, I stop from time to time to reflect on what I’m trying to learn from it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>When I read, I examine the details carefully to see how they fit in with what's being said</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>I like books which challenge me and provide explanations which go beyond the lectures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>I like books which give definite facts and information which can be learned easily</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>I read an article straight through from start to finish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>I note down all the facts and figures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>I note the author’s main arguments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>I think about whether the facts supported these arguments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>I make summary notes to use later</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!!! ☺️
Critical reading is a process of making judgment in reading, evaluating relevancy and adequate of what is read; an act of reading in which a questioning attitude, logical and inference are used to judge the worth of what is reading according to an established standard.

IV. Your opinion about teaching critical reading skills for first year students

4. Developing critical reading for first year students is necessary

   Yes □   Little important □   No □

* If your answer to question 1 is “yes” answer question 2 and question 3

5. How do you value the importance of teaching critical reading skills to first year students? (Please circle no more than one choice)

   1   2   3

   Little important   Quite important   Important

6. Develop critical reading skills is important to first year student because (You can circle more than one choice)

   J. It motivates students to read actively and independently.
   K. It helps students well in their critical writing (e.g. writing argumentative essays/article)
   L. Critical reading skills enhance students’ ability to think critically- an essential skill for students to study well at University.
   M. Critical reading skills help students to be independent and confident in this Information Age.
   N. Others (Please specify): .................................................................

* If your answer to question 1 is “no” or “little important” answer question 4

4. Develop critical reading skills is not important to first year students because:
(You can circle more than one choice)

   A. Critical reading involves higher level of thinking skills which are not suitable to third year students.
   B. Reading tests do not require critical reading skills therefore it is not necessary for first year students to study these skills.
C. Others (Please specify):

............................................................................................................

V. Situation of teaching critical reading skills in your class

5. Do you focus on developing critical reading skills in reading lessons? (Circle one number on the rating scale)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


6. What strategies have you used to enhance critical reading? How often does you use these strategies (please put a tick in the box to indicate the frequency)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Require students previewing the reading (e.g. the headline, title, subtitle)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provoke students’ background knowledge about the topic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Establish students a purpose for reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ask students to determine text structure and organization.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ask searching and thoughtful questions which require students to argue for their own answer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ask students to paraphrase and summarize the author’s ideas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Help students to determine the author’s purpose and attitude.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Require students to relate ideas from one reading to other ideas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Help students to evaluate the validity of the author’s claims (looking at the evidence and assertions that the author makes.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Help students to make comparison and connections between the subject and matter in the reading text and the real situation in the real world.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Get students to talk about their own thoughts of the subject matter in the reading text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Encourage questions from students about the subject matter in the reading text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Collaborating with other readers to work with the ideas in the reading.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In reading classes</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Require students previewing the reading (e.g. the headline, title, subtitle)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provoke students’ background knowledge about the topic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Establish students a purpose for reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ask students to determine text structure and organization.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ask searching and thoughtful questions which require students to argue for their own answer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ask students to paraphrase and summarize the author’s ideas.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Help students to determine the author’s purpose and attitude.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Require students to relate ideas from one reading to other ideas.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Help students to evaluate the validity of the author’s claims (looking at the evidence and assertions that the author makes.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Help students to make comparison and connections between the subject and matter in the reading text and the real situation in the real world.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Get students to talk about their own thoughts of the subject matter in the reading text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Encourage questions from students about the subject matter in the reading text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Collaborating with other readers to work with the ideas in the reading.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homework</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Organization note</strong>: provide students with a reading text with questions to be answered then ask students to organize their notes around these questions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Writing comments</strong>: provide students with a reading text and ask them to write comments on the problems raised in the reading text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Establishing arguments</strong>: at the end of the reading lessons, raise an open question which is related to the issues n the reading class, ask students to read related articles and then write a small essay to establish their own arguments based on these articles.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Comparing arguments</strong>: give students a them, ask them to read some article on that theme and write a card note to compare the arguments in the articles( Which arguments sounds better, more reasonable and why, etc…)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VI. Difficulties and suggestions

7. What are the difficulties confronting you when you teach critical reading skills?
(You can circle one more choice)
   E. Low level of students
   F. Strict time schedule (i.e. lack of class time for critical reading activities)
   G. Reading materials in the textbook are not suitable for designing critical reading activities
   H. Work overload of first year students (i.e. first year students are overloaded with homework, assignment of and presentations)
   I. Others: (Please specify) .................................................................

8. What have you done to overcome these difficulties?
................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................

9. What are your suggestions for enhancing first year students’ critical reading skill?
................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!!! 😊
APPENDIX 3
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do you think about teaching critical reading to first year students?
2. Can you tell me the reasons why teaching critical reading to first year students is important/ not important?
3. Can you tell me the reasons why reading teacher can not focus more on teaching critical reading to first year students?
4. What are your difficulties in teaching critical reading to first year students?
5. What have you done to overcome those difficulties?
6. What are your suggestions to better the teaching of critical reading to first year students?
APPENDIX 4
EXAMPLE READING REPORT

(This report should take no more than 5 minutes!)

Title ______________________  Author _________________________  
My Name ___________________  My Student number ________________
Book Code __________________  Number of pages ________________
My book report number ______  Date ____________________________

Fill in the table. Put an 'X' where you like.

the book was enjoyable ___________________  the book was not enjoyable
the book was fun to read ___________________  the book was not so fun to read
the book was exciting ___________________  the book was not exciting
the book was easy to read ___  the book was difficult to read
the story was easy to understand ___  the story was difficult to understand
the characters were interesting ___  the characters were not so interesting
the vocabulary was easy ___  the vocabulary was difficult
I enjoyed it very much ___________  I didn't like the book.

What grade do you give the book (out of 10)? ___

I would like to read it again sometime? Circle one. YES/ NO
My impression of the book.
Write a few words about the book and try to finish these sentences.
This book was........
My favorite character was .........., because.......... 
I didn't like ............... , because........................ 
The story was................ 
I really liked........
APPENDIX 5
CRITICAL READING QUESTION CHECKLIST

* Why are you reading this text? What is your purpose?
* What type of text it is research report, essay, textbook, book review?
* What do you know about the subject of the text?
* What else has been written on the subject of the text?
* What controversies exist in this area? How does this text fit in?
* What is the author’s purpose?
* What is the writer’s attitude towards the topic?
* What conclusions are drawn?
* Is there a clear distinction between fact and opinion?
* Is evidence used to support arguments? How good is the evidence?
* Are all the points supported?
* How does the writer use other texts and other people’s ideas?
* Are the writer’s conclusions reasonable in the light of the evidence presented?
* How do the conclusions relate to other similar research?
* What assumptions has the writer made? Are they valid?
* What beliefs or values does the writer hold? Are they explicit?
* How else could the text have been written?
* In what order are the ideas, arguments, or finding presented?
* What are the logical connections between the major assertions being made in the piece? How does one idea lead to the next?
* What passages in the next explain these connections?
* What assumption about the topic or the readers is the author making?
* Where in the text are these assumptions articulated, explained or defended?
* Does the author support his contentions or findings?
* Is this support adequate? Does the author offer enough evidence to support his contentions?
* Has the author ignored evidence or alternative hypotheses or explanations for the evidence he or she offers?
* While developing his or her position, are there any problems with unstated assumption? Does the author create something to be the case that he needs to clarify or defend?
* Are these problems with logical fallacies such as hasty generalizations, false dilemmas, or appeals to false authorities?
* Has the author addressed the ethical implications of his position?
* Is the author’s reasoning process a notable strength in the piece? Is it clear and convincing?
* In what order are the ideas or finding presented?
* How has the author indicated that he is moving from one point to another point of the discussion?
* What is the relationship between the thesis of the piece (stated and unstated) and the other in which the ideas or findings are presented?
* How has the author tried to help the reader understand the organization of the reading? Has the author used the following signs?
* Is there a clear connection between the major assertions of the essay or paragraph? Does there seem to be some reason why one idea precedes or follows another.
* Are all the assertions clearly related to the overall thesis of the piece?
* Has the author provided headings or subheadings to help readers to follow his or her line of thought? How effective are they?
* Has the author provided adequate transition to help readers move through the writing and see the logical connection between the assertions he is making? How effective are they?
* How would the diction of the piece be characterized: formal, informal or somewhere in the middle
* Is it consistently maintained? Is it appropriate? Does it contribute to the effectiveness of the piece?
* What would be the characteristic of the tone of the piece: inviting, satiric or humorous? Is it appropriate? Does the tone enhance or damage the effectiveness of the writing?
* Is the author’s word choice clear and effective? Or does the writer rely too heavily on jargon, abstraction or highly technical terms?
* Is the author’s word choice needlessly inflammatory or emotional? Or do the words convey appropriate connotations?
* Are the sentences clearly written? Are any of the sentences poorly structured that the source is difficult to read and understand?
* Are the sentence’s types varied? Is the syntax appropriate given to the audience?

(Adapted from Reed, 2004; Sunda & Brisas, 2002; and Kirszner and Mandell, 1992)
## APPENDIX 6

### SCORE FOR ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS’ READING APPROACH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Approach</th>
<th>Characteristic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Surface approach</strong></td>
<td>Students are organizing their learning in order to be able to remember facts and figures to use in essays and exams. They intend to complete task requirements, memorize information needed for assessments. They usually fail to distinguish principles from examples, treats task as an external imposition and focus on discrete elements without integration. They are unreflective about purpose or strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deep approach</strong></td>
<td>They are thinking critically about the information you read and trying to make sense of it in the wider context of your studies. This approach to learning and studying shows initiative and understanding and an ability to undertake independent study. They have intention to understand, have vigorous interaction with content, relate new ideas to previous knowledge, relate concepts to everyday experience, relate evidence to conclusions and examine the logic of the argument.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APPENDIX 6**

**SCORE FOR ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS’ READING REFLECTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Characteristic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literal level</strong></td>
<td>Students are able to select the main idea or central thought to extract the most important thought from a mass of ideas and subordinate ideas or illustrative materials. Students are able to see readings not as a series of isolated bits of information but see through details being in relation to the main concepts that they help develop. Students are able to clarify illustration, definition, description, discussion and explanation in the reading to discover the organization of the reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluative level</strong></td>
<td>Students have ability to evaluate the effectiveness of the author’s arguments and do not believe in everything she/he reads. Students understand the underlying ideas of the authors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applied level</strong></td>
<td>Students are able to relate the theme to present day events.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from: Rivers, 1979. *Teaching Foreign Language Skills*)