

Applying Question and Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy to Enhance Critical Reading Skill of Authentic Text

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ABSTRACT

Abstract: This study examined the implementation of the Question and Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy during the teaching-learning process to enhance the critical reading skill of authentic texts. The study employed classroom action research of fourth-semester students at Tridinanti University. It was implemented for three cycles involving four phases; planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The data were gathered using three different types of instruments, including interviews, observation, and tests of critical reading. The findings showed that students' critical reading achievement of authentic text increased for each cycle. The question categories of the QAR strategy could help the students in managing difficulties in doing the reading learning activities.

One of the effective ways to improve the quality of education is by engaging students in the learning process. Educators can help students to learn in a meaningful way by developing the student's reading skills as better readers make more successful students. For students to successfully meet the educational objectives and standards demanded in classroom settings, they must possess reading comprehension skills (Ruiz, 2015). The reading abilities that assist reading comprehension include comprehending the meaning of words, analyzing the author's points of view, setting writing goals, and learning new vocabulary. As the objective of teaching English through the Indonesian curriculum, reading comprehension is crucial for education (Poedjuastutie, Akhyar, Hidayati, & Gasmi, 2018).

Meanwhile, reading efficiently depends on the ability to think critically. Hence, students need to develop their critical reading skills to assist them to become good readers and thinkers as well. Tasnimi (2017) suggests that discerning readers look at the words critically rather than just skimming them to refresh their recollections. They analyze, synthesize, and challenge what they read. They inquire about everything that was stated, even the implicit and suggested messages. Hosseini (2017) Also discussed the possibility that developing critical reading abilities can improve reading comprehension, particularly concerning the capacity to read between the lines.

To "unearth authorial intention," critical reading focuses on intentionally establishing a connection between the reader, writer, and subject by examining the writer's use of methods including diction, parallel structure, figurative language, and imagery (Wells. et al, 2022). One of the critical approaches to text selection is to select texts which could pose problems for students to solve, texts which are of literature base, texts which have cross-cultural material, and texts which could give alternative discourses to students. Furthermore, Amalia (2016) says that encouraging children to read critically by utilizing actual texts in the classroom. The motivation of children to acquire critical listening and reading abilities can be increased by providing them with authentic texts like newspapers, magazines, television, and radio. When students are engaging in critical reading activities, they read more actively because they are attempting to interact with the text to gain a deeper comprehension and meaning. Moreover, Ismi (2016) describes that The use of critical reading techniques and real texts can help students become more adept at critical reading by encouraging their engagement with the text. Authentic books can put students in real-world situations even though a classroom is not a true-world one. The use of real texts will assist students in meeting academic goals, pique their interest in what they are reading, and maintain their motivation (Berardo, 2006).

Furthermore, although the classroom is not a realistic setting, authentic literature can reflect the absence of the real world, according to Hamed & Rashdia (2014). Additionally, using real literature will help kids succeed in the classroom. A text can be a movie, an artwork, or anything else that communicates ideas in a language and culture. Authentic, semi-authentic, and manufactured texts can all be classed. First, the book was written by non-native speakers for non-native speakers in order to meet pre-established educational objectives. Next, semi-authentic texts are texts created by native and/or non-native speaker, based on original language materials, but it is adjusted to fit curricular needs. Last, authentic texts are texts made by native

speakers for consumption in a native environment. Additionally, since authentic texts are considered to be non-pedagogical materials used to help students develop their communicative and cultural skills, they can be helpful at any level (Ciornei & Dina, 2015). The materials carried in authentic text provide "real life" linguistic input including valuable cultural information for the students. They gain knowledge on significant subjects through using resources like audio, video, books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and online sources.

Moreover, Ciornei and Dina (2015) explained three advantages of using authentic texts. First, real materials generated and made available to students provide precise illustrations of how the language is used by native speakers or by the great majority of target language users. Second, when students know they are performing as expected, they are more comfortable utilizing the language. When reading realistic texts, students are exposed to vocabulary and idioms that are utilized in everyday situations. When faced with identical circumstances, students do better in casual, face-to-face interactions. Third, real-world things are more widespread, casual, and socially oriented. For completing the rules and patterns in textbooks, they might be useful sources.

Many researchers had implemented different strategies to improve the reading comprehension skills of English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners in various contexts and be critical of their reading text. Question and Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy is a kind of these method, which assist the students to engage in learning processes effectively. The QAR approach offers a structure for teaching comprehension strategies to assist readers in connecting the questions and answers. In other words, the pre-, mid-, and post-reading questions demand that students apply a range of comprehension strategies. Students may be required to recollect facts, make predictions, synthesize information, create connections, and employ text structures when responding to the questions for instance (Raphael, Highfield, & Au, 2006). In their opinion, better readers read a text to hunt for information while using different tactics, oftentimes simultaneously.

According to Al-Kafarna (2015), asking questions is a good way to increase understanding. It concentrates attention on what has to be studied and encourages the development of active reading thought. It helps to keep track of comprehension and go over topics. Additionally, it connects newly learned information to prior knowledge. So, the types of questions to which pupils acquire accustomed can easily affect their understanding and memory. One of the strategies that can be used is QAR. In other Question Answer Relationships aid to students in distinguishing among questions based on where the answer can be found: either *In the Book* or *My Head* (Caldwell & Leslie, 2015).

QAR has two types of questions, there are in the text/book and my head (Raphael & Au, 2005). Each of the categories has two levels. First, in "In the Text / Book" type consists of right there and think and search. In "Right There", the answer is in one or the same sentence in the text, and the question and answer usually have the same wording. In "Think and Search", the answer is found in several categories of the text. The answer may be found in a single paragraph, several paragraphs, or even several chapters. The question and answer have different wording. Furthermore, in "In My Head" type consists of Author and You and On My Own. In "Author and You", the answer is not in the story. The students should consider their prior knowledge, what the author is saying to them, and how these three pieces of information relate to one another. Next, in "On My Own", the answer is not in the text. It comes entirely from students' prior knowledge. The formulation of the Question and Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy is presented in figure 1.

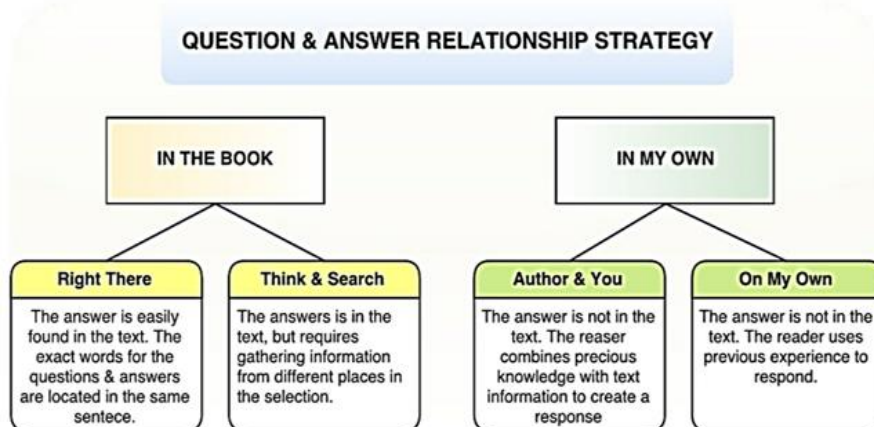


Figure 1. Question and Answer Relationship Strategy
Raphael and Au (2005)

Meanwhile, Anggun (2017) stated that question-answer relationship activities can assist the students to get the difference between a question and answer the questions easier, while the teacher only provides them by giving some hints related to the topic. Other researchers like Kinniburgh and Shaw (2010) showed that by incorporating reading-comprehension

skills and strategies into science instruction through the use of QAR, students became more strategic readers of science texts. The test scores in science and reading should be improved by students' reading comprehension of science expository texts. When students grasped how questions and responses interrelate, they performed better when responding to questions like those found after each chapter in science textbooks. For answers that required the application of their prior knowledge, they briefly searched through the scientific literature. They got more assured in their reading skills when reading science materials after realizing that many answers were not "right there" in a single book phrase. Nurhayati, et al. (2019) stated that the students who were taught utilizing the QAR technique appeared to be more engaged and alert. With another text, the students attempted to apply the QAR technique in small groups with their peers. They would attempt to use the tactic alone once they had mastered it.

The goal of this study was to use the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) method during reading in order to assess how this strategy affected EFL students' ability to read critically in actual content. Additionally, the objectives of the study were to discover the significant improvement of the implementation Question and Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy in students' critical reading skills of authentic text at Tridinanti University Palembang and how the strategy could improve students' critical reading skills.

METHOD

Research Method

This study implemented Classroom Action Research (CAR). In CAR, teachers intend to solve problems by discovering which teaching techniques work best in a particular situation and assessing students' understanding through systematic action until all indicators of success to solve the learning problem are achieved (Rasuan, 2019; Mettetal, 2012). This study focused on the application of the QAR Strategy along with the use of authentic text to cope with students' problems in critical reading class. The CAR used in the study covered four phases namely, planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The classroom action research scheme using QAR Strategy is presented in figure 2.

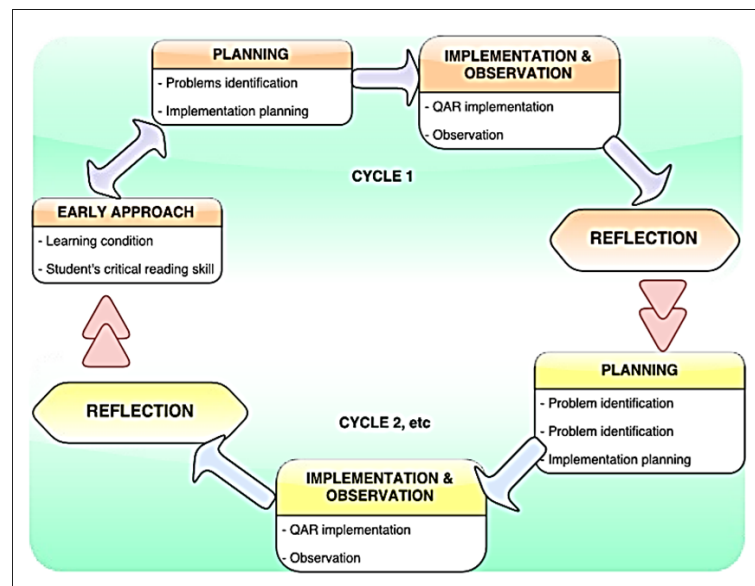


Figure 2. Action Research Scheme by Using QAR

Before starting the CAR, a preliminary study about learning conditions and students' critical reading skills was conducted as the early approach action for problem identification. Then, the study began to process the planning phase by preparing the research instrument, teaching materials, and student worksheet. In the implementation phase, the researchers applied the Question and Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy to the students in the classroom for four meetings in each cycle. At first, the teacher introduced and explained about the Question Answer Relationship which consisted of "In the Book" Questions and "In My Head" Questions. The teacher then used a brief reading text to demonstrate the QAR Strategy and provided numerous examples to teach the pupils how to use it. Next, students read the text and also the questions guided by the instructor to apply the QAR Strategy to answer the questions. Furthermore, the authentic texts used during the implementation of the QAR Strategy were taken from books, songs, biography, newspaper, magazines, advertisement, news websites, and videos. Meanwhile, every meeting of each cycle discussed various and updated topics such as education, culture, psychology, politics, health, history, music, and environment.

While implementing the QAR strategy, each meeting's learning process was evaluated utilizing an observation sheet for the purpose of success in the learning process. While researcher 1 was teaching the class, researcher 2 observed students' activities during the teaching and learning process. The last phase was reflection used for the evaluation of students' critical reading skill progress. Therefore, a critical reading test was given to the students with a score of success indicator 80. If the average score of the test result was still below the score of the success indicator, then the study would be continued to the next cycle. In addition, after the success indicator of this study had been achieved by the students, researchers interviewed the students to get feedback about the application of the QAR Strategy in building their critical reading skills of authentic text.

Subjects of the Study

The students of the English education study program at Tridinanti University participated in this study. It involved 15 students who were enrolled in a critical reading course during the fourth semester. Considering that the critical reading course is the fourth level of reading taken by the students but most of them still lack vocabulary mastery and reading skills, hence this study selected those students as the subjects of the study. In addition, they had difficulty finding the right answer for the reading practice since they were not trained to use appropriate strategies to answer the questions effectively and correctly. Thus, using QAR Strategy could help them solve problems and enhance their critical reading skill.

Data Collection and Analysis

There were three types of instruments such as critical reading tests, observation, and interviews used in collecting the data for this study. Critical Reading test was used to measure students' critical reading skills of authentic text. The test was administered to the students at the beginning of the study to measure their critical reading skills before the teaching-learning process and it was also distributed at the end of each cycle to see the progress of students' critical reading skills after implementing QAR Strategy. The test consisted of 28 multiple-choice items which were divided into four categories of questions, they were: Right There, Think and Search, Author and Me, and On My Own Questions. The distribution of the question categories for the test is presented in table 1.

Table 1. Specification for Critical Reading Test

Text	Topic	Question Category				Total
		Right There	Think & Search	Author & Me	On My Own	
Text 1	Education	3	4	2	1	10
Text 2	Music	3	4	2	1	10
Text 3	Health	2	3	2	1	8

Meanwhile, observation was conducted in every meeting of each cycle to identify the activities done by the students in the teaching and learning process during the implementation of the QAR Strategy in the classroom. The observer used an observation sheet in Likert-Scale type with four responses in terms of the agreement as the guideline. The observation consisted of three phases of the teaching and learning process including apperception (students' enthusiasm, readiness, and curiosity), whilst -activities (students' understanding of lecturer's instruction, involvement in following QAR Strategy, comprehension of the material given, and their interaction with peer), and closing activities (students' mastery about the material given and feedback toward the materials).

Moreover, after all the processes were accomplished, the students were interviewed as supplementary feedback for the researchers in getting information about the implementation of the QAR Strategy and authentic text in their critical reading course. In the interview, students discussed their opinions of the QAR Strategy's implementation in a critical reading course, whether the QAR Strategy's question categories could assist them in resolving their reading difficulties, and the benefits of reading authentic texts for the development of their communicative and cultural competence. Descriptive statistics were then employed to further evaluate the data.

RESULTS

Preliminary Study

Researchers identified the problems based on the preliminary study conducted at the beginning of the study. After distributing the pre-cycle critical reading test to the students, the result showed that the average score of the test was 43,5 which indicated students' critical reading skill was very poor. Inadequate vocabulary mastery and low comprehension in reading became the main factors for this problem. Furthermore, based on the researchers' observation in the previous reading course, the learning situation in the classroom was monotonous and students were not actively engaged in what they read. This condition encouraged the researchers to apply appropriate strategies and be selective in choosing the reading materials. In order to enhance students' reading skills and encourage them to respond critically to a variety of authentic texts, including song lyrics, advertisements, newspaper articles, online resources, biographies, books, and magazines, researchers took some actions using the question and answer relationship (QAR) strategy.

Critical Reading Test

Critical reading achievement of the authentic text showed progress in each cycle and it took 3 cycles for the students to achieve the success indicator. Before starting the study, most students' critical reading scores were under 50 with a mean score was only 43,5. They were in the poor (20%) and failed (80%) categories. Then, the mean score slightly increased to 54,6 after the execution of the QAR Strategy in cycle 1. Students were trained to comprehend the relationship between questions and answers but they were still confused to differentiate the categories of the questions. Although the study continued to the next cycle, students' level of achievement for the test signified improvement. They could achieve the good (13%) and average (34%) categories while 53% of them were still in the poor and failed categories. In cycle 2, the teacher assisted the students to identify the question categories based on where the answer can be found: *In the Book (Right There and Think & Search)* or *In My Head (Author & Me and On My Own)*. The class was also divided into some groups. Therefore, the students could accomplish the reading practice by discussing the answer with their peers. After completing four meetings for cycle 2, the mean score for the critical reading test could reach 70 containing very good (20%), good (40%), average (27%), and poor (13%) categories. There was no student in the failed category. However, cycle 3 still needed to be conducted since the result could not achieve the success indicator yet. During the implementation of cycle 3, the teacher made some improvements by preparing more interesting learning materials, using learning media (pictures, graphs, and video), and creating a fun and enjoyable learning situation. In addition, most activities encouraged students to complete the learning tasks individually. Finally, the mean score of the critical reading test for this cycle was 86,8. The students could pass the very good (80%) and good (20%) categories. In other words, the application of the QAR Strategy at the end of cycle 3 could successfully improve students' critical reading skills of authentic text. The students' score distribution for each test is illustrated in figure 3.

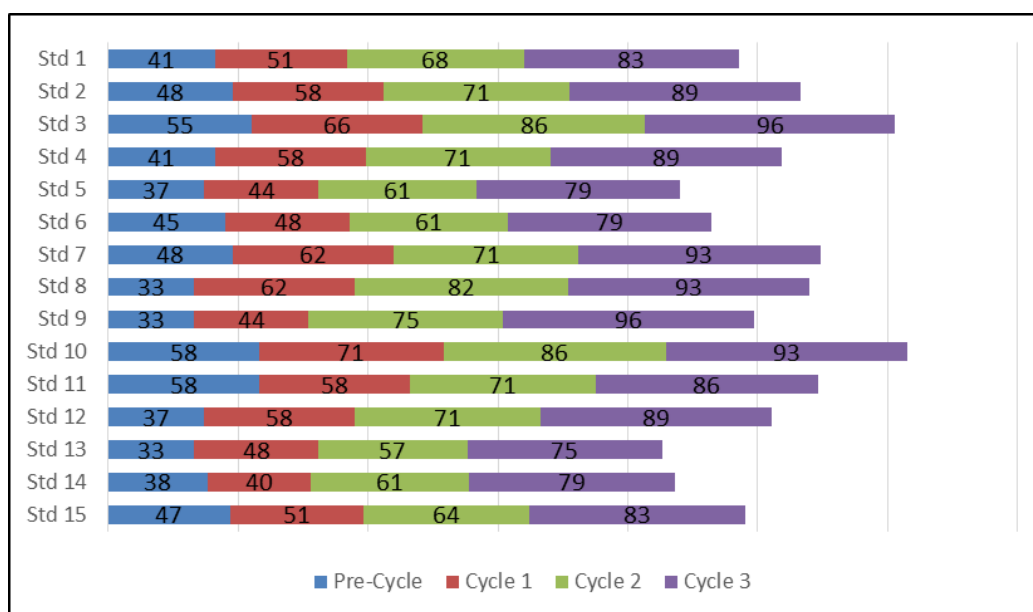


Figure 3. Critical Reading Test Results

Observation

The observation results described the information about the learning situation in the classroom during the application of the QAR Strategy in each cycle. In cycle 1, the average score of the observation result was 70. The score slightly increased in each meeting. It was found that the students were still passive in creating the questions. Therefore, the teacher explained the strategy information to the students. It involved WHAT strategy will be learned (self-questioning), WHY the strategy is important (to increase reading comprehension), and WHEN the strategy will be used (during reading). Furthermore, the researchers introduced "In the Book" and "In My Head" major categories. The pupils made an effort to adhere to the directions based on the suggestions of the researchers. Many students found it challenging to adhere to the instructions. Then, after they had several examples, they started to understand the question categories. However, they tended to make mistakes in creating the questions and had slow progress in comprehending the text.

Meanwhile, the average score of observation in cycle 2 rose to 79,5 after the teacher gave more intensive assistance to the students and applied collaborative learning during the practice. Students learned to understand the instructions given by the teacher. They practiced differentiating Right There and Putting out Together sources. They also learned to differentiate between Author and Me and On My Own Sources. Students tried to predict the category of the question given by other group members and got the right answer for the questions. Some students were good at guessing the questions category and still learned in

creating good questions. Even though some of them still made mistakes in guessing the category, they were enthusiastic to follow the teaching-learning process. They tried to ask the question and identified QAR question categories during the practice. When they found the difficult words, friends tried to help them. Most of them were quite expressive in delivering their ideas and interacted with each other when the discussion occurred. In this step, the researcher could see their motivation to improve their critical reading skill through this strategy.

In addition, cycle 3 was conducted to facilitate students to do all the activities well. The average score might reach 88,3 according to the observation results from cycle 3. Students began familiarizing themselves with QAR question categories and authentic texts. As the result, they enjoyed the learning activities and could answer the questions correctly. Most of them were quite brave to express or share their ideas to discuss the texts. The students were also independent in creating the question for their partners. They practiced creating and answering the questions through the passages independently. The students also mastered classifying the types of questions. They were confident in identifying the QAR strategy. All these activities could help them in handling the problems in doing the reading learning activities by using the QAR strategy. They have been able to think more clearly and arrange their ideas as a result of using this technique in the classroom. It could also improve their critical reading skill. Furthermore, determining the question category before finding the answer guides students to get the right answer without wasting much time.

Interview

The interview was administered at the end of cycle 3 to obtain supplementary information composed of three questions about the effectiveness of the QAR Strategy, the use of QAR question categories, and the impact of reading authentic texts for the students. For the first question, students described that the use of the QAR Strategy in the critical reading course was effective as described by the students as follows: *"(1) I think QAR Strategy makes students think creatively about the texts and challenge them to use their critical reading skill as well, (2) In my opinion, the application of QAR Strategy in the critical reading course is very good and recommended to be applied because it can improve our critical thinking when we read a book or other scientific works, and (3) It is very helpful because students can be more active to participate in reading practice and able to express their opinions in the learning activities by using QAR Strategy."*

Afterward, students' answers for the second question confirmed that the use of QAR question categories (Right There, Think and Search, Author and Me, On My Own) could solve their reading problems. They agreed that: *"(1) It can help me handle my reading problems and can make my reading more effective and easier, (2) Each type of question has a different way to study the text. It can help me develop my reading techniques, (3) Question categories of QAR strategy are very helpful because they make me easier to answer the questions, and (4) It is quite helpful because it teaches me to find the answers directly from the text, or several places in the respective text. While Author & Me and On My Own Questions require more thought because readers have to be connected with the text and use the information and abilities to the fullest."*

The last question asked for their opinions on whether reading authentic texts (such as videos, books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and online resources) could help them improve their communicative and cultural competencies. Most of them had the same ideas in which: *"(1) reading the original texts facilitate me to find the way how the outsiders communicate through reading the texts, (2) In my opinion, reading authentic texts can increase vocabulary for communication and add knowledge about the culture, (3) I think it helps me to improve my communicative and cultural competence because surely I can get knowledge and also learn about the culture from reading the book, magazine, or other sources, (4) Usually the authentic text is made by native speakers so that it can help us improve our communication competence by knowing a lot of vocabulary written by native speakers, and (5) Very helpful, because reading more authentic texts can help us know what is going on in the world or issues related to our environment."*

DISCUSSION

During the process of classroom action research, students were trained to comprehend the relationship between questions and answers. The QAR technique assisted the students distinguish between the question types based on where the solution can be found: in the book (Right There and Think & Search) or in My Head (Author & Me and On My Own). Therefore, based on the chart above, we could conclude that the effectiveness of QAR brings significant improvement in the student's critical reading achievement. The score of the students had increased well. From the critical reading test results, we can conclude that the application of the QAR strategy in the teaching-learning process was effective in increasing the student's critical reading achievement. The outcomes indicate that these activities made it simpler for them to understand the material. Nurhayati, et al. (2019), who made the case that question-answering instruction assisted students to learn how to answer questions appropriately, backed up this conclusion. The QAR Strategy can help pupils' comprehension of what they read (Muthalib, 2018). The use of strategic questions will enhance readers' comprehension of a current topic based on expertise or personal experience, according to Wahyuni (2007).

Through the QAR strategy, the students did many activities which involved recalling information, making predictions, synthesizing information, making connections, and using text structures when answering the questions. They discovered that proficient readers employ a variety of techniques, frequently all at once, to extract information from texts. Question and Answer Strategy reinforced the students' reading comprehension. It also supported Anggrain, et al (2020) who concluded that The QAR

strategy used to teach reading comprehension, enables students to work cooperatively, speak aloud, and develop into strategic readers by using questions to guide them in finding the answers in the text. Students learned how to differentiate between the categories "In the Book and in My Head" in the first phase. Each student had a chance to read the passages, make an educated guess, and answer the questions. When students are aware of the connection between questions and solutions, they perform better when responding to questions like those found after passages. They no longer pore over the material for long periods looking for a solution that calls on their prior knowledge. When students read the original texts, they see that many of the answers are not "right there" in a single book sentence and they grow more self-assured in their reading skills.

CONCLUSION

Students are supposed to respond to a text critically and use a certain strategy to process the information from the text effectively. Text selection and the application of critical approaches in reading could give an alternative for students to build their critical reading skills. In an EFL classroom, combining the QAR technique with actual material can benefit both teachers and students in a variety of ways. This study has demonstrated that both of them benefited from the QAR technique. The QAR application in the classroom aided pupils in thinking through and organizing their ideas. As a result, students developed a sense of responsibility for their reading activities and began to manage their own learning. Additionally, they had demonstrated a greater level of trust in their ability to critically assess the content in the target language. Additionally, these exercises inspired the students to develop a favourable attitude toward reading in a foreign language. Students had started to get chances to enhance their comprehension skills. Considering all the results, this study made several recommendations. First, using the QAR Strategy to teach reading to pupils is advised since it might raise the standard of instruction for reading exercises. To improve their reading scores and increase their exposure to real texts, students should strive to practice reading activities utilizing the QAR Strategy. This will help them build their communicative and cultural competence. Finally, it is advised that future researchers conduct further research into the usefulness of using real text and critical reading strategies for enhancing reading instruction and learning in EFL contexts.

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