Developing Critical Readers and Writers ("CR&W") through Reading-driven Units of Work

"CR&W" is a 4-year research and development project conducted by Education Bureau, Hong Kong, between 2015 and 2019. It was designed to build teachers' capacity to develop students as critical, discerning, discriminating and responsive 21st century readers and writers navigating an increasingly complex world of information.

Critical literacy: the ability that "gives us potent ways of reading, seeing and acting in the world"
(Janks, Dixon, Ferreira, Granville & Newfield (2014), *Doing Critical Literacy*, p.1)

The **reading process** involves use of the following:

- Graphophonic cues
- Syntax cue
- Semantic cues

The **critical thinking process** involves the following higher order thinking skills:

- Analysing
- Evaluating
- Creating

Texts have social effects, that they are designed to recruit us into their version of "the truth" and that language can be used for both good and ill. Knowing that texts are not neutral, we need to develop ways to see where they are coming from and to recognise their designs on us, their readers.

(Janks, et al. (2014), p.1)

A Sample "CR&W' Project Unit (Secondary 3): Advertising

Theme:
Persuasive Power of Advertisements

→

Focus question:
How does advertising influence us?

↓

Thematically-linked **authentic texts** carefully selected for the teaching of **critical literacy elements and strategies**

Critical literacy elements, e.g.

- Stereotypes
- Positioning
- Influencing

Critical literacy strategies, e.g.

- Posing questions
- Juxtaposing texts
- Switching

↓

4 Roles of the Reader

- Code-breaker
- Text participant
- Text user
- Text analyst

Lesson objectives:
Language / Skills / Values & attitudes
&
Assessment of / for / as learning

Gradual Release of Responsibility

↓

Final tasks

- Counter advertisement
- Advertisement review

Students read articles presenting different perspectives of how advertisements might influence the reader and share their own views.

Students write sentences of what advertising means to them using the target language structure.

Students analyse how the advertisements they come across in their daily life might influence their thinking, create counter-advertisements and write advertisement reviews.
(Student work samples available on the presenters' iPads)

Special thanks to Carmel Secondary School for contributing the student work from the sample unit above