

Chapter Two

Review of Literature & Related Studies

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This chapter aims at reviewing the literature and related studies in the area of critical reading and blended learning. Furthermore, it aims at shedding light on the interrelationships between these two major areas.

Critical Reading

Critical reading according to Sherry (2005) means more than simply decoding words and phrases. Sherry wants students to learn to ask good questions about texts, make inferences and connections, develop interpretations, use research, and think critically and effectively to develop their own answers, and write essays that engage with the critical conversation of the field (247). In addition, Sandy, Betty and Paul (2005) see that critical reading is the evaluation of written material –comparing the ideas discovered in the material with known standards and drawing conclusions about their accuracy, appropriateness, and timelines (236).

According to Pavel (2008), a non-critical reader works on an emotional rather than an intellectual level, does not study purposes, audiences and contexts of texts he is working with, does not establish dialogue with texts; he only provides "agree or disagree" answers, does not understand complex arguments and does not make a true rhetorical engagement with the text. The critical reader, on the other hand, works on an intellectual and emotional level; s/he studies the text's rhetorical aspects carefully, establishes dialogue with the text, understands the complex texts deeply.

Grace (2010) states that critical reading means reading with the goal of finding deep understanding of a material, whether it is fiction or nonfiction. It is the act of analyzing and evaluating what the reader is reading as s/he progresses, or as s/he reflects back but Abu Shihab (2011) sees that critical reading is a sophisticated game in which writers and readers interact. A good critical reader does not let the author twist the truth by using his/her prior knowledge in order to understand the intention of the writer (216).

Out of the previously mentioned viewpoints, it can be concluded that Grace (2010), Sandy, Betty and Paul (2005) and Joe and Janet (2002) agree

that the reader should evaluate what s/he reads. While Abu Shihab (2011), Pavel (2008), Sherry (2005) and Richard and Linda (2003) agree that the reader should participate in an inner dialogue with the writer. Besides, a good critical reader does not let the author twist the truth by using his/her prior knowledge in order to understand the intention of the writer. It would be preferred to add that the reader should judge evidences. No idea is accepted without evidence. No one can write anything without evidences.

To sum up, it is evident that critical reading means reading other texts, collecting further information about the subject and reading analytically and critically. In addition, there is a wide spectrum for the concept of critical reading as gleaned from the literature. Critical reading means not taking information and opinions for granted, but to investigate, test and doubt every example, every story and every conclusion. It is evaluating written materials, comparing the ideas with known standards and drawing conclusions about their accuracy, appropriateness, timelines and many other criteria. Critical reading aim is not to find a fault but to assess strengthens of the evidence and the arguments.

Need for Learning Critical Reading

Richard and Linda (2003) say that the emergence of larger portable storage devices and media requires continued staff and student development. Students need to learn how to determine whether a text is worth reading or not and how to take ownership of a text's important ideas .This requires the active use of intellectual skills (36, 39).

Sharon and Jon's study (2003) agrees with Annie's (2008) in that a child's earliest experiences with reading are crucial as they lay the groundwork for development along continuum abilities that expedite future success. Children who have been taught how to go "beyond to text" and offer evaluative responses might feel more able to take a critical perspective .In addition, Lisa (2007) writes that in an age in which more children grow up engaged in passive activities like television, videogames, and the internet, teaching critical reading is one of the most important and most difficult burdens of the classroom (300) .

Ernest (2010) indicates that critical reading is a matter of life and death. Families, students, communities, and neighborhoods simply cannot survive

in the 21st century without raising reading rates (147) .It is evident that Ernest's statement (2010) that critical reading is a matter of life and death is correct . That is justified on the following grounds:

- It is important to investigate timelines.
- It is dangerous to accept opinions as facts.
- It is important to be a critical reader.
- Some writings are honey-coated.

Chris in her report (2010) investigates the importance of critical reading skills in online environments. She states that in the United States, there is a growing, professional and public demand for technologically proficient students who possess strong information literacy skills. By helping the students to assess the credibility of online resources, a teacher helps them develop the literacy skills they need to assess material critically so that they can participate in democracy (273). Richard and Linda (2004) add that to learn well, one should read well. It is more important to read a few things well than to read many things poorly (37).

Sandy, Betty and Paul (2005) state that children who do not attach importance to learning to read will not be motivated to learn. Every aspect of life involves reading, for example, reading road signs in order to direct travelers to particular destinations, inform drivers in hazards, and remind people about regulations. To help children see reading as a pleasurable activity, teachers should read them every day on a variety of themes and topics, from the works of many authors, and in a variety of genres. They should also make many books available for children to look at, and they should set aside time for children to read. Students should be given opportunities to share information in both oral and written forms (3, 4).

One can notice that some writers, such as Lisa (2007) , Sandy, H .S., Betty and Paul (2005), Vinesh and Fisher (2009) and Annie (2008) stress teaching critical reading to children for many reasons; critical reading is necessary for children's success and their increasing engagement in passive activities like television. So, Critical reading is badly needed for all readers in this age of information. In addition, the idea of Sandy,Betty and Paul (2005) is applicable. They see that teachers should make many books available for children to look at, and they should set aside time for children to read. Students should be given opportunities to share information with

each other. They should be encouraged to think about things they read. Applying this idea in classes and specifying one class at least for reading will encourage students to read. Doing that will help solving the problem of deserting reading. Thus, conclusively, Critical reading is a an important matter. There is a responsibility to teach students reading critically as it is a worldwide need.

In order to choose the suitable critical reading skills for the current research, it might be of importance to shed light on the critical reading skills.

Critical Reading Skills

Thus, out of surveying some Arabic and English theses, such as Sherry (2005), Richard and Linda (2004) ,Mofleh (2004) and Nassar(2009), some required critical reading skills for the secondary stage students are identified such as :

1. identifying the author's purpose of writing the text,
2. constructing the meaning based on context,
3. determining the cause-effect relationships,
4. comparing and contrasting things /characters and ideas,
5. evaluating the text by using some criteria (clarity, precision, relevance, significance, depth, consistency, and fairness),
6. agree/disagreeing with the author, and
7. finding alternatives, see Appendix C.

The most important critical reading skills can be demonstrated as follows:

Identifying the Main Idea

A thesis is the point the reader is trying to identify the purpose of writing the text. The main idea is the author's most important point in a passage. It may be one or more paragraphs. A topic sentence is the sentence that states the author's main idea. A good strategy for the reader when looking for the main idea is to ask two questions(a)what is the topic of the passage?(b)what is the author's most important point about the topic?. Main ideas are found in the first paragraph and in the last paragraph. When the reader thinks s/he has found the main idea, s/he should go back and check his/her answers by asking: "Do all of the other sentences tell more about this

sentence?". Sometimes an author does not state the main idea in the topic sentence or thesis statement. In this case, the reader should infer the main idea by drawing a conclusion. Sentences that support the main idea are called supporting details (Henry and Mini, 2006, 28).

The topic is the subject of the entire paragraph. Every sentence in the paragraph will explain this topic. If the reader has to choose a title for a paragraph, the one or two words he/she would choose are the topic. The following question is a guide to find the topic of a paragraph: What is the one thing the author is discussing throughout the paragraph?. The main idea of a paragraph is the most important idea. It is the idea that the whole paragraph explains or supports. It is expressed in one sentence called the topic sentence. To find the stated main idea, the reader should locate the topic, and then locate the general sentence. This sentence is called the topic sentence. This sentence should be broad enough to cover other details. After that, the reader should study the rest of the paragraph. The topic sentence may be the first in the paragraph, last in the paragraph, in the middle or in the first and in the last. If the main idea is implied, then the reader has to study the details and figure out what all the details mean when considered together (Kathleen, 2006,169-172).

The common subject or idea is called the topic. To identify the topic of a paragraph the reader can ask "what or who is the paragraph about?" Moreover, the main idea of a paragraph is what the author wants the reader to know about the topic. It is the most important idea that the writer develops throughout the paragraph. The entire paragraph explains, develops, and supports this main idea. A question that will guide the reader in finding the main idea is "what key point is the author making about the topic?. The topic sentence can be located in several positions; first, last, in the middle, first and last. In some paragraphs, the main idea may be implied (Kathleen, 2004, 34, 48).

Joe and Janet (2002) state that the topic of a paragraph tells who or what the paragraph is about. A main idea may be stated or implied. The writer may put it at the beginning, at the end, or even in the middle. Sometimes, an author does not state the main idea of a paragraph directly. In that case, the main idea is called an implied main idea. In short, the reader should avoid taking a short cut by reading only the first and the last sentence, and should always answer the question "what is the single most important point the

author wants them to understand about the topic of this paragraph?” . Here is a simple formula that gives the essential parts of any main idea:

The topic+ the author's most important point about the topic= main idea sentence. Hence, it can be concluded that the main idea is the most important idea in a text. It is the idea that the whole topic explains(195 - 199).

Comparison and Contrast

In comparisons, one has to examine two or more items for likenesses, differences, or both. Comparison serves an evaluation purpose, showing why one person, thing, plan, or action is superior to another. Comparison influences people's decisions that are more important. Both academic assignments and jobs demand comparative analysis. A successful comparison depends on ample, well-chosen details that show how the items under consideration are alike or different. Such support helps the reader grasp the meaning. Unfair comparison should be avoided, for example, when advertisers magnify trivial drawbacks in competitive products while exaggerating the benefits of their own merchandise. In order to ensure that the comparison is solid, the following questions help the reader:

- Has the author avoided skewing one or both of the comparison items in order to ensure a particular outcome?
- Are the items properly matched? It is unethical to compare a student essay to a professional's in order to demonstrate the inadequacy of the former (Katherine et al ,2005,188,190).

If the writer is concerned only with similarities, s/he may identify the items to be compared, and then list the ways in which they are alike. This process is called comparison. Its transitional words or phrases include (both, in comparison, in the same way, likewise, similarly, to compare). On the other hand, the writer may be concerned only with the differences between sociology and psychology, for example. This process is called contrast. The transitional words or phrases include (as opposed to, differs from, however, in contrast, instead, on the other hand, unlike) (Kathleen, 2006, 252, 253) but according to Henry and Mini(2006) to determine the compare and contrast, the reader should:

- identify the topic and main idea,
- focus on supporting details.
- think about the author's purpose,

- look for the following transitional phrases (different, like, alike, similar, unlike, both, although, but, contrast, compare, instead of, however, nevertheless, yet, also, opposite), and
- look for relationship between ideas (54, 55).

The comparison pattern is used to emphasize or discuss similarities between ideas, theories, concepts or events, whereas the contrast pattern emphasizes differences. Transitional words of contrast include: unlike, less wordy than, contrasted with, differs from, in contrast, however, on the other hand, as opposed to, whereas. Transitional words of comparison include: similarities betweenand.....,asas , both.....and....., resembles ,in a like manner, similarly, likewise, correspondingly, in the same way(Kathleen, 2004, 196-197). John (2000)adds that looking for similarities and differences among various items will help the reader in making his decision. In making a comparison, the reader should try to avoid incomplete comparisons - when focusing only on too few points of comparison - and selective comparison - when taking a one-sided view of a comparative situation, when concentrating on the points that favor one side of the things being compared but overlook the points favoring the other sides (319,320).

Then, out of the previous explication, it can be concluded that making comparison influences people's decisions. One needs comparative analysis in both academic assignments and job demands. The reader should ask if the author has avoided one of the comparison items in order to ensure a particular outcome.

Cause- Effect Pattern

Cause probes the reasons why events, actions, attitudes and conditions exist. Effect represents their consequences. Causation is important because it can explain historical events, actions, and attitudes of individuals, and natural happenings. Errors in the causal analysis include ignoring multiple causes-when blaming television for children violence and being emotionally disturbed. However, many other factors also play important parts. Another error is mistaking chronology for causation – one event may cause the next event, but before making a conclusion the reader should make sure that he is not dealing with mere chronology .Another error is confusing causes with effects - Tara's relationship breakdown caused her depression but perhaps her undiagnosed depression caused her relationship breakdown. The reader

should scan the evidence carefully in order to avoid such faulty assertions (Katherine et al, 2005, 150,151).

The cause-effect pattern is used to describe an action or event that is caused by another action or event. A cause/effect paragraph explains why or how some events happen. There are four types of such a relationship (a) single cause/single effect, single cause/multiple effects, multiple causes/single effect and multiple causes/multiple effects. To read paragraphs that explain such a relationship, the reader should pay close attention to the topic sentence as it usually states the cause/effect relationship that is detailed in the remainder of the paragraph. Its transitional words or phrases include (as a result, because, because of, causes, consequently, contributes, due to, leads to, since, therefore, thus) (Kathleen, 2006, 257-261) but according to Henry and Mini(2006) a cause-effect pattern of organization shows how one or more events cause another (e.g. a textbook section on the causes of World War II and its effects on the economy of Europe). In addition, to determine the cause and effect, the reader should

- identify the topic and main idea,
- focus on the supporting details,
- think about the author's purpose,
- look for the following transitional phrases(result, effect, cause, consequently, thus, then, if, since, because, therefore, accordingly, results in, lead to), and
- look for relationship between ideas (54, 55).

This skill expresses a relationship between two or more actions, events or occurrences that are connected in time. All disciplines that ask "why" employ a cause-effect pattern. This pattern might be limited to a simple one cause-one effect relationship. Alternatively, a chain of causes or effects may occur. Its transitional words may include stress causes, aggression leads, forethought yields, mental retardation stems from, life changes produce, hostility breeds, therefore, consequently, hence, for this reason, since (Kathleen, 2004, 191-193).

Thus, there are many errors in the causal analysis .These include ignoring multiple causes and mistaking chronology for causation. So, the reader should scan the evidence carefully in order to avoid such faulty assertions.

Determining an Author's Purpose

The author may write for many purposes. S/he may write to inform, to persuade, to express ideas or to entertain the reader. Having a specific purpose assists the writer at every stage of the writing process. It helps him define his audience, select details, language, and approach that best suit their needs and avoiding going off in directions that will not interest them (Katherine et al, 2005, 4,5). Kathleen agrees with that when he states that authors have many different reasons or purposes for writing. They may write to give information, to persuade the reader, to amuse the reader, to explain something or to give advice (Kathleen, 2006, 438,439).

The three most common reasons for writing are (a) to entertain (in short stories, novels, poems, jokes, anecdotes), (b) to inform (in newspapers articles, textbooks, reference materials, instruction manuals, legal documents) and (c) to persuade (for example, campaign speeches, advertising, music/art/literary criticism). Sometimes, an author may have more than one purpose for writing. To find the author's purpose, the reader should ask why the author writes this. What is s/he trying to accomplish. The clues to a writer's purpose include looking for the main idea. This often indicates the author's purpose. The author's tone helps in finding the purpose. If the author is informing or instructing, the tone will usually be objective, straightforward, matter of fact, formal or neutral. To entertain, an author often uses tones that are lighthearted, humorous, amusing, or dramatic .To persuade, an author may use a tone that is critical, indignant, angry, impassioned, or insistent. The reader should ask whether the author presents mostly facts or opinions. Factual passages tend to be objective and informative, while passages with many opinions tend to be persuasive and biased. Then, the reader should look at the author's intention, such as "the goal of this essay....."or" it is my intention to show.....". After that, the reader should pay attention to the overall pattern of organization (Henry and Mini, 2006, 42).

Richard (2003) says that a writer's purpose for writing is usually to inform, to persuade, to entertain, or some combination of the three. To inform means to provide facts, data, or information about a given subject so that the reader can learn more about it. To persuade means that the writer is trying to get the reader to think in a certain way or take a particular action. To entertain means to bring enjoyment to readers by treating a topic in a light, cheerful, funny or laughable manner. Sometimes, a writer not only

provides factual information but also tries to persuade readers to accept his viewpoint and take action so the reader should try to uncover and concentrate on the writer's overall or main purpose by focusing on the most important messages and the information that lends direct support to them(400,402).

In most textbooks, a writer's purpose is to present information; in newspaper's articles, one's purpose is to communicate daily events, and in reference books, in most academic reading, an author's purpose is to inform or persuade. The author's purpose may be varied. Knowing an author's purpose is important in alerting the reader to the type of critical questions he should ask (Kathleen, 2004, 95, 96). Thus, commonly, most authors agree on that authors have three common purposes in writing texts. These include to inform, to entertain and to persuade the reader to take a certain action or to believe something .It is important to understand the author's purpose so the readers can prevent themselves from being unknowingly influenced.

Constructing the Meaning Based on Context

In this skill, students are asked to write what they get out of reading a text. Thus, they will write the underlying value stated in the text. Students would be asked what they benefited from the entire lesson.

Criteria for Evaluating Texts

In evaluating a source, the first question to be asked is: 'what is the source: from what book, magazine, or newspaper is this taken?' This will help the reader judge the accuracy and soundness of what he reads. Part of evaluating a source is to pay attention to the date of publication. In the internet sources, not all internet sources are trustworthy, so the reader should evaluate a source before accepting it. There are some guidelines to help the reader evaluate internet sources. In checking who the author is, the reader should look for professionals or credentials. If no author is listed, the reader should be skeptical. The reader should discover the purpose of the posting as many sites have an agenda, such as selling a product. The reader should be aware of the date of posting. It should be up-to-date. The site should be provided by a well –known organization to be reliable. The author should be objective not one-sided. He can decide whether the author is biased or not by asking: (1) Is the writer acting as a reporter presenting facts or as a salesperson providing only favourable information? (2) Are there other

views toward the subject that the writer does not discuss? (Kathleen, 2006, 463-468).

Mary (2007) enumerates several methods of consumer reviews: at first, the students pick out statements as "Do not buy this product" or "Everyone should have one of these!" Then they discuss with their teacher whether these statements are supported in the text using a set of qualities. They include the reviewer is not strongly positive or negative; s/he provides some balance, supports his or her claim with examples, stays in topic and does not state unrelated items, sounds like s/he has a good working knowledge of the product, and Generally, uses good grammar and spelling (90) but another point of view encourages the idea of following stated criteria; e.g. the report of Richard and Linda; readers assess what they read by applying intellectual standards, such as clarity, precision, accuracy, relevance, significance, depth, breadth, logic, and fairness (Richard and Linda, 2004, 37). Katherine et al. (2005) add other criteria as they state that the principles of ethical writing include accuracy, no deliberate omission, clarity, honest representation and writing that should not be intended to harm the reader (for example, if a writer encourages readers to follow a diet that the writer knows it is not only ineffective but also harmful (16,17).

Other persons may have viewpoints that are equally important and need to be taken into consideration. The only viewpoint of the author is inadequate. In order to increase and deepen their knowledge, readers should seek other perspectives on the situations they are trying to understand. In addition, readers have to work on understanding the reasons behind these viewpoints (John, 2000, 62).

The strategy of Richard and Linda (2004) of the evaluating skill will be adopted in building the program of the recent study. Thus, the following criteria (clarity, precision, consistency, relevance, significance, depth and fairness) will be selected. The elements of the faulty arguments which will be used in this study are deliberate missing information, using manipulative language, pointing to another wrong action and circular reasoning (Marlys, 1997, 286).

Agree/disagreeing with the Author

This skill means to ask students whether they agree or disagree with the author of the text. The learner has to approve his/her own viewpoint and to find reasons. This helps learners' self expression.

Finding Alternatives

In this skill, the student will be asked to say why s/he agrees or disagrees, to show opinions and to think of possible solutions for problems.

After surveying the concept of critical reading and some relevant elements, it makes sense that the critical reading instruction and some previous studies related be reviewed.

Teaching Critical Reading

To empower students so that they can engage in critical investigations, dialogues, collaboratively learning and questioning various points, some suggestions are considered. They are using and discussing multi modal texts and informing students about propaganda techniques (Yvonne, 2007, 63, 64). In addition, Lane and Whitney (2009) put other ways to provide rich and meaningful reading experiences through using multiple -perspective texts as a bridge to critical reading, deconstruction, readers' theatre, graphic organizer, visual representation, making connections and disconnections, reconstruction, diary entries, and social action (530-532) but according to Pavel (2008) one of the key principles of critical reading is that students do not only read silently and by themselves, they take notes and write about what they read. They also discuss the texts they are working with, with others and compare their own interpretations of those texts with the interpretations of their colleagues.

Barbara (2000) suggests some other methods to encourage the new reader: collecting environmental print that s/he recognizes, making scrapbook of words a child knows later, pages that display toys, clothes or snapshots with one word, and using picture clues as an authentic reading

strategy; gradually the child will read words without the pictures . The teacher, the instructor or the parents can use word labels. They can write word labels on cards to place around the house – "chair" "table" "disk." When the child tells what he reads, the teacher will collect the cards and have the child to place on the proper object or after hearing his/her name . The instructor asks them to find something in the house that begins with the same letter. Another way is using prescriptions (33, 34).

Mark (2011) shows that there is an exact connection between reflective teaching and critical reading. Examples of teachers' tasks in the critical reading classroom include building time into lesson plans and implementation of students to give careful consideration and thought to and to pass judgment on the text being studied, guiding students' evaluations and criticisms in a judicious manner, encouraging students to look critically at literature and question what they are reading, emphasizing the readings of texts from a variety of perspectives, allowing students to use journals to write entries that juxtapose multiple viewpoints, and facilitating discussions generally that are based on students' journal entries (73,83).

According to Sandy, Betty and Paul (2005) in order to foster critical reading skills, teachers can encourage students to read with a questioning attitude and can lead them to ask questions, such as the following:

- Why does the author write this material?
- Is s/he likely to be biased? Why or why not?
- Is the author approaching the material logically or emotionally?
- Is the author employing any undesirable propaganda techniques? If so, which ones? How does he or she use them?
- The questions of the fiction passages are a bit different:
 - Could this story really have happened?
 - Are the characters believable within the setting furnished by the story? Are they consistent in their actions?
 - Is the dialogue realistic?
 - Does the plot hold the reader's interest?
 - Is the title well chosen? Why or why not (237,238).

Sandy, Betty and Paul (2005) state that teachers can generally teach strategies in critical reading most effectively through explanation and modeling, guided student practice, and independent student practice (261) while Lisa (2007) says that critical reading involves a gradual progression from the superficial to the increasingly complex. In elementary school, when

vocabulary and reading comprehension skills develop, text can and should be read for surface meaning. In middle school, teachers should begin to establish a foundation of terminology. Literary terms should be introduced on a scale of increasing complexity, progressing from plot and setting to point of view and figurative language (301). On the other hand, according to Leigh and Susan there is no best way to teach reading. Good teachers read in countless approaches to create literate children. Teaching reading is a very individualized process. The teacher should read about reading instruction. For parents, there are many wonderful books and brochures from the American academy of pediatrics. Teachers should provide a supportive nonjudgmental environment that allows students to examine belief systems (Leigh and Susan, 2008, 40).

Teaching literature to children becomes efficient in improving students' critical reading when teachers can use stories from all over the world. They can choose the suitable stories according to their intended learning objectives. Besides, it is evident that making discussions inside classrooms is an important method of teaching. It helps students exchange information and experiences with each other. Hence, it is evident that there are many strategies for teaching critical reading. This requires the teacher to read much to develop students' performance. However, there is no ideal way to teach critical reading, developing critical reading is engaging in a discussion through asking students "why" questions and encouraging social issues through the discussion in the classroom.

Rosane (2006) conducted a case study in teaching critical reading through using newspaper article:

As a pre-reading activity, the students were asked to prepare in groups two questions they thought would be answered in the text. These questions provide students with a purpose for reading.

The while-reading activity required the students to read the article. While reading the text, the students were aware that some details were omitted. This is important, since omissions may tell the reader something about an author's bias. Identifying bias is an essential part of a reading lesson aiming at developing critical reading skills.

As a post-reading activity, she wrote three questions, which had to do with the author's choice of verb tense and words used in the text.

- What verb tenses are used in the article?
- Which subjects are described using the passive or active voice and why?

- What purpose do the metaphors serve in the text?

The purpose of raising these questions is to help students read more critically and consider whether the article was meant to inform, influence or merely entertain readers. An analysis of verb tenses and voice provides students with the opportunity to discuss the author's purpose in choosing the particular tense or voice s/he did. After discussing the questions, the students were asked to write a summary of the article. Then, students exchanged their summaries with their classmates. They observed that even though all of the main ideas were included in the summaries, there was a variety of possible interpretations (16-19).

The major benefit of the lesson on the critical reading was the high level of exhausted student participation. The questions they thought would be answered in the text, rather than trying to answer superficial comprehension questions or true-false statements prepared by the textbook writer. Students felt that they need help from the teacher to read "between the lines" or to question the message the author was trying to convey.

Studies Related to Critical Reading

Christine, Anne and Kate (2012) work on interpretive stances (criteria) with two classes of eighth graders. They recommend the strategy of using interpretive stances as the study provides evidence that the activity of reading from different stances encourage students to engage in flexible thinking and multiple perspectives (436).

Shari's paper (2012) uses an example of an extra-curricular graphic novel reading group in order to explore the instructional critical reading practices that take place in English classrooms in the senior years of secondary school. The paper suggests that there may be other ways of engaging with text that pupils find less alienating, more pleasurable and less reminiscent of "work". Thus, Shari suggests using graphic novels and other suggested ways to develop critical reading skills.

Nassar (2009) examines the effectiveness of a content-based program on developing critical reading skills with a group of third-year TEFL majors at Faculty of Education, Ain Shams University. 88 subjects are selected. Findings show significant differences between the experimental and the control groups on critical reading skills test in general. In addition, the

program enhances the students' civic awareness on the civic awareness questionnaire (iii the abstract, 15).

The purpose of the article of Terry (2009) is to describe a variety of reading/writing prompts that can be used to promote critical-out-of class reading by undergraduate students. The prompts are organized into six categories: (1) identification of problem or issue, (2) interpretation of evidence, (3) making connections, (4) challenging assumptions,(5) making applications, and (6) taking different points of view . His students are elementary education students. The tutor's role is to guide the active learning process in a variety ways, one way is the use of these prompts to promote critical reading. Using these prompts creates a more active and dynamic learning experience for undergraduate students. The list of reading/writing prompts offers realistic purposes for the students' reading. This is one way to facilitate richer learning experiences for students outside the classroom. The study shows that these prompts help students to use what they have learned through reading in a very practical way (127-132).

The study of Lisa (2008)examines ways critical reading is taught in freshman composition courses at one university by gathering data from teacher interviews and document analysis. The primary data source is interviews with seven composition instructors. Other data sources include course syllabi and course textbooks. Findings reveal that reading pedagogy vary widely among composition instructors and that critical reading is generally not taught explicitly by participants in the study (285,288).

In the context of a longitudinal four-year-study of reading instruction in low-performing urban schools, Louisa and Barbara (2003) survey and observe teacher knowledge, student achievement and teachers' overall teaching competence. They survey K-2 teachers (n=50), second and third grade teachers (n=41), and third and fourth grade teachers (n=103) to document their understanding of reading instruction. They also analyze the teachers' misconceptions about sounds, words, sentences and principles of reading instruction. They find out surprising gaps in teachers' insights about learning to read. The results indicates that teachers are often licensed without acquiring content knowledge of language and reading development (36-38).

Nussbaum (2002) presents a case study of one classroom attempting to develop critical discourse in students fostering the ability of the students to

participate in critical discussions. The sample of the study consists of four target students, analyzing their discourse in depth. The study prizes critical questioning as a way of encouraging students to think more deeply about content. The study also suggests that critical questioning could act as a vehicle for permitting students to participate more centrally in classroom discourse. It also helps students join ongoing social interactions (490,496).

In their study, Robert and Kim (2001) require students to electronically post draft answers to take home essay questions using a web-based, conferencing system. Students then produce peer reviews to each other's answers. An analysis indicates that the higher of the quality of the review students give their peers, the higher their own grades for revised essays. The pedagogy of this activity draw heavily on the theoretical concepts of 'scaffolding' or 'assisted performance'. The sample of the study is made up of 58 students. Students who participate more in the group work do write better peer reviews across all cycles. Critical reading skills develop in the group work (30).

Commentary and conclusion:

The current study agrees with the study of Nassar (2009) which treats some of the critical reading skills and the study of Chris (2010) that discusses "habits of the mind; Thus, the study adopted clarity, precision, relevance, depth, significance, and fairness as skills to be developed from Chris's(2010).

Out of surveying the previous studies and other studies, such as Chun (2009) and Robert and Kim (2001)it can be concluded that:

- Critical reading helps students develop understanding, respect and the value for the diverse cultures and people in the world and it requires the synthesis of multiple sources of information that are found every day in books, websites, magazine and videos.
- Teachers should use and modify literature textbooks in ways that improve students' learning.
- Time should be provided in schools for teachers to work with colleagues to design learning instructional units that modify rather than rely on textbook units.

- It is vital that teachers equip students with the “habits of mind” necessary for them to evaluate web-based resources critically.
- There are many methods that can help develop critical reading skills, such as using a civic education based program, reading/writing prompts and narrative enriching activities.
- Teaching which depends on narrative enriching activities proves to be efficient in developing some of the critical skills of reading.
- Making discussion and criticism in the class is important.
- It is necessary to provide an intellectually challenging and culturally enriching school experience to students by applying a curriculum focusing on reading, debating, and writing about significant texts.
- Debating strategy, cooperation, sharing opinions together with peer interaction are excellent methods to develop mentality. Thus, they are very great to the daily life.
- It can be suggested that teachers, researchers or professors can make scenarios programs to develop any targeted ability based on the results of the previous studies, and then send them to the teachers in school to read them. They will be effective and very useful.
- From the previous studies, it is thought that teachers and students are in bad need of learning about critical reading. The studies refer to the ignorance of this area. Teachers are a very important element in effective teaching.

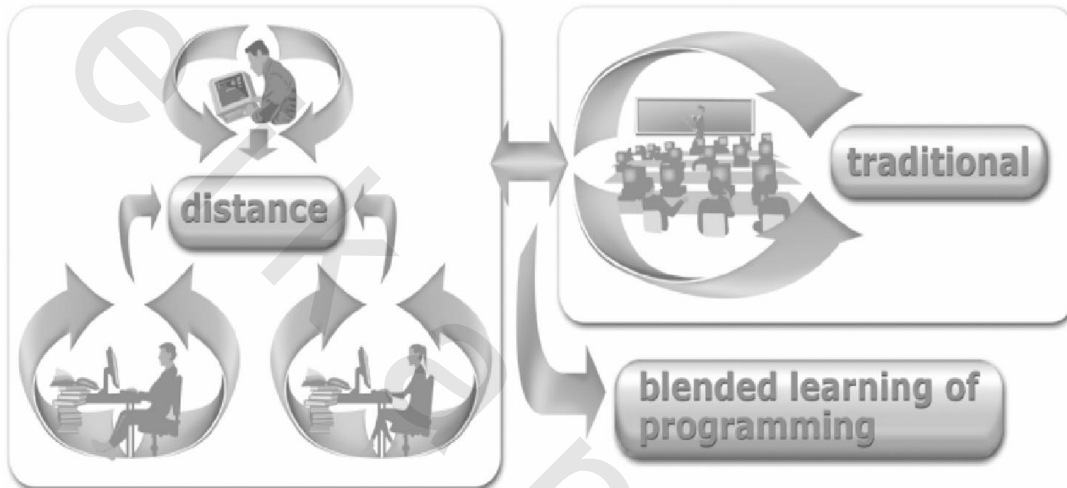
The current study benefited from the previous studies in designing the proposed program. Since the aim of this study is to develop secondary stage students’ critical reading skills by using blended learning, it is essential to write about the literature of blended learning and its designs. Thus, this will be the aim of the following section.

Blended learning

The Philosophy of Blended Learning

The purpose of blended learning can be demonstrated as follows:

Figure (1): The Purpose of Blended Learning



Source: (Djenic, Krneta and Mitic,2011, 249).

figures 1 refers to the philosophy of blended learning. They show that blended learning gathers both online learning and face -to -face learning. Thus, it has the advantages of both. It is a useful approach to learning. Authors describe the approach of the blended learning as follows:

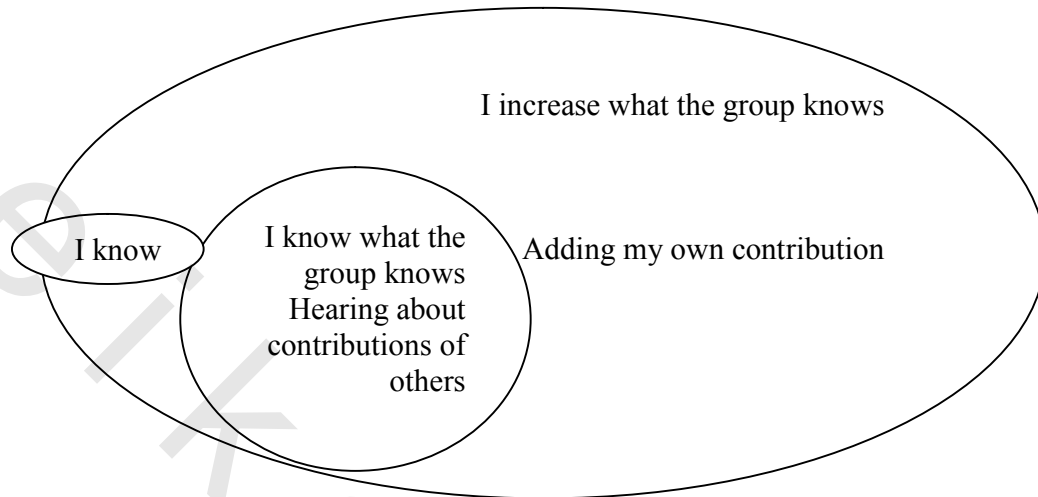
Mark and Cindy (2007) see that the technology approach is the tool, which assumes that learners can apply general - purpose hardware or software to various topics and tasks. In this approach, students learn by applying the technology to tasks rather than by being directly "instructed" by the technology (13). On the other hand Buket. and Meryem (2006) are more elaborate when they state that in recent years, the spread of computer uses, connection and development of internet technologies have paved the way for providing a significant part of distance education through the internet. That is why; concepts such as e-learning, web-based learning are used to refer to these learning environments rather than the concept of distance education which defines the largest area, including models of learning through letter and radio broadcasting. E-learning is a practical method which ensures the continuation of education twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. This

new environment has introduced concepts, such as blended learning, mixed learning and hybrid learning. Blended learning is a type of education which combines various models of traditional and distance education and makes use of all types of technology (44,45).

Janet (2008) suggests that face-to-face tutorials are important for teaching the group, as are forums or emails to the group. Some tutors use audio conferences as an alternative for students who are unable to attend face - to- face tutorials. The number of emails or forum messages, which one needs to achieve a particular purpose, may be considerably in excess of the number of phone calls, or meetings to achieve the same purpose (16) .

Jennifer and Nanette (2008) state that its name is "blended training"; that is because leadership development classes require a large online business that offers off- the -shelf leadership development to these classes. The design of the content requires that the organization physically sends thousands of people to a training site, and the administrative side of the training processes is just too cumbersome and expensive, so a different training solution is required. The answer is a blended curriculum, and the approach includes self-study, e- learning and rewards, conducted with worksheet or prints out and brings to the live class. The key to the blend is that each "piece" of the training is dependent on the others. Asynchronous and synchronous work is integrated to the extent that a participant cannot successfully pass the class without completing each component (29) .

Figure (2): Sharing Experiences as a Basis for the Learning Model



Source: (Anonsh, Betty, and Andy ,2004, 267).

The diagram of Anonsh, Betty, and Andy (figure 2) explains a good strategy of how the information is built inside students' minds. This is an effective method of understanding as it illustrates that when students exchange information with one another, an exchange of information with knowledge will result in. If blended learning is like that, it will be a good way of teaching.

Randy and Heather (2004) discuss the idea of blended learning as both simple and complex. It is a thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online experiences. At the same time, there are considerable complex limitless design possibilities and applicability to so many contexts. Blended learning is essentially about rethinking and redesigning the teaching and learning relationship (96, 97). While Jessica (2009) and Paul, John and Luke (2009) contend that blended learning represents a new approach to social work education that may address at least some of the concerns about online learning, such as lack of face- to - face contact with students. Blended learning provides students with increased flexibility, accessibility, and depth of learning offered by internet-based education, while at the same time keeping what is valued most about face-to-face educational opportunities for the professional education .

Curtis, Charles, Jay and Micheal (2006) states that blended learning or blended e-learning sounds like a confusing term at first since it is relatively a new term for today's instructors. However, it was reported that it could be traced as far back to the 1920s in which it was called —supervised correspondence study. In addition, Benlihan, Buket, and Serap (2011) see that it is a combination of didactic methods and delivery formats, which are independent. They define blended learning as the integration of online and face-to-face formats to create a more effective learning experience than either medium can produce alone. They describe blended learning saying that the different definitions of blended learning show diversity and strength of this type of learning (7,8).

Anthony and Sue. in their report (2007), Hyo-Jeong and Thomas(2007) and Norman (2007) agree that blended learning means any combination of learning delivery methods, including most often face -to- face instruction with asynchronous and/or synchronous computer technologies. Another term of blended learning is hybrid learning . In addition, Fernando, Genoveva, Daniel and Jose (2008) say that blended learning is used to describe learning that mixes various event-based activities. These are self - based learning, live e - learning, and face -to -face classrooms. This definition assembles the definition of Rachel and Jakie (2009) who suggest that blended learning is a mix of delivery methods that have been selected and fashioned to accommodate the various learning needs of a diverse audience in a variety of subjects .

Liz's opinion (2010) on blended learning is distinguished. He sees that online tools to communicate, collaborate, and publish, to extend the school day or year and to develop the 21st century skills students need. This opinion assembles the opinion of Doo and Micheal (2009) when they state that the previous studies findings support the positive effect of blended instruction on the learning of individual learners.

Doo and Micheal (2009) , Hyo-Jeong and Curtis (2010) and Beatric and Norrma (2007)agree that the term blended learning refers to the combining of face-to-face and online learning. They see blended learning is a planned combination of teaching approaches that include a diversity of media, online and face-to-face teaching strategies, in order to improve the teaching and learning mediated processes .

It is evident that there are many terms about blended learning. These are balance learning, hybrid learning, and blended instruction. The Liz's definition (2010) is very clarifying. So, blended learning is integrating different didactic methods and delivery formats which are independent to create a more effective learning experiences. Thus, blended learning is the learning that mixes both online learning and face -to -face way of teaching .It has the advantages of both.

Because of its novelty, it makes sense that the importance of blended learning be reviewed.

Importance of Blended Learning

Donna (2004) says that at the time when most organizations are expected to do more with less, managers need to build and sustain teams that are flexible, creative, and high performance. The result is more than just content. The company's core product is a learning process that integrates online media with traditional instructional approach. Such course is designed to help supervisors, managers, and team leaders improve team communication skills, relationships, problem –solving and decision –making abilities. It is also designed to increase the effectiveness of team meetings and help people learn to handle difficult situations and resolve conflict effectively. It can dramatically improve retention of knowledge, and provide better foundation for the skills.

In their study, Anonsh, Betty, and Andy (2004, 272) contend that technology is an important tool for learning, participating in terms of facilitating flexibility and the reuse of learner submissions but technology does not replace the central importance of interpersonal contact among learners, between the course director and learners, between the learner and his manager and between the learner and workplace colleagues. Technology is a tool for making this contact richer, more flexible, and reusable.

James (2012) agrees with Randy and Heather (2004)in that the potential for using blended learning is to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning, to enable greater flexibility in the provision of education. This flexibility covers both time and geographic dimensions and provides more convenient education for students who have other severe constraints on their lives. Blended learning can provide a wider access to learning for learners; it provides scope for “co-production” of effective

knowledge; and finally the design of appropriate blended learning solutions could provide scope for more systemic integration of diverse geographic, cultural, economic and political perspectives. So, they contend that internet information and communication tools provide flexibility of time and place and the reality of unbounded educational discourse.

Robin (2005) in his paper agrees with Jing and Feili (2008) in that blended learning is a solution for the higher education campus. Web blogs stimulate critical reading and inspire students to be lifelong learners. They suggest that the development of web-based technology supports strong enhancement to the lifelong education.

Norman (2007) states that students indicate to a blended learning model that provides them with greater time flexibility and improved learning outcomes. Faculty suggests that a blended course creates enhanced opportunities for teacher-student interaction, increased student engagement in learning, added flexibility in the teaching and learning environment, and opportunities for continuous improvement. Administrators say that blended learning presents the opportunity to enhance institutions educational offerings and reduce operating costs (81). Simultaneously, the findings of Matilde's report (2008) refer to blended learning in work place instruction as very fruitful, especially when applied to language learning, as it allows one to establish a collaborative environment and to stretch the learning experience over a long time. This is only possible when the topics are close to the participants' professional interests and the teacher stimulates collaboration (777).

According to the benefits of the blended learning for teachers; the following reports are benefit; in their report Ron, Herb, Janet and Denys (2008) point out that blended programs are effective in providing teachers with an opportunity for learning on the job and collaborating with other teachers. Blended learning is a viable model for teacher professional development. Besides, David (2009) says that blended learning is more effective than either face-to-face or online learning by itself. Effective teachers need to incorporate digital content into everyday classes and consider open-source learning management systems, which have proven cost-effective in school districts and colleges nationwide.

Jennifer and Nanette (2008) see that the convenience and flexibility of a variety of delivery methodologies of blended learning mean that more

training can occur when and where it is needed, thus enabling the workforce to be efficient and highly skilled so there is no need for trainers to wait until there is enough fill class (29). In addition, Janet (2008) sees that face-to-face tutorials are important for teaching the group, as are forums or emails to the group (16).

The opinion of Liz (2010) is similar to Jennifer and Nanette's opinions (2008). They see that through blended learning, students are given the power to choose the means of communication most suitable to their diverse learning styles, e.g. storybook, power-point, web pages, drawing, etc. This helps in engaging students more in their learning (23-25).

Fernando, Genoveva, Daniel and Jose (2008) state that blended learning approach according to several authors, is the most efficient teaching model. It combines self-paced learning, live e-learning and face-to-face classroom learning. They say that their experience over several years of training information technology specialists and the results show that self-paced learning and live e-learning facets have the following properties:
dynamic: experts are online with the best source and fast access to information, at real time: one gets what one needs, when he needs it,
collaborative: because people learn from one another, blended learning connects students with colleagues or experts both inside and outside the organization,
personalized: each student selects his/her activities from a personal menu of learning, and comprehensive: for it provides learning events from many sources (232) .

In blended learning, learners can be independent of space and time. Written communication encourages reflection and precision of expression. A blended learning context can provide the independence and increased control essential to developing critical reading (Randy and Heather, 2004, 105). Simultaneously, the findings of the report of Vinesh and Fisher (2009) reveal that students have positive perceptions of their web-based learning environment. The integration of web-based learning through science and physics lessons is convenient and accessible, promotes autonomy of learning and enables students to work at their pace. It also promotes positive interactions between peers during internet lessons, enhances enjoyment, learning opportunities and sustains interest in the subject. Online tests provide valuable feedback; using email is productive

for the ideal student who reviews his or her work daily, identifies problems and forwards queries electronically to his or her teacher (42, 43) .

Arbaugh, Michael, Marianne, Bright, Pollack., Bruce, and William, W. (2009) transfer results of a stream of studies. The results of such studies suggest that conscientious, creative and compliant students perform well in online courses, but extroverted students tend to have poorer performance. Interaction with other participants has enhanced performance and attitudes toward online learning may be enhanced using exercises. The interaction with participants predicates performance and satisfaction. It helps in improving the writing skills (75- 77).

Rachel and Jakie (2009) in their report find that students in an online space can engage with the content anywhere and anytime. This flexibility provides students with the personalized time they need to think, read process and respond. Online courses incorporate teamwork, group assignments and common conversations through threaded discussions. The material of the course can be presented in a variety of formats. This variety can increase interest and engagement, supporting the process of a more effective learning (88).

Hyo-Jeong and Curtis (2010) state that blended learning offers unique opportunities for international collaboration, knowledge instruction and negotiation and project management. The resources available for students for such interactions and collaborations widen the spectrum of learning. Blended learning also offers a greater flexibility and opportunities for community building among students. Instructors can share their ideas and course materials more readily with one another. The experts of the Delphi study indicate that blended learning also offers greater flexibility and opportunities for community building among students. Equally important, instructors can share their course materials and ideas more readily with each other. The study proves that blended learning approaches are useful for communication and knowledge construction perspective. Time efficiency and flexibility appear often in the responses as advantages of blended learning approaches (195-197).

Benlihan, Buket, and Serap's study (2011) reveals that students' views on blended learning are highly positive and suitable for them despite the differences of their learning styles. They say that the rapid growth in the use of learning technologies, particularly the use of the internet and web-

based communication, provides teachers and students with many more opportunities to explore the suitable teaching and learning methodologies and mix of teaching and learning styles for a given task. The development of internet technologies has resulted in the delivery of a great majority of distance learning. The teaching paradigms also changed. They shift away from teaching to an emphasis on learning. This has encouraged power to be moved from the teacher to the student. Technologies enhance communication with students, to improve the quality of learning by making it relevant to the skills needed in 21st century (6, 20). In addition, Christine (2011) states that the use of information communication technologies bridges the communication gap between the teacher and learner (142). According to the Jon and Johns' points of view (2010) blended learning is the acknowledged solution of choice in corporate education (27) .

It seems odd to read what Anonsh, Betty, and Andy (2004) say that technology is a tool to make human contact richer, more flexible, and reusable, unlike many critics who criticize blended learning as it decreases social interaction. Besides, one can conclude that now electronic resources are the primary information source for many students. The important benefit of using blended learning in TEFL is that students can get a lecture over the internet, so they will be able to concentrate during the lecture, as they will be free from the burden of writing during the class. Blended learning also plays an important role when the student is absent. Thus, out of surveying the above opinions, it can be concluded that blended learning has many benefits. They include stimulating reading critically ,inspiring students to be life long learners, creating new opportunities for learners to interact with their peers ,improving the quality of learning and giving students a variety of ways to demonstrate their knowledge while appealing to diverse learning styles. So, out of the previous studies, it is evident that blended learning is a very important element inside the classroom.

Due to building a blended learning program, blended learning is to be elaborated on in the following section.

Components of Blended Learning

According to Norman (2007) states that blended learning consists of two parts – active learning and reduction of classroom time. When they are successfully combined, the potential result is an educational environment, highly conducive to student learning. In some blended courses, the time for

each class per week is eliminated while in others, in-class sessions occur only at certain points throughout the semester (82, 83).

Jennifer and Nanette (2008) state that blended curriculum includes self-study, e-learning, rewards, worksheets, an instructor-led class, and an assessment, which requires them to use of the worksheet again. The key to the blend is that each "piece" of the training is dependent on the other. Asynchronous and synchronous work is integrated to the extent that a participant cannot successfully pass the class without completing each component (29). To sum up, as Jennifer and Nanette (2008) say the key to the blend is that each "piece" of the training is dependent on the other.

In order to better understand the essence of blended learning, how to teach it effectively, and how to control the drawbacks that can negatively affect using blended learning, it might be of significance to understand the factors and criteria that affect teaching using blended learning.

Design of Blended Learning

Pete and Barney. (2007) say that building a blended learning program can include many technologies. They include electronic dictionaries, office software, such as PowerPoint from Microsoft, interactive whiteboards, portable devices, such as mobile phone, PADS, digital audio recorders, digital cameras, digital camcorders, MP3 players and laptop computers, Using computer mediated communication or CMC, such as text chat, Multi-Object Orientation (MOOs), email, forums, bulletin boards and video-conferencing, virtual learning environments (VLEs), such as Moodle platform, blogs, podcasts, wikis and websites (52-119).

Some authors put designs for explicating the steps of building such designs. The following two programs demonstrate these steps:

Fernando, Genoveva, Daniel and Jose (2005) and Barbara (2007)

State that designing blended learning programs includes:

1. analysis,
2. design,
3. development,
4. implementation,
5. execution, and
6. evaluation.

These steps can be explained as follows:

1-Analysis stage

It is the phase in which the planner will define what to teach; the educational content and the learners are analyzed, and the environment is ascertained.

2-Design stage

This phase defines how to teach. It specifies the learning approach, the learners, learning process, the structure and information to be delivered (facts, concepts, processes, procedures and principles), standards to be used, criteria, and achievements expected of the learner.

3-Development stage

This phase outputs the practical self - paced learning process applicable to the real structure of each teaching unit, which includes a learning tree containing the structure and contents of each – lesson.

4-Implementation stage

It is the phase which involves building the software for the e-learning process and its location in a learning management system. It outputs the different didactic units with their respective e-lessons.

5-Execution stage

They define this stage as the phase which involves the learner using the learning process. It provides information on the problems encountered and the knowledge acquired.

6-Evaluation

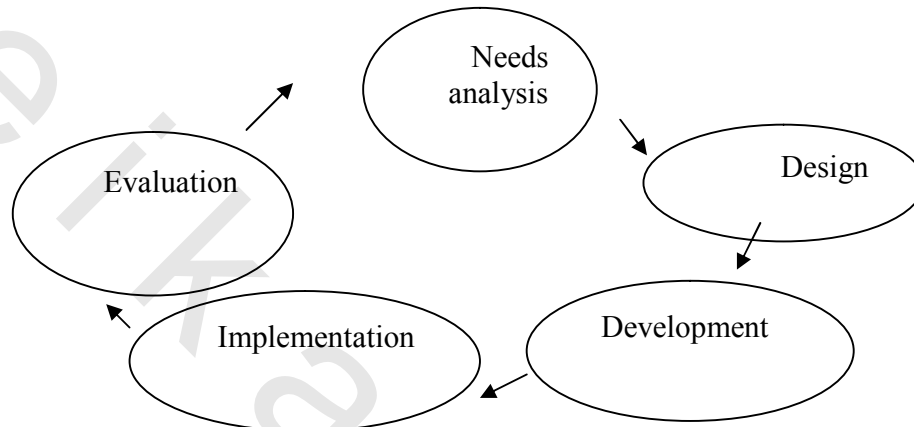
It focuses on evaluating a blended learning program.

7-Review

This phase serves the learning process by analyzing the results of the evaluation.

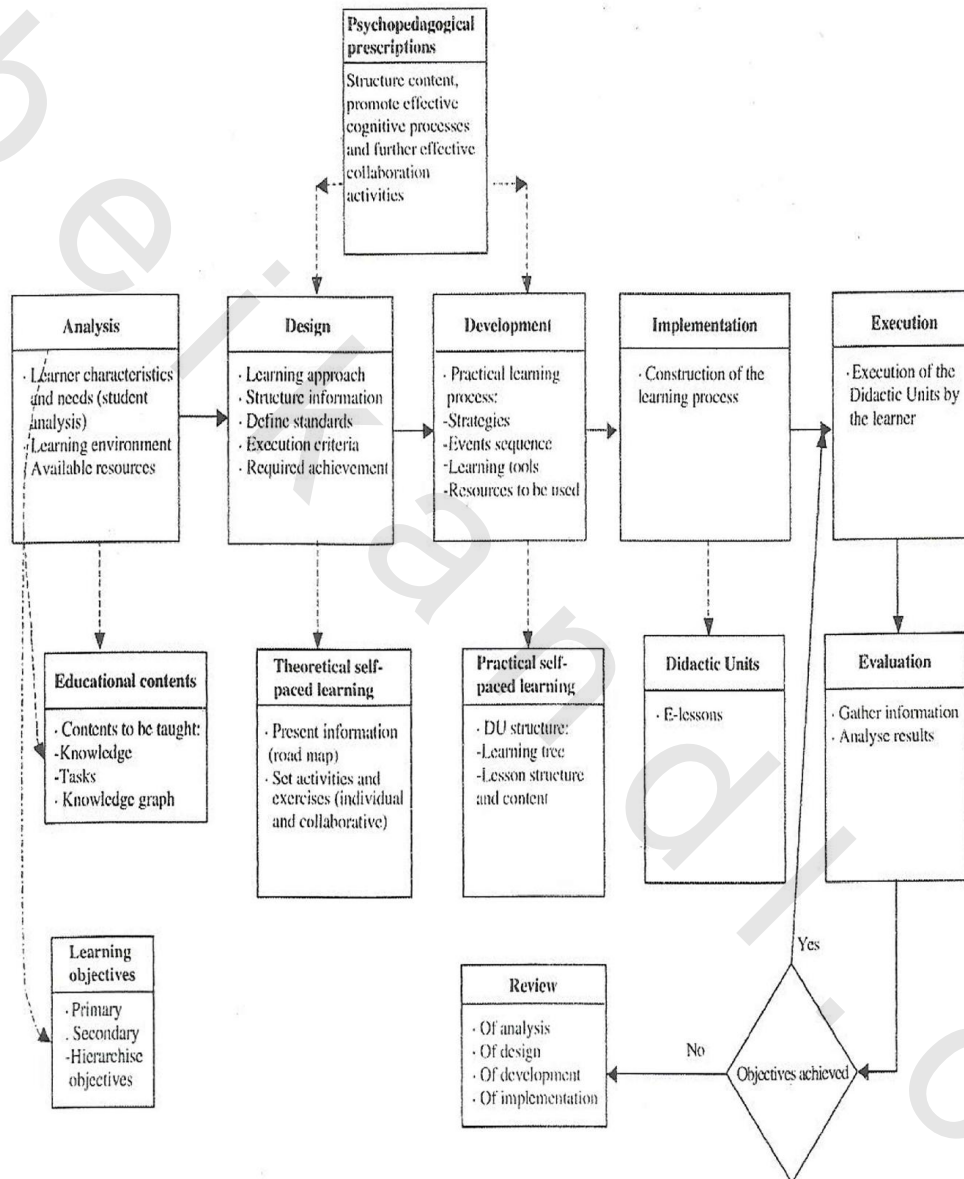
They demonstrate these steps in the following diagrams:

Figure (3): Stages of the Design and Development Process



Source: (Barbara ,2007, 72).

Figure (4): E-Learning Instructional Model



Source: (Fernando, Genoveva, Daniel and Jose ,2005, 223).

figures 3 and 4 show the steps of making a web/blended learning design. It can be observed that both diagrams have the same stages of designing a blended learning program. There are five shared stages in both. These are

1. Analysis,

2. Design,
3. Development,
4. Implementation,
5. execution
6. Evaluation

Some technologies are adopted from Pete and Barney (2007). These technologies included electronic dictionaries, office software (PowerPoint from Microsoft), interactive whiteboard, portable devices (laptop computers and MP3 players), computer mediated communication (CMC) (MOOs, email and forums), virtual learning environments(VLEs) and blogs.

Factors Influencing the Uptake of Blended Learning

Richard and Myron (2004) assert that learner autonomy is a critical factor in successful online-distance learning. Autonomy is comprised of a number of self-regulatory learning attributes to learner autonomy in online learning contexts. Motivation is the second component for learning. Motivation comprises of two elements. They are self-efficacy and goal orientation. Self-efficacy is self-beliefs that reflect a learner's confidence to successfully accomplish a learning task. Goal orientation is the reason why a learner engages in a learning task. The third component of online learner autonomy is the experience with internet technologies, which contributes to the learner's confidence in effectively using the technology in order to learn. The fourth component of autonomy is the learner's ability to seek learning assistance when and as necessary and in the appropriate manner through the appropriate channels. The fifth component of autonomy is the learner's ability to manage study time productively and effectively. These five components of learner's autonomy are self -regulatory learning attributes that have been identified as important – factors in classroom based learning(6). Richard and Myrons' opinion agrees with the findings of Doo and Micheal (2009) which indicate that there are many factors that affect the blended instructional environment, one of which is learning motivation and learning involvement. In addition, motivation, self-regulatory and time management are important factors in both blended learning and face-to face learning (285).

James (2012) states that the challenges facing blended learning can be summarized under the following headings: costs, intellectual property rights,

custom and practice, and preconceptions (408). While Randy and Heather (2004) see that the issues pertaining to the front end of blended learning (administration and development) fall into the following categories: policy, planning, resources, scheduling, and support (99) .

Anthony and Sue (2007) highlight the factors that need to be considered when implementing a blended learning solution. The participants were 45 learners. Findings referred to the importance of human behavioral factors over content and tool selection when implementing a blended learning program, the importance of the group dynamics in achieving the learning outcomes. In addition, it is vital to consider a variety of perspectives (organization, instructor, and most importantly, the learner). The technology itself is not important but it is important to consider the integration with the organization, staff and learners, and the actual material. The consideration of the appropriateness of the context and pedagogy is a first step. Individuals characteristics, such as expectations, motivation and learning style should be considered as well as cultural considerations should be considered alongside learning processes, learning outcomes and environmental factors (technology, support, skills). Adequate time, resources and evaluation are critical factors (161).

Hyo-Jeong and Thomas (2007) state that the degree of student satisfaction with course plays an important role in evaluating the effectiveness of distance learning. In blended learning, the importance of students' self-motivation and self-management increases because there is less in-class time and more emphasis on self-regulated learning. Another problem in blended learning is that when several components are not well integrated, this can increase the effective cognitive load in learning processes. Other factors are course structure - well organized, CD ROM technologies, collaborative learning, face-to-face interaction and peer-evaluation and online exam (evaluation), emotional bonding, and communication medium (326) .

In their report, Hugh and Karen (2007) state that the critical success factors that affect building a program in a blended approach are active involvement of senior management, the whole curriculum approach, funding, support at the point of need, collaborations. Therefore, if things did not work, that is, not everything in the project worked perfectly, then it is useful to reflect on failures as well as on successes (824-827).

The findings of Matilde's report (2008) refer to that students reported that they encountered issues around time management, taking greater responsibility for their learning, and using sophisticated technologies. Faculty members state that the challenges faced in developing such a course included lack of time, support and resources for course redesign, acquiring new teaching and technology skills plus the risk associated with delivering a course in a blended format. The challenges from the administrative perspective consist of aligning blended learning with institutional goals and priorities, resistance to organizational change and lack of organizational structure and experience (81).

The report of Doo and Micheal (2009) indicates that the age, prior experiences with distance learning opportunities, preference in delivery format, and average study time are those learner antecedents differentiating learning outcomes among groups of college students. They divide the factors affecting the blended instructional environment to learning variables, instructional variables, learning motivation and learning –involvement (282-285) but Rachel and Jakie (2009) say that poorly designed blended learning format can potentially decrease effective learning compared with a single delivery method (88) .

Hyo-Jeong and Curtis (2010) state that while there are many advantages of a blended course, blended learning is complex. New instructors to blended learning will need additional training in what it offers for teaching and learning. Instructors could benefit from seeing examples of common problems in online or web-supplemented learning environments and possible blended learning solutions (197) while Norman (2007) investigates challenges faced in developing a blended learning course. They include an aligning blended learning with instructional goals and priorities, resistance to organizational change and lack of organizational structure, experience with collaboration and partnerships and reduce operating costs (88).

Monica (2011) recommends that all students be digital learners; all students have access to high-quality digital content and online courses, and can customize their education using digital content through an approved provider. Students' progress based on demonstrated competency, digital content, instructional materials, and online or blended learning courses of high quality, digital instruction and teachers should be of high quality, students' learning is the metric for evaluating the quality of content and

instruction, funding creates incentives for performance and options, innovation, and infrastructure support digital learning(71) .

The report of Christine (2011) seeks to identify the barriers preventing open and distance learning (OD) and learners from maximizing the potentials of information communication technology (ICT) and strategies to overcome them within the Nigerian context. The findings of the study indicate that much of ODL instructional delivery is still primarily print-based; there is some significant progress has been made especially with regard to encouraging the use of some non-traditional ICTS through ODL; and the issue of affordability, bandwidth and infrastructural facilities like constant electricity remained barriers (142).

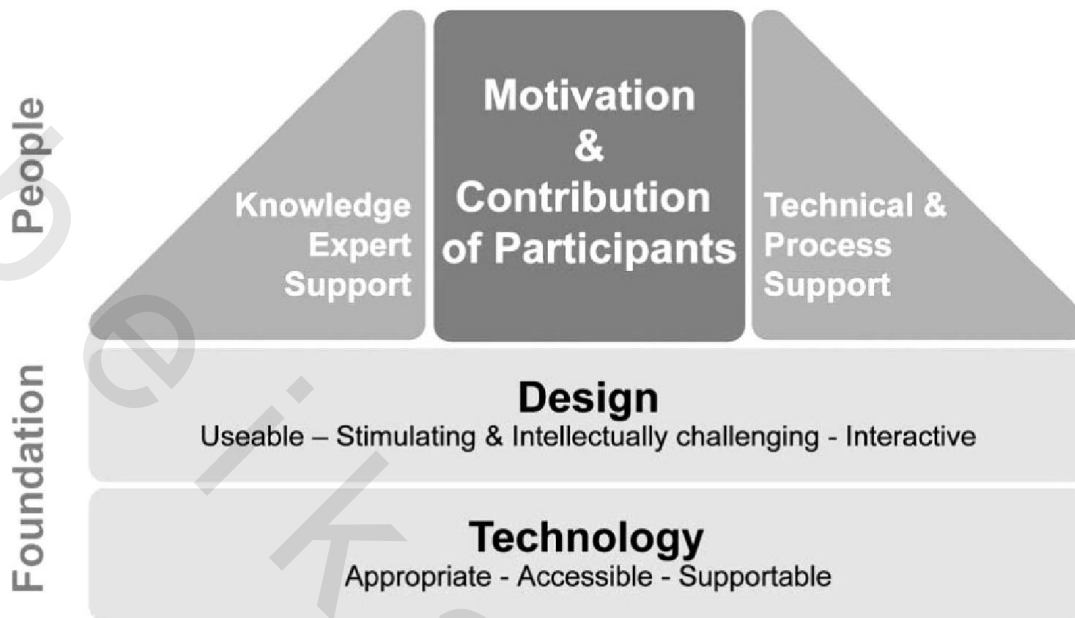
A comprehensive view about the factors that influence blended learning is introduced above. If teachers are to seek effective teaching, then it is important for them to know these factors. The most prominent factors are time management, teachers' experiences with using blended learning, motivation, costs and choosing the appropriate activities. It will be tried to provide students with programs they need to accomplish the program and they will be encouraged to use blended learning in order to solve some of the challenges of blended learning. a Skype program for the video conference will be provided.

Criteria of Effective Blended Learning Programs

Anthony and Sue (2007) state that the success of e- learning depends on a three-way partnership: the organization, the learner, and the supplier. Encouraging the right human conditions for a successful learning environment is important in the virtual world as is shown in the following diagram:

The findings of their study indicate that the most critical factors which affect blended learning are the people, namely, the support staff, faculty and the learners themselves with the right attitude and ownership of their learning success. The design of the program should be usable, intellectual, challenging and interactive design (148). This is shown in the following diagram:

Figure (5): Criteria of Effective Blended Learning Programs



Source : (Anthony and Sue, 2007, 146).

Figure 5 shows that the program should include knowledge experts, motivated participants and technical support. However, the foundation of the program should have a usable and interactive design and supportable technology. One can conclude from the diagram the importance of motivation and the students' participation. It is important for teachers to consider all these elements when using blended learning.

Paul, John and Luke (2009) in their paper highlight the importance of evaluation, skills training, pedagogy, human factor, technology, and implementation . In this study, these criteria will be considered when building the program. It is seen that, it is important to shed light on some related studies to blended learning. This is the purpose of the next section.

Studies Related to Blended Learning

The study of Yu, Ling and Yi (2011) aims to develop a teacher-training program that integrates knowledge management (KM) and blended learning and examined its effects on pre-service teachers' professional development in creativity instruction; and (2) to explore the mechanisms underlying the success of such KM- based training. The sample of the study is made up of 44 pre-service teachers. The results of the study indicate the effectiveness of the program on developing the pre-service teachers' professional knowledge and personal teaching efficacy in their teaching of

creativity. In addition, the study shows that blended learning, guided practice, observational learning group discussion, peer evaluation and feedback are important mechanisms underlying this success.

The study of Jung and Chun (2011) aims to explore problem-solving patterns and their impact on learning achievement in a blended learning environment. The data are collected from 34 students in a blended learning environment using classroom instruction, mobile and web scenarios. The sample is divided into three groups the hybrid- oriented group, the technology-oriented group, and the efficiency- oriented group. The hybrid-oriented group uses the classroom, mobile and web scenario almost equally and displays a regular manner in following the teacher's procedure, and tends to passively accept whatever the teacher says. Students in the technology-oriented group spend most of their time using mobile and web technologies but they reveal superficial problem-solving abilities, such as lack of understanding and planning. The efficiency-oriented group is characterized by the efficient monitoring of learning processes; it is more task- oriented and performs better than the other two groups.

The purpose of the study of Benlihan, Buket, and Serap (2011) is to examine students' views on blended learning method and its use in relation to the students' individual learning styles. The sample of the study consists of 31 senior students. Findings imply that students' views on blended learning method and its use are quite positive (5).

The aim of the study of Ian (2010) is assessing the effect of online learning management system (LMS) to a postgraduate professional legal education course to blend the online elements with other existing methods of delivery. The rationale behind the project is to add to the existing flexible learning mode and create an enhanced student-centered learning environment as well as improving learning outcomes. Findings indicate that their project is successful in enhancing the flexibility of delivery and in contributing to the quality of students' learning experiences (56, 57).

The goal of Matthew's study (2008) is to investigate the impact of the time management on a blended distance-learning course. 92 of students participated in the study and 46 are randomly placed as a control group. Findings show that the time management group does not scientifically do better in content understanding. There is a significant difference in the effort scale and the self-efficacy scale as both increased for the time management

group. There is a significant difference within group in the worry scale as worry decreases. Matthew says that this may be due to low reliability in the genetic test and the Punnett square, the implications for the future research will include more test items and more comprehensive and effective management program (xi-xii) .

Anthony and Sue (2007) highlight the factors that have to be considered when implementing a blended learning solution in a group environment. The participants are 45 learners. Findings imply the importance of human behavioral factors over content and tool selection when implementing a blended learning, and the importance of the group dynamics in achieving the learning outcomes (143,144).

The thesis of Linda (2005) is conducted to examine blended learning from the instructional, faculty, and student environment. Participants of the study are the instructor and 54 students. The course is HFT4932, exploring wines of the world. Students continued to report high overall satisfaction with blended courses and a high level of quality interaction among students and with faculty. Many students see the blended format as a way to becoming an active participants in their learning and developing new learning skills. On the other hand, technology difficulties are reported. Challenges for the students are time management and poor course organization (54) .

Commentary and conclusion:

Out of surveying many studies, it can be noticed that blended learning is very effective. It is necessary to meet the demands of the present age. Blended learning has many benefits as follows:

- It can encourage students to study.
- It can develop the pre-service teachers' professional knowledge and personal teaching efficacy.
- It can enhance the quality of students' learning experiences.
- It can foster students' collaborative learning.
- It provides more effective use of classroom time, increased flexibility in meeting time constraints of both students and professor, and greater ability to meet the needs of individual students.
- It provides a significant decrease in costs of delivery and an enhancement in learning availability and learning quality.

- It can improve students' attitudes toward a course and the students' critical dispositions compared to the traditional learning mode.
- It can increase the content understanding and problem-solving skills.

After reviewing some of the major elements of critical reading and blended learning, it would be of worth going through the relationship between both of them to help in drawing an image of how to develop critical reading skills through blended learning.

Developing Critical Reading through Blended Learning

Kathleen (2006) states that not all internet sources are trustworthy. The reader should evaluate a source before accepting it. Any individual, company, or organization can put information on a website or a newsgroup posting. Kathleen puts some guidelines to follow when evaluating internet sources. They include (a) checking the author, (b) discovering the purpose of the posting, (c) checking the date of the posting, and (d) checking the sponsoring organization of the site (456).

In evaluating internet sources, Kathleen (2004) says that reading electronic sources requires unique reading and thinking skills. He puts some guidelines to follow when evaluating internet sources. They are (a) discovering the purpose of websites and (b) evaluating the context of a website including evaluating the source, the level of technical details, the presentation, completeness, the links and the accuracy of a website (292-298).

- The site itself should provide clues about the accuracy of its information. The reader should ask the following questions:
 - Are the author's name and credentials provided?
 - Is contact information for the author included?
 - If opinions are offered, are they presented clearly as opinions?
 - Does the writer make unsubstantiated assumptions?
 - Does the site provide a list of works cited?

Not all websites are current so the reader should be sure that the information is up to date.

John (2000) writes that the reader should never accept information at its face value without first establishing its accuracy, evaluating the credibility of

the source and determining the point of view or bias of the source (60). This point of view agrees with Patricia's (1998) as he says that there is a strong tie between resource - based learning and critical reading. Proponents of both concepts are aware of the need to create healthy skepticism about information provided by mass media or most easily accessed. Students need to recognize information produced by propagandists and people with strong left biases. In addition, critical reading is an information literacy goal; critical reading and resource based learning go hand-in-hand as students will automatically acquire or sharpen their critical reading skills as they become information literate through resource-based learning(28,30). While Michael (2005) highlights the suitable choice of the right integrated technologies .She says that the benefits of blended learning in enriching the students learning experience and an efficient use of faculty resources. By choosing the right situation of when to use blended learning, the quality of teaching and enrollment will improve (131). Liz (2010) adds that blended learning develops critical reading, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, and global awareness (23).

In their report, Marisa, Ying, Max and James (2009) put a solution for the difficulties of the critical reading of the students. They suggest using the critical web reader, critical web reader (CWR) tool sites in a pane next to the website that a student is viewing. With it, teachers create activities that guide students in exploring one or more websites through a series of "lenses". A lens is a set of prompts and questions that direct students to pay attention to certain aspects of the web – page. These lenses are designed to improve academic literacy strategies, such as summarizing, questioning, evaluating claims and evidence, and synthesizing. They also aim to improve critical literacy strategies, such as identifying and examining claims and evidence presented on a website. Teachers may choose from a number of lenses developed by the research team or create new lenses for each activity. An example of an activity: What is this activity about?, What is the purpose? (26).

Chris (2005) says that it is important that teachers equip students with the habits of mind necessary for them to evaluate web-based resources critically. This is due to the rapid evolution of new technologies used by adolescents to communicate in and out of school. By focusing on the "habits of mind" – critical reading skills – teachers can help students see that not all web - based resources provide accurate or unbiased information. For this reason, students need to learn to be careful when they choose where and how

they use the internet. By helping students assess the credibility of online resources, teachers can help them to develop the information literacy skills that they need to assess material critically so that they can participate in democracy (271-273).

Mary (2007) has another opinion in which he says that even after students are shown strategies to help them to decide whether the information on the internet is reliable, they need extensive practice before the strategy becomes second nature to them. So, teachers should help them develop criteria for evaluating online information and train students to develop the habit of using their criteria. Question-based discussions will lead to a deeper understanding of the nature of online information and prepare the students to analyze the information more effectively. Teaching students to question an author's motives and biases increases teacher responsibility for finding and presenting information sources (89, 91, 93).

The previous demonstration of blended learning is approved by what Gheith (2009) says. She says that technology has limitless benefits including contributing to the development of critical reading. It will be useful to adopt the view of Chris (2005) that the relationship between blended learning and critical reading is directly proportional relationship. Teachers can help students see that not all web-based resources provide accurate or unbiased information and the growing popularity of electronic texts call for new approaches for understanding and teaching critical reading. Meanwhile, by helping students access online resources, teachers help them develop their critical reading skills; thus, they can participate in democracy.

Commentary

It is evident that critical reading is an important type of reading as it is a matter of attaching current requirements of the age. Blended learning proved to be an effective method in language teaching. The researcher also sees that both blended learning and critical reading strategies can be used to create a different successful context to enhance students' abilities to read more fruitfully, i.e., critical blended learning application can add motivation and more current context to enhance students' abilities to read critically. Some researchers called (BL) as a method, others called it as an approach. The researcher sees that it is a method of teaching.

Some technologies adopted from Pete and Barney (2007). These technologies included electronic dictionaries, office software (PowerPoint from Microsoft), interactive whiteboard, portable devices (laptop computers and MP3 players), computer mediated communication (CMC) (MOOs), email and forums), virtual learning environments(VLEs) and blogs. In addition, this study considered and benefited from the theoretical part in building the program and in teaching critical reading. In addition, the study considered making discussion and cooperative learning as an important strategies for developing the secondary stage students' critical reading in a blended learning context. The research instruments are designed according to the previously surveyed literature.