

## A Surrealist Play of Associations: Neoliberalism, Critical Pedagogy and Surrealism in Secondary English Language Arts

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**Abstract :** This project utilizes principles derived from the Surrealist movement to prioritize creative and critical thinking in secondary English Language Arts (ELA). The implementation of Surrealist-style pedagogies within an ELA classroom will be rooted in critical, radical pedagogy, which addresses the injustices caused by economic-oriented educational systems. The use of critical pedagogy will enable the subversive artistic and political aims of Surrealism to be transmitted to a classroom context. Through aesthetic reading strategies, appreciative questioning and dialogue, students will actively critique the power dynamics which structure (and often restrict) their lives. Within the ELA domain, cost-effective approaches often replace the actual “arts” of ELA. This research will therefore explore how Surrealist-oriented pedagogies could restore imaginative freedom and deconstruct conceptual barriers (normative standards, curricular constraints, and status quo power relations) in secondary ELA. This research will also examine how Surrealism can be used as a political and pedagogical model to treat societal problems mirrored in ELA classrooms. The stakeholders are teachers, as they experience constant pressure within their practices. Similarly, students encounter rigorous, results-based pressures. These dynamics contribute to feelings of powerlessness, thus reinforcing a formulaic model of ELA. The ELA curriculum has potential to create laboratories for critical discussion and active movement towards social change. This proposed research strategy of Surrealist-oriented pedagogies could enable students to experiment with social issues and develop senses of agency and voice that reflect awareness of contemporary society while simultaneously building their ELA skills.

**Keywords :** arts-informed pedagogies, language arts, literature, surrealism

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