



【發行單位】嘉義縣國教輔導團英語領域

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Review of the on-line course- Critical Thinking In English Teaching

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Before the lesson

A. Critical thinking, in my opinion, happens when someone meets something unusual to know or understand, he or she take it into consideration the knowledge or information, trying to figure things out. In other words, he or she needs to use what he or she learned before or get to look for some useful information as the foundation to access the question or the problem. Therefore, thinking without enough strong basement is not critical thinking.

B. I would say Dr.Lin , who advised my graduation paper, is a critical thinker. Why I described her as a critical thinker based on one reason. She did a lot of research. That means she knew much in her field. Every time I reached to her and asked the problems I encountered while doing my work, she helped me by giving me more paper. She believed only when you are ready for the problem can you solve it. Absorbing knowledge in relation to what you want to find out as much as possible is absolutely a smart way though it takes you much time. Thanks to her guide, I am a

judgmental no more but a person who believes in truth.

What did I think after reading some related articles?

Critical thinking, in my opinion, happens when someone meets something unusual to know or understand or have different views from others', he or she take it into consideration the knowledge, information ,detail, creativity and the like, trying to figure things out and make some contribution. In other words, he or she needs to use what he or she learned before or gets to look for some useful information as the foundation to find solution, explanation, or proposal to the question or the problem. Not only can critical thinking helps us reach deeper to our own beliefs and others' as well, but it can enable us to do something bigger. For example, critical thinking gives a responsible school teacher the power to make some change at school instead of just complaining about the education system. Although critical thinking needs training and developing, it is an inevitable ability for all of us. Otherwise, if we lack critical thinking ability, we might just

prefer own ideas and beliefs rather than open our mind to more possibilities, let alone constructively help the situation.

Discussion 2: Intellectual Traits

I selected intellectual courage because I definitely have it but use it rarely.

As a citizen in my country and a teacher in my school, I saw many things going with the flow, though I could immediately know it was not right. However, in correspondence to most people's response, I chose to neglect sometimes. Not long before I knew that was not right, I should stand out for the right thing and never gave up. For example, I would confront those who broke the rules, smoking in public without any fear because I knew I was right. To my surprise, those asked not to smoke in public did what I said and said sorry to me. I think all people have intellectual courage but they just forget it. As long as more people practice more, then they will see it anywhere and anytime.

Intellectual empathy might be taken into account when you practice intellectual courage. Everyone knows the white lie. Under such circumstances won't I stick to my own principle but go with the flow. Sometimes, it's necessary to break the rule.

Insights into Bloom's Taxonomy

After reading A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy: An Overview, I've learned an important idea about taxonomy. The point is that teachers or instructors can set up a standard before teaching or instruction based on the taxonomy because the taxonomy has different

levels of abilities, making it more specific to ensure to what level they want the learners to achieve, thereby making it easier to apply the appropriate lessons. By doing so, not only can the teachers or the instructors pinpoint the teaching purpose, but they can provide the proper teaching material.

The old visions are presented in the hierarchy order of the six major categories in the cognitive domain. One needs to acquire the easily-learned ability to move on to the next level. For example, one may need to master the level of knowledge in order to the next level: comprehension. However, they are arranged more rigidly than the new visions. The new visions, in comparison with the old ones, are arranged in two dimensions, including the knowledge dimension forming the vertical axis of the table and the cognitive process dimension forming the horizontal axis. Such arrangements lead to the whole possibilities shown by the table, helping one to focus on blank areas and rethink possible teaching opportunities. What's more, with more clear categories come more suitable teaching materials and assessments. No matter the table is used in teaching or assessments; it brings teachers and instructors versatility.

The new hierarchy of levels does improve the taxonomy owing to what I mentioned before. Besides, teachers or instructors can assess their learners to decide whether they want the learners to move on to the next level or give extra efforts to missed teaching opportunities (or maybe teaching again at the same level to make sure the learners acquire the

necessary ability).

DISCUSSION: Questioning Discussion

While teaching, I really use much questioning. For example, at the beginning of the class, I begin my class by asking how my students feel today or what they do on weekends. Moreover, during the class, I use questioning by giving them easy questions to make sure if they understand what I want them to know. What's more, I stay in the class at break time, answering the questions on their test paper. Such cases are only some of my using questioning in teaching and learning.

Since I use a lot of questioning, I want to give some ideas of how it works. First, ask questions anytime. In class, students are the main role. Without them focusing on you, everything you do would be in vain. Questions can not only arouse their attention but also make them brainstorm. Such usages can ensure that they keep up the pace with yours. However, any question which might cause discrimination should be used wisely. Secondly, sometimes, your questions don't need to have the right answers. This means teachers give students opportunities to do some research and discuss with their counterparts. Believe it or not, the process of finding out the answers usually brings more benefit to the students. Thirdly, when asking questions, I link them to students' experience as much as possible. Teaching has a wide range of education purposes. Teachers don't always stick to the lesson plan. Sometimes, impromptu questions about their life attitude might lead them to the right way. The last but not the least, no matter when teachers use questioning, do not expose your students to the threatening atmosphere. By

which I mean what or how teachers respond will definitely affect students in the right or the wrong way. The possibility of discouraging students from asking questions should be avoided. Positive response will reinforce the next students' involvement in answering questions.

Task: Lesson Critique Strengths

The lesson plan is designed for the third grade of junior high school students. Besides regular lessons, they have extra lessons to do. This is one of them, Christmas holiday. Usually, the third grade students do a lot of reading to prepare for the BC test. However, you can see I introduce the worldwide famous holiday to them by doing various activities. With more excitement fulfilling into the lesson, not only can they learn happily, but they can appreciate the real meaning for the Christmas.

Weaknesses

Due to the main purpose of this lesson, I don't design many critical thinking activities, not to mention of giving them the chances to learn further. Besides, the main goal of this lesson plan is stated neither clearly nor specially. Such weakness could lead to misunderstanding of studying this lesson. Still, too many activities might distract them from learning. After all, learning the origin of the Christmas is the most priority. Question time might be too less. On such condition would the students lose the chance to conclude precisely what they learn.

Suggestions for change

I would

1. state my purpose clearly so that I can remind

myself of not losing the students.

2. decrease the amount of the activities so that the students can focus on learning one thing.

For example, I might only do Categorizing Vocabulary and think about developing extended activities related to this activity, mainly emphasizing the vocabulary learning.

3. add our own culture to this lesson. For example, after finishing this lesson, I would introduce one national holiday in our country. Take the Moon Festival as example, since the students all have BBQ on that day, I would let them discuss why we celebrate this holiday, how we celebrate this holiday, where we celebrate this holiday, and the like. After guiding them to compare the Christmas with the Moon Festival, I might have them categorize the similarities and differences of the two holiday.

4. give the students time to share their opinions. That means they can rethink their own ideas and others' as well.

5. give them homework so that they can know more about the holiday. For example, I would let them to search for more information about Christmas. The next, they would share what they find with the class.

To Everyone: Question about objectives".

After reading this week's readings, I learned so much, especially main teaching strategies for writing lesson plans. In my opinion, no matter what kind of subject we teach, motivating our students to think deeper is our first priority.

Therefore, after this practice, for me, I'll think about preparing many questions to brainstorm my students. What's more, since collaborative learning not only helps students socially involve in their discussion but also offers them much time to talk as much as possible, by which reflecting on themselves at the same time.

Thanks to this practice, I felt refreshed.

Assessment

Given various films related to modern culture (C), students in pairs or groups (A) will (B) compare their own culture by sharing the ideas (D) at least in three perspectives.

Because students are divided into several groups, they are supposed to have different responsibilities. In order to make sure that each student shares the equal responsibility, I will give each group a criteria consisting of clear direction. For example, a group leader's job is to organize the whole assignment to the group and present a final result to the whole class.

The major way to assess students is to ask them to make their own group's working diary, with which describing clearly how they proceed the job. Therefore, I can grade them based on how much they contributed to their own group.

In conclusion, I will give each group two different grades representing two different categories. One is the final result for the whole group, and the other is the procedure for separated member. I believe this way can ensure that everyone is involved in the active

Constraints on Teaching Critical Thinking

After reading this week's materials, I can't agree more with the ideas. In my teaching, I do

encounter some problems with making students think critically while teaching under the pressure of competitive climate dominated by student testing and public school ranking.

In our country, junior high students need to have BC tests before they go to senior high school. In order to help them get high grades on all the subjects they take, teachers have to focus on having them practicing similar questions again and again instead of guiding them to think critically.

However, I am overcoming the constraint by using two activities. One is cooperative learning groups and the other is portfolio assessment.

In my class, I group my students according to their performances on tests. That means a group consisting of different levels of students. Usually, I assign each member with different levels of responsibility to ensure that everyone in the group can make contribution no matter in what level he or she is. What's more, by interacting with the other members, not only can he or she learn how to think critically by practicing all the skills needed in cooperation, but he or she can build good relationship in the classroom, thereby reinforcing the good learning atmosphere in the classroom.

Besides, I ask every student to make their own personal files. To be specific, I make each compile all the tests they take and correct the wrong answers on the notebook. I believe every student can restudy by doing so and it works well.

Technology and CT

I extracted the idea that students need to compare and contrast their own culture with others. For example, after they watch a short

clip or watch a magazine via the teacher's guide, they will think deeper to complete all the assignments. Besides, beyond the classroom, due to the critical thinking they learn in class, they will without any doubt to think more critically about everything they encounter, which is absolutely beneficial to themselves from the unit plan.

Usually, this activity is to wrap up the lesson and help students to make conclusions. However, thanks to technology, it is not the end but the start.

In fact, I've already started this way by creating the social group on Facebook for the graduates in my class two years ago, via which we can share our everyday life with the members on this group. Therefore, I've come up with the same idea to create a social group for the students who I am teaching now.

For example, according to the lesson plan I designed, students are asked to read magazines or watch movie clips. Besides what I give them in class, I will inform students of the learning group I create for them on Facebook, ensuring that they use the Net to check the contents on Facebook by posting the interesting materials. Of course, they need to respond and discuss with their group members. On the Net, the discussion is supposed to be interactive due to the easy learning atmosphere. Though grading is necessary, I will try to grade and comment on their good parts. As for their parts need improvements, I will advise them instead of giving them bad grades.

The more we use our social discussion groups, the more we will get used to learning in

this way besides classroom learning. Thus, I believe critical thinking can happen both inside and outside the classroom as long as I establish the good learning environment.

Critical thinking self-assessment

1. The quality of my thinking is good because in my daily teaching life, I have free time to prepare for teaching material. Meanwhile, I can go through what I've done and rehearse what I am going to do.

Usually, before I do everything, I do think. As for the frequency of critical thinking, I would say usually. That's because something has to be done with the collaboration with other colleagues. To meet with the majority, I really have to compromise instead of doing things by thinking critically.

I would say the stage for me now is Stage Four: The Practicing Thinker.

2. After this course, I changed the way of my critical thinking by overcoming my constraints first. I found most of my daily life is related to the teaching situation at school. Besides, the obstacle for me to think critically is because of the pressure brought by the constraints. As soon as I chose to face the problem, solutions seemed to appear accordingly.

3. I will spend more time communicating with my colleagues. The more time you share your teaching ideas with other teaching English teachers, the more you will get to apply to the teaching environment. At the same time, I will mull over what I've done and what I will use for the next day.

Reflections on the Course

I would choose the meaning of critical thinking, assessment and constraints.

The first time when I learned the term of critical thinking, I knew nothing but inferred to some level of deeper thinking. However, as soon as I read the articles of critical thinking, I learned more clear definition. What's more, thanks to the assignments related to critical thinking, I tried many ways I never did before. To be more specific, I put the ideas into practice in my class. I believe giving students more opportunities such working together and rethinking their answers can help them learn to think more critically.

And then, I would choose assessment. No sooner had I read such articles did I knew many methods can be used for students' assessment. In this category, I personally prefer portfolios. Students can not only record their learning, but they can also go back to mull over the past in order to avoid making the same mistake and think how to do better next time. Believe it or not, I am using this way and it worked well.

Finally, I would choose constraints. Sometimes, to help students develop skills of critical thinking takes time. What's worse, under the pressure of helping students get good grades, teachers may choose the way of repeating the same material instead of using novel ways. I, honest to say, was one of the teachers who sacrifice the time for students to think critically. Nevertheless, as a result of the changing education system, I find the chance to help students think critically. Hopefully, I can continue what I am trying now and see my students grow with the new ways of teaching.