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GUY SMITH • MEREDITH STEPHENS
ROEHL SYBING • JENNIE ROLOFF ROTHMAN



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Foreword

This volume marks our fourth volume of the Critical Thinking and Language Learning peer-reviewed academic journal. In this issue, our journal is showcasing the results of a more vigorous peer-review. The excellent articles that passed the reviewers are the result of the hard work of our chief editor, Curtis Chu, and the editorial board. The CTLL journal, now more than ever, stands as a symbol of our commitment to what the JALT CT SIG can do for the professional development of its members and how we can help expand critical thinking into more areas of language teaching and learning.

This year's journal hosts four articles that share ideas aimed at promoting critical thinking in language learning. We invite you to read through our journal, consider the ideas presented by our authors, and explore how they can be applied in your teaching.

We also invite you to write about your ideas and experiences for promoting critical thinking in language education for a future volume of our journal.

You can find out more information on submitting your manuscript at our website: www.jaltcriticalthinking.org

Due to the efforts of our executive board and our members, 2017 was a great year for the JALT Critical Thinking SIG. We had 5 CT SIG sponsored events during 2017 which were great successes. We also have some big things planned for 2018 and hope you can join us for them. We hope to provide opportunities for our membership throughout the year to present at our events throughout Japan. From PanSIG 2018 in Tokyo to an event being planned with the JALT Nagoya Chapter in summer, expect to see your CT SIG making waves in Japan's educational institutions. We hope to prove to you why the CT SIG is one of the most attractive and exciting SIGs in JALT. Thank you for supporting the JALT Critical Thinking SIG.

Sincerely,

James D. Dunn

Coordinator - JALT Critical Thinking SIG

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About the Authors

GUY SMITH - Guy Smith teaches at International Christian University in Tokyo in the English for Liberal Arts program. His teaching and research interests are in Self Determination Theory, Critical Thinking, and Technology in Teaching. Correspondence related to this article should be directed to guys@icu.ac.jp.

MEREDITH STEPHENS - Meredith Stephens is on the faculty in the department of International Liberal Arts, Institute of Socio-Arts and Sciences, Tokushima University. She graduated in Japanese and Linguistics from the University of Adelaide, and obtained a Masters in Applied Linguistics from Macquarie University. At Tokushima University she trains English teachers and supervises undergraduate theses in Applied Linguistics. Her principal research interest is English language pedagogy in Japan. Her writing about her experiences as an expatriate mother in Japan has been included in volumes published by Demeter Press.

ROEHL SYBING - Roehl Sybing is a teacher of English to speakers of other languages and a PhD student in Education at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. His research interests include critical thinking in language acquisition and culture in foreign language education. He can be reached at rsybing@umass.edu.

JENNIE ROLOFF ROTHMAN - Jennie Roloff Rothman is Principal Lecturer of Professional Development-Teacher Development in the English Language Institute at Kanda University of International Studies. She attained her MA in TESOL from Teachers College Columbia University and is pursuing an EdD at Northeastern University. Her research interests include critical thinking, global issues education, and second language writing.

Building a Base: Critical Thinking Skills and a Question Habit

GUY SMITH
INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Abstract: This article looks at some practical classroom activities for teachers of English in Japan to assist students in becoming more active in asking questions, an essential part of the Critical Thinking (CT) process. Students at the college level in Japan often come to English classes with little experience in using, and knowledge of, CT skills. This can often lead to a frustrating and difficult experience on the part of both teacher and student. From discussions with Japanese students, one reason why they perceive they have trouble with positive engagement in questioning is that it is not a task that they feel they are accustomed to doing. The suggested activities described in this article were aimed at developing a question habit, as a pre-step to assisting low to intermediate level students to work more actively and effectively in lessons which build and apply CT skills.

Introduction

People are surrounded by questions in daily life. What do you want for dinner? Can you give me a hand with this? How can I change the languages on this computer? There is one place, however, where questions do not flow as freely as hoped for. For teachers interested in developing CT skills in students, this situation can often be found in classrooms with Japanese students. In efforts to provide scaffolding support, teachers will carefully explain to students the importance of questions, explicitly demonstrate how to ask questions, teach appropriate expressions, and role model the asking of questions to students in efforts to provide examples. Teachers drive themselves to great lengths trying to inspire students to do just what students naturally do in abundance in other situations in their daily lives. However, the reality is that the question “Any questions?” by teachers to Japanese students is often asked more for show and habit with students, than from any real expectations that they will actually ask something.

Why do instructors go to such lengths in an effort to get a few questions? As teachers interested in CT, the belief is that questions, and inquiring minds, are essential drivers of learning. Questions are a way for students, young or old, to gain a greater understanding of concepts, and also importantly, to help them achieve personal growth and

change. A famous Chinese quote from Confucius, “Those who ask questions may look like fools for a minute, but those who never ask will be fools for life,” offers a cautionary tale in that a willingness to ask questions leads to greater wisdom. Avoidance of this in the fear that the question may be a foolish one hinders intellectual growth and progress in understanding. In the tradition of CT, questioning is seen as the key element of deep and powerful thinking. Questioning confirms, challenges, and transforms. The Critical Thinking Community, in its website introduction explains the central importance of questioning in the thinking process.

When we ask the right questions, we succeed as a thinker, for questions are the force that powers our thinking. Thinking, at any point in time, can go off in thousands of different directions, some of which, by the way, are dead-ends. Questions define the agenda of our thinking. They determine what information we seek. They lead us in one direction rather than another. They are, therefore, a crucial part of our thinking. (Paul & Elder, 1996)

Students in Japan often come across as relatively passive questioners in classes, even when given considerable amounts of time to consider a question related to class tasks and activities. There could be several reasons behind this weakness. Matthew Reesor, in his 2003 article exploring why Japanese often fail in gaining expected levels of English spoken competency, points towards the historical influence

in the emphasis on translation in Japan, and the difficulty of changing traditional styles of teaching in Japanese schools, e.g. the grammar translation method. Furthermore, students may feel low motivation towards English due to negative classroom experiences involving factors such as the textbooks used in classes and the pressure of tests (Kikuchi and Sakai, 2009). To address this issue, low to intermediate level learners may first benefit from controlled and motivational practice in both linguistic competence and a psychological habit in asking questions in class to better prepare for the demands of lessons which build and call for the application of CT skills.

In order to further investigate this issue with a group of my learners, I held an informal in-class discussion of around 20 minutes with my class of 37 college students asking why they felt it was difficult for them to ask questions, followed by a raising of hands to see who among them also might have felt in a similar way.. The discussion was in Japanese to give students the opportunity to express themselves as fully as possible. I noted down replies and numbers carefully. After looking at, and considering the answers, four themes seemed to emerge:

- *I don't want to be thought stupid.*
- *I am not confident in my English.*
- *I don't have questions.*
- *I'm not used to asking questions.*

This last one is perhaps the most intriguing one in terms of classroom task design.

Teachers and students both can identify with the “I don’t want to look stupid” feeling. The common feeling of doubt over whether or not the question is the “right” one, i.e. appropriate, timely, or intelligent. Secondly, lack of confidence or competence in a second or third language can often play a more important factor than culture in allowing students to display CT (see Manalo, Watanabe and Sheppard, 2013; Durkin, 2008). Depending on the level of language competence, there may be some questions and concepts that a language student simply does not have the linguistic resources and capability to be able to voice, especially those requiring a critical evaluation and analysis which often involves multi-layered thinking and detailed explanation. Thus, it is quite reasonable to assume that a student with lower levels of English proficiency and often a correspondingly lack of confidence in their language skills may hesitate to challenge and evaluate material. Regarding the third response, not having any questions, perhaps the cultural tradition of regarding the teacher as the regulator of knowledge means Japanese students do not strongly feel they need to challenge the class material, the tasks, or the teacher in general resulting in “I don’t have any questions.”

However, for teachers interested in the encouragement and development of CT skills in students, the final answer, being

unused to asking questions, may give teachers something concrete to design classroom practices and tasks around. If certain carefully planned classroom strategies and tasks can move students towards considering asking questions as ordinary, if students develop a habit of asking questions through conscious and self-directed practice, this may connect to later developing the ability to ask more critical and informed questions (within their linguistic capabilities), and perhaps works towards overriding the other influences that seem to hold Japanese students back in asking questions. To develop this question habit, and to encourage students to more actively ask some questions in the classroom setting, there are two ideas that have been successful in my classroom helping the students become more dynamic and involved in taking a more proactive stance towards asking questions.

Developing a Question Habit

Habit Formation is the terminology for describing when behaviors become an integrated part of our personality. It can be very difficult to break habits if they have become part of neural pathways. However, research shows that conscious thought directed towards adopting certain behaviors through repetition can make changes in mental processes (Lally, Van Jaarsveld, Potts, & Wardle, 2010). So perhaps, in order to make passive learners into more confident and more able questioners, the first step is question and participation

training, establishing these habits in students through conscious and repetitive practice. In the classroom, the two practices described below have been useful in increasing participation and motivation in my students towards asking questions.

1. Create an environment where participation, critical evaluation, and questioning is promoted
 - set basic volunteering, question asking, and critical analysis as a part of the course grade.

Explain to students that 10% of their participation grade is to be decided by answering questions from the teacher, volunteering to speak in front of the class, pointing out teacher errors, and asking questions. Each student has a Volunteer Sheet they keep track of by themselves (students are very honest about this). For answering a question they get 1 star, for volunteering or asking a question in class, 2 stars, and for catching a teacher error, 3 stars. Setting goals works as a strong motivator for proactive participation and some students will end the semester with a hundred or more stars. This concrete reward also seems to help give Japanese students a point of reference to reflect on their performance and start to circumvent the natural instinct of respect for the teacher as the knowledge master, to more of one to be challenged.

2. Become accustomed to generating questions - include some kind of question generating practice regularly in lessons.

A practice for creative thinking works as an effective task to works towards this goal. A very simple task, ask students to write down as many questions as they can in two minutes about, for example, “frogs”.

What do frogs eat?

What's the biggest frog?

Why are frogs green?

Do frogs live in the ocean?

At the start, students will be hard pressed to come up with even three or four questions in two minutes, but after practice, the ability to press more deeply into the theme develops, in some students quite impressively. Teachers will find that as students discover themselves quickly using up the usual questions they begin to push themselves more, and start to generate questions that open up more unusual and interesting lines of enquiry.

Discussion

Especially with low to intermediate level non-English majors, it may be more practical (and stress free!) to initially look at working on specific foundation skills related to CT, such as basic practice at formulating questions and proactive participation. Teachers who have worked in Japanese elementary, junior high, and senior high schools in Japan, will know that questioning in the classroom is not discouraged, but certainly not promoted. They will be able sympathize with students coming to college classes and finding themselves struggling to adapt to lessons by teachers and in textbooks designed to work applying CT skills, in which active questioning often plays a key role. The two techniques described in this paper seem to work in helping Japanese students take steps towards overcoming both linguistic and psychological obstacles holding back their greater participation in classes integrating CT. As a gentle form of pre-training, spending some time on building a question habit through such motivating activities may help Japanese students move closer to understanding the intellectual joy of the art of questioning, and become more effective and confident when approaching lessons teaching and applying CT skills.

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Applying the Skill of Inferring to Learning Vocabulary: A Call to Move from Details to Discourse

MEREDITH STEPHENS
TOKUSHIMA UNIVERSITY

Abstract: Learners need to develop the skill of inferring in order to ascertain the meaning of unknown vocabulary. They would be well advised to supplement the task of consulting the dictionary, by making reference to the contextual clues provided by language in use. Vocabulary can be acquired through multiple encounters in meaningful discourse. Current English language pedagogy fosters a reliance on translation and vocabulary lists as means of promoting vocabulary acquisition. This pedagogy suggests there is a ready equivalence between lexical items in Japanese and English. Learners need to be taught to connect the dots to become active participants in the process of meaning-making.

Introduction

This is a discussion of how higher-order thinking skills can facilitate the learning of vocabulary. Tokuhama-Espinosa (2010,) lists the higher order thinking skills that constitute critical thinking, as “analysis, evaluation, discernment, interpretation, inferences and self-regulation” (p. 145). One of these components of higher order thinking that could be applied to learning vocabulary is the skill of inferring. This occurs in the process of speaking with a competent interlocutor, because it is in the act of speaking that prompts the development of thinking skills (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). As Ricards Hopkins (2010) aptly explains, “Language pulls cognition out of our mouths” (p. 116). This discussion concerns, firstly, a description of some of the weaknesses in the current way in which vocabulary is taught. Next there is an explanation of the difficulties that underlie an assumption of lexical equivalence between languages. Finally, it suggests ways in which a higher order thinking skill, inferring, can be exploited in the process of vocabulary acquisition while engaging in social interaction in L2 English.

A PEDAGOGY THAT REINFORCES A FIXED VIEW OF TRANSLATION EQUIVALENTS

Sybing (2014) identifies the tendency for students to try and “find the right answer” (p. 82) in the dictionary. This discussion is a call for learners to look beyond the one to one correspondences in a dictionary and direct their attention to

comprehending English in the myriad of contexts in which various meanings are expressed. It has been prompted by the common experience of observing students who are in the midst of expressing their opinion in class, and suddenly stopping to consult their Japanese-English dictionary. This behaviour arguably derives from an unquestioned belief in the accuracy of translation equivalents, and not having been taught alternative ways of expressing themselves while maintaining the flow of the dialogue.

Current textbooks in Japan continue to be characterized by vocabulary lists and grammatical explanations. The assumption behind these textbooks may be that proficiency and success in tests derive from a detailed understanding of the minutiae of language use. This is partially true, but proficiency is also aided by attention to longer stretches of discourse. Vygotsky (2012) explains how individual words are subservient to the context: “A word derives its sense from the sentence, which, in turn, gets its sense from the paragraph, the paragraph from the book, the book from all the works of the author” (p.260). In the case of children using English as a first language, comprehension of words spoken in context exceeds that of words read in isolation (Willis, 2008). Their pattern of literacy development appears to be in contrast to that of L2 English learners in Japan.

Sakurai (2015) asserts that translation remains the prevalent teaching methodology in Japanese junior and senior high schools. She explains the methodology of these classes, in which students are directed to consult their dictionary to ascertain the meaning of unfamiliar words, decipher the meaning of grammatical structures, and achieve an understanding in Japanese. They may produce vocabulary lists, buy a vocabulary book, or receive one from the teacher. Sakurai explains how these vocabulary lists feature English on one side and Japanese on the other; students memorize the vocabulary by looking at these lists. What is striking about Sakurai's description is how little appears to have changed since Gorsuch's (1998) observations that in high school English classes there was a greater emphasis on achieving an accurate translation than on the English itself, and that translation was the defining feature of the classes.

Given that translation has traditionally been and continues to be an essential part of English teaching methodology, an examination of the processes of translation merits consideration. The lessons described by Sakurai (2015) require learners to focus on vocabulary, and to create and memorize vocabulary lists. The notion of a vocabulary list presupposes lexical equivalents across languages, but this deserves to be problematized. Sakurai highlights the preponderance of rote learning of translation equivalents as a tactic to succeed in examinations (p.108). She identifies

a worrying trend: “students just memorize meanings in Japanese without context. Ordinarily, output is not expected for most of the English words they learn by rote” (p. 108).

Brown et al. (2008) call for researchers to attend to the complexity of vocabulary learning and direct attention beyond the single word level (p. 158-9). Even though the importance of the context in language learning has been widely identified (e.g. Nunan, 1995), Gee (1990) identifies the tendency for teachers to conceptualize language teaching as “a form of mental transference of neatly wrapped little packages (drills, grammar lessons, vocabulary lists) along a conveyor belt from teacher to student” (p. 96). Such packages may be misleading in terms of the simplicity they imply. Van Lier (1995) describes the false impression given by dictionaries and textbooks that “words have well-defined and precise meanings” (p. 76). In contrast to this assumption he argues “we often have to calculate the meaning of a particular word every time anew, in the context in which it is uttered” (p. 76-77).

THE POLYSEMY OF MEANING IN THE CONTEXT OF DISCOURSE

Accordingly, in meaningful contexts vocabulary usage is characterized by polysemy, creativity and originality. Danow explains Bakhtin’s notion of the fluidity of word meanings in context:

“In Bakhtin’s view, as noted, there is no such thing as ‘the word as such’- except as it exists in the dictionary; as a ‘living thing’, the word is always contextual. Moreover, ‘the word does not enter the utterance from a dictionary, but from life, from utterance to utterance” (FM, 122) (Danow, 1991, p. 39).

Wajnryb (2008) distinguishes between the semantic and pragmatic perspectives on vocabulary: the former referring to the dictionary definition and the latter to the more fluid role of the word in context, with usage of vocabulary being controlled by the nuances of the speaker. She eloquently explains the notion of how the listener constructs meaning:

“Clearly, the meaning of words resides only partly in dictionaries. Their richness is in the pragmatic space between what is said and what is meant. In this space, loose and unanchored, float notions like shared experience of the word/world, cultural understandings, connotations and associations - a well of possibilities from which one draws to infer and construct meaning.” (Wajnryb, 2008, p. 109)

Pavlenko distinguishes between three forms of lexical equivalence between languages: conceptual equivalence, partial (non)equivalence and non-equivalence. Conceptual equivalence refers to L2 words that can be positively transferred from the L1. Partial (non) equivalence refers to vocabulary that can sometimes be transferred positively from the L1. However, when learners assume equivalence this can backfire and result in negative transfer, requiring them to restructure their understanding of lexical items. Non-equivalence refers to lexical items which exist in only one of the languages. Yet another perspective is posited by Wierzbicka (2014), who appears to suggest that a sizeable number of English words belong to the last category: “most English words are not cross-translatable into other languages and carry with them a particular culturally shaped perspective” (p.50). Gee (2014) also acknowledges the limitations of dictionary definitions, providing the example of the definition of the word ‘bachelor’ as an unmarried male. He gives numerous examples of unmarried men who would not be classed as bachelors, such as the Pope, a thrice-divorced man or a man in an irreversible coma. Mastery of a word is achieved through use rather than simply consulting a dictionary.

Educational materials and practices for Japanese students of English neither adequately incorporate Pavlenko’s (2009) distinctions, nor Wierzbicka’s (2014) and Gee’s (2014)

insights, and result in the often futile search for lexical equivalents in the Japanese-English dictionary. The practices identified by Sakurai (2015), in which teachers direct students to consult dictionaries to ascertain the meaning of words, and create word lists, presuppose an assumption of lexical equivalence.

WORDS AS GENERALIZATIONS

Wittgenstein (1981, no. 135, as cited in Shotter, 2008, p. 1) explains that it is the flow of discourse that supplies the meanings of individual words: “Conversation flows on, the application and interpretation of words, and only in its course do words have their meaning.” Similarly Gee (1990) stresses the contextual importance of individual words: “Words have no meaning in and of themselves and by themselves apart from other words” (p.101). A limitation of the reliance on dictionaries is the fluid and changing nature of word meanings. Vygotsky (2012) and Bakhtin (Danow, 1991) elaborate on the dynamic nature of the meanings of individual words:

“A word does not refer to a single object, but to a group or a class of objects. Each word is therefore already a generalization. Generalization is a verbal act of thought and reflects reality in quite another way than sensation and perception reflect it.”
(Vygotsky, 2012, p.6)

“There inheres in both the word and its corresponding object an infinitely open-ended series of meanings, affording, with each contextual usage, a potentially new sense.” (Danow, 1991, p.32-33)

The notions of partial (non) equivalence (Pavlenko, 2009) and of the fluid and dynamic potential meanings of words (Gee, 1990; Vygotsky, 2012; Danow, 1991), also referred to as the “polysemy problem” by Aitchison (2012, p.171), do not receive adequate attention in the presentation of vocabulary in Japan. Accordingly, students sometimes assume that a Japanese word has an English equivalent, to the extent that they faithfully consult their Japanese-English dictionaries, rather than elicit the words’ intended meanings through dialogue with their interlocutors. More attention to the process of inferring meaning, and a heightened awareness of the role of context in retrieving meaning, are recommended.

Future directions

The preponderance of translation exercises of lexical items and individual sentences in teaching materials may encourage the belief that expressions in different languages may be neutrally transferred between them. Alternative methods of teaching reading and listening need to be provided in order for students to be given the opportunity to allow the true voice of texts to penetrate their thinking.

Students need to be introduced to the notion of acquiring vocabulary from multiple encounters in context, rather than relying on educational materials and practices that suggest translation equivalents found in dictionaries are the most accurate means of identifying the meaning of words. Students' attention should be directed away from a narrow focus on the translation equivalents in the dictionary, to a global understanding of discourse in meaningful contexts.

Because of the inefficiency of processing vocabulary through the arduous process of looking up individual lexical items in a dictionary, it is suggested that students learn how to invoke one of the processes identified in higher order thinking skills, inferring. Inferring is listed under the Bloom's taxonomy of higher levels of thinking under 'Analysis' (Davidson & Decker, 2006, p. 13), In Anderson & Krathwohl's (2001) revision of Bloom's taxonomy, inferring is referred to as a cognitive process, and is defined as "drawing a logical conclusion from presented information" (p. 67). Wiggins & McTighe (2004, as cited in Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2014, p. 100) provide a list of "Performance Verbs Associated With the Six Facets of Understanding" (p.100), and list the verb "infer" under the category of "Perspective". This notion concerns the ability to see the "big picture" (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011, as cited in Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2014, p. 98). Accordingly, the process of inferring is recommended by a wide range of

scholars of higher level thinking skills, as well as the applied linguists and other scholars noted earlier.

Students can be advised to extend their L2 English vocabulary by practices such as extensive reading, practised as a form of flipped learning. Numerous encounters with vocabulary in the context can be accessed through extensive reading as homework, participation in university English-language spaces, and the classroom. If the exposure to vocabulary is extensive, students will encounter the vocabulary in multiple contexts, and learn to appreciate the nuances of meaning vocabulary acquire in varied contexts.

A cognitive perspective on second language acquisition suggests that knowledge for speaking and understanding is a skill that can be practised until it becomes automatic (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 108-109). Hattie and Yates (2015) explain the process of the development of automaticity of skills. Initially, the learner focuses attention on the acquisition of the skill, and after repeated practice it becomes automatic. The application of higher order thinking skills, and in particular, inferring, can be used as a means of reaching the goal of automatic processing.

According to sociocultural theory, the act of thinking is mediated by the processes of speaking and writing; speaking and thinking are interdependent. Social activity provides the

stimulus to the reorganization of knowledge (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p.118-119). If this theory were applied to the learning of vocabulary, it would imply that scaffolding of vocabulary acquisition by a competent interlocutor, in a range of meaningful contexts, could aid vocabulary acquisition. Output is a means of refining thinking, and therefore, if students hypothesize how to apply vocabulary in the course of social interaction, they can obtain the necessary feedback to be able to use the vocabulary with increasing accuracy.

Concluding Remarks

This discussion urges teachers and learners to broaden their approach to the task of learning second language vocabulary. The application of one of the subsets of higher order thinking skills, inferring, is recommended as a means enriching vocabulary learning. Currently students tend to assume lexical equivalence in their first and second languages. Rather than always consulting a dictionary to search for an assumed lexical equivalent for an L1 Japanese word, students would be well advised to make inferences from the usages of the words of their interlocutors, and to test the usages of these words, in social interaction.

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Measuring the unobservable: A Framework for Fostering Critical Thinking in EFL Education

ROEHL SYBING
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS-AMHERST

Abstract: The discussions regarding the importance of critical thinking in language education should prompt educators to consider how to frame a pathway for learners to exhibit critical thinking in the classroom. This paper proposes a framework that synthesizes theories in the academic literature regarding critical thinking dispositions, distinctions between forms of inquiry, and commodification of language. The synthesis will be applied to the Japanese EFL context, providing possible implications for language educators to consider.

Introduction

Alan Maley is famous for asserting that it is difficult to measure learning, since no one, let alone an educator, can observe what is happening inside the minds of learners (2003). The very term critical thinking suggests a concept that cannot be observed, and yet the growing interest in tying critical thinking to language education as an element of fluency makes it necessary for academics and practitioners to seek consensus on a more detailed theoretical framework for producing critical thinkers in language learning. This challenge, as daunting as it seems, is made more complex by the cultural divides that may exist between language educator and learner, with all the potentially different belief systems and approaches to learning that each bring to the classroom.

What follows is a treatment of the three main aspects of a proposed framework – (1) dispositions, or characteristics or behaviors seen as necessary to critical thinking, (2) chronotopes, or representations of time and space that define frames of thinking and inquiry, and (3) commodification of language, which are given value akin to material commodities in order to motivate learners between chronotopes and toward dispositions. Finally, using Japanese education in English as a foreign language (EFL), a discussion of the required synthesis of these three aspects will aim to suggest

useful implications for language educators to consider in fostering critical thinking associated with language acquisition. The discussion presented in this paper is not intended to provide any sense of empiricism that makes critical thinking observable, but to highlight a roadmap of sorts, detailing pathways toward and obstacles in the way of critical thinking skills in the context of language education.

Critical thinking dispositions

Critical thinking is arguably a process-oriented concept, as opposed to a result-oriented concept. In other words, to an educator interested in fostering critical thinking skills among their learners, the final product is not as important as the exercise of critical thinking itself. As Ennis (1994) notes, a person who exercises critical thinking takes various perspectives into consideration and clarifies the meaning of expressed opinions, among other dispositions. These dispositions, which are similar to skills in that they could be something that a person is able to do, but can also involve characteristics or behaviors that a person can have. Dispositions that are indicative of critical thinking cannot reliably produce the same resulting opinions among different people who may arguably demonstrate (or at least possess) such dispositions. Thus is the nature of fostering critical thinking made more complicated.

Table 1 is a partial reproduction of a list of critical thinking dispositions addressed by Ennis. Dispositions are divided into three categories, with the first two shown in Table 1. A third category deals with the “auxiliary” disposition of caring about and empathizing with people, an important quality for any person to have, but also one that falls outside the direct purview of this paper.

- Ideal critical thinkers are disposed to
1. Care that their beliefs be true, and that their decisions be justified; that is, care to "get it right" to the extent possible; including to
 - a. Seek alternative hypotheses, explanations, conclusions, plans, sources, etc.; and be open to them
 - b. Consider seriously other points of view than their own
 - c. Try to be well informed
 - d. Endorse a position to the extent that, but only to the extent that, it is justified by the information that is available
 - e. Use their critical thinking abilities
 2. Care to understand and present a position honestly and clearly, theirs as well as others'; including to
 - a. Discover and listen to others' view and reasons
 - b. Be clear about the intended meaning of what is said, written, or otherwise communicated, seeking as much precision as the situation requires
 - c. Determine, and maintain focus on, the conclusion or question
 - d. Seek and offer reasons
 - e. Take into account the total situation
 - f. Be reflectively aware of their own basic beliefs

Table 1 – Partial reproduction of Ennis’ critical thinking dispositions (2011).

Chronotopes

Conceptualizing critical thinking as a series of dispositions is a useful way to perceive the terminal goals associated with fostering critical thinking skills among learners. However, a discussion of dispositions, while providing specific and meaningful criteria that defines critical thinking, is still overly simplistic. The presentation of a list of dispositions gives the suggestion that each disposition is of equal value to and is as easily attainable as every other disposition. Moreover, in the view of one observing a critical thinker, not all dispositions are easily observable in any given situation. Missing in Ennis' discussion is a process through which a learner becomes a critical thinker. To do so, it is important to highlight the different approaches to thinking that are critical to varying extents.

Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005) reference the Bakhtinian (1981) chronotope, which can be defined as a way of thinking that a particular time and space (hence the term) require or elicit. Four particular chronotopes presented in their discussion were intended to serve as lenses for various forms of qualitative inquiry in research, but they can also serve as a useful element in this framework to provide definition to the possible thinking processes of language learners. They are illustrated and detailed in Figure 1.



Figure 1 - Reproduction of Kamberelis' and Dimitriadis' chronotopes of qualitative inquiry (2005, p. 28).

To summarize the treatise visualized in Figure 1, knowledge can be acquired and processed in different ways depending on the chronotope that is being used. Knowledge can be taken "at face value," without the need for a larger context, or it can be interpreted and analyzed within a larger collective of forces for its social construction and subsequent truth value. In communication, to move across chronotopes is to shift emphasis from meaning exclusively derived from specific utterances toward an approach that takes into

account the speakers and the larger environment within which those utterances occur.

In the context of language learning, one can, for example, consider a phrase such as “America is the greatest country in the world.” A language learner can look at this statement in any of several ways, indicating a particular chronotope within which that learner operates:

- Chronotope I: simple meaning extraction through grammar translation; what is the greatest country in the world, according to the reading?
- Chronotope II: surface-level inferences; what other countries would NOT be considered the greatest country in the world?
- Chronotope III: skepticism and consideration of context; who might disagree with this statement, and in what ways might it be considered true or false?
- Chronotope IV: examination of power relations in expression; what forces might compel or encourage a particular person to make this statement?

Chronotope I inquiry is fairly straightforward – the answer that one gives to such an objective question is either right

or wrong. On the other hand, the questions posed within Chronotope IV deal with potentially lengthy discussions of power dynamics and historical context. One can argue that when an American utters the statement “America is the greatest country in the world,” that speaker is acting on knowledge bases and belief systems that are vastly different that a speaker of a different nationality might have. As such, if, for example, a Chinese speaker were to utter the same statement, the reasons that it was uttered would likely be different. A simple translation or extraction of meaning is insufficient to explore the full depth of the utterance because it ignores knowledge that is not directly visible in the text.

This is not to say that there is no useful purpose to posing questions within a Chronotope I or II approach, as one would be less likely to ably discuss the questions in the other chronotopes without at least a surface understanding of the meaning being expressed. Moreover, the framework of chronotopes is not meant to be strictly hierarchical; in other words, there is a mutual relationship among the approaches between chronotopes. This is apparent when, for example, new vernacular has been shown to be formed from features found in common in mass media (Spitulnik, 1997). In Spitulnik’s study, users of slang derived from what is heard through radio do not have to be aware of its origins or the power dynamics involved in order to understand its meaning. Knowledge that requires surface interpretation

is thus informed by processes involving deeper contextual understanding, just as contextual understanding is informed by objective meaning extraction.

What is important in this discussion is that, while the framework of chronotopes provides a graded progression toward critical thinking, there is importance in being able to exercise proficiency within any given chronotope, even one that requires simple meaning extraction or decontextualized interpretation. Without the definition of these chronotopes, an observer of language learners might be likely to adopt a deficit model, determining that language learners who don't employ skills necessary for engaging in inquiry characteristic of Chronotopes III or IV are not thinking at all.

It is important for educators to be able to perceive the wider array of approaches provided by this framework of chronotopes in their learners and, of course, in their own practice. Ultimately, for a critical thinker to engage in the various dispositions defined by Ennis, one should be able to approach knowledge from all four chronotopes. Yet the question of how to move language learners into and out of each chronotope remains; another layer to this discussion is thus required.

Materiality and commodification

The third layer to this framework involves the question of how to guide and, more importantly, encourage learners along the process provided by the discussion on chronotopes to better achieve critical thinking. After all, just because someone is aware of a path does not mean they will take it. The adage about leading a horse to water is apt, and directs us to question what can motivate language learners to take a particular approach to language learning that we might recommend.

Shankar and Cavanagh (2012) speak to the concept of materiality and commodification of what people, at first glance, might consider non-material concepts, such as language. In turn, because such concepts can be “materialized,” they can be given a value, as material things such as food and clothing are similarly given a value. Their treatise on language in the context of global capitalism, for example, focuses on populist movements such as the Tahrir Square revolution in Egypt and Occupy Wall Street in the United States. Participants in those movements relied on certain aspects of language to deliver their message among fellow participants and to their larger audiences. In the latter example, the term “99%” has since become commodified by popular culture; those who use the term and other language that springs from the movement are likely to find favor with

other like-minded populists. In other words, in the view of the language user, such language brings value to those who attain it.

The useful takeaway from the discussion of materiality and commodification is that intrinsic motivation among language learners can be defined in discrete terms. The goal of gaining the ability to speak a foreign language is a large and ambiguous thing. Setting a goal to allow students to be able to express opinions is more specific and more easily attainable. Most importantly, if features of language necessary to form opinions (e.g. “I think...” or “In my opinion...”) can be shown as valuable to language learners, a case can be made that learners would be more likely to want to acquire those features.

The Japanese EFL context

In the Japanese context, English brings value to its learners, but in ways that may fall outside the obvious expectations of language educators. It is apparent to educators that English proficiency provides its users with greater access to the outside world, but certain assertions in the literature has indicated that Japanese learners of English may also see a value in acquiring aspects of English with respect to gaining favor with other Japanese. One guidebook for English-speaking tourists visiting Japan asserts that Japanese

people gain prestige among their peers when they are “seen conversing fluently with a foreigner. Even a brief conversation, if successful, will make them very happy” (Fujishima, 1994, p. 82). Moreover, Furukawa (2015) highlights a phenomenon in Japanese popular media in which English is “stylized,” or exaggerated by television personalities to sound more like English (at least in the perceptions of television audiences), with the intent of presenting English as cool or trendy in the public sphere.

One particular anecdote from Nagatomo’s (2016) research documenting native-speaking English teachers in Japan can also highlight the disparity in beliefs from the perspective of native-speaking English teachers. In that research, one particular interview subject, a native-speaking English teacher in Japanese junior high schools detailed a situation in which students would ask her simple questions such as whether she liked sports or ate Japanese food. The account of these experiences paints the language learning experience in Japan as simplistic and superficial, with the teacher being thought of as their token foreigner. In this case, the students appear to value the interaction, however simple, with the teacher, and the vocabulary they use to ensure that interaction. On the other hand, this appears to be in contrast to other sorts of interactions, unnamed in Nagatomo’s research, that might be seen as more substantive. What is important here is to highlight that, as with material

things, elements of language can be commodified (or not) in different ways by different people and, in this case, by different cultures. As a result, when we, as language teachers, encounter the dreaded language gap that shows our learners as struggling, we should first consider whether it is because of different values that lead to expressions of language that we do not consider standard or fluent. How to address this in the context of critical thinking is the next topic in this paper.

Practical implications

Ochs and Schieffelin (2011) establish the notion of experts socializing novices in the codes and norms of the community in which both participate. They also assert that novices bring with them knowledge that is not “ratified” by experts, feeding into the power dynamic that makes novices “novices.” In establishing this, Ochs and Schieffelin emphasize that novices, our language learners, are not “deficient” in knowledge but, rather, bring to the learning environment different knowledge that requires negotiation with the knowledge we as educators aim to transfer. We should keep this concept in mind and consider that, if there is a learning gap among learners with respect to the development of critical thinking skills, it may likely not be attributable to a learning deficiency, but to a disparity in the knowledge bases of both student and teacher, and an asymmetrical power dynamic that privileges the teacher.

The discussion regarding differences in knowledge bases should prompt us to consider whether “struggling” learners who approach activities aimed at fostering critical thinking skills are merely unaware of the dispositions that they are expected to display or the sorts of inquiry that they are expected to undertake. Even if learners are aware of such concepts, Ochs and Schieffelin further assert that novices in the process of socialization may face moral conflict in negotiating between familiar and unfamiliar norms. In such cases, it is important to emphasize the value of critical thinking skills and the language structures that may be associated with them, hence the discussion on language materiality and commodification. A process that synthesizes all of these discussions is thus necessary.

Figure 2 proposes a straightforward, if simplified, pathway for educators to consider to encourage language learners to engage in critical thinking.

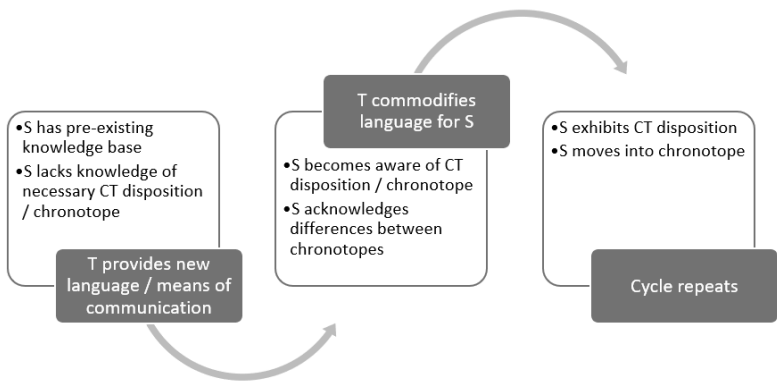


Figure 2 - Proposed pathway to fostering critical thinking dispositions.

Suppose that we return to the statement “America is the greatest country in the world,” and we were to find that a learner were focused solely on simple translation and surface comprehension of the statement. In this case, one objective of the language teacher would be to provide activities that encourage the learner to focus on Ennis’ dispositions in which a critical thinker forms supporting reasons for the statement given the full context of the statement. This would be in keeping with at least two of Ennis’ dispositions. A language teacher tasked with designing activities for this objective might ask a learner to seek out resources on the Internet that might support and give context to such a statement.

The academic literature has placed much stock in the need to raise awareness in learners of concepts to which, because of their unfamiliarity with foreign languages, they may have not given sufficient attention (e.g. Miyagi, Sato, & Crump, 2009, for awareness-raising as a key aspect in promoting various linguistic varieties in English). In this case, a language teacher would be responsible for raising awareness of language structures that explain cause and effect (e.g., “America is the greatest country in the world because it has the largest economy” – one can further argue the validity of this statement, but the point here is to highlight how cause and effect can be expressed). However, that language teacher should also take other considerations into account; is that learner, for example, more interested in translation than in

critical thinking for a specific reason, even if that learner is aware that other types of inquiry are required?

In acknowledging that a student might value something besides critical thinking skills – in this case, the heavy emphasis on grammar translation in Japanese EFL classrooms (Nishino & Watanabe, 2008) – we must reflect on how we can not only raise learners' awareness of critical thinking skills, but also the intrinsic importance of their usage. Language teachers in Japan acknowledge anecdotally the value that Japanese schooling places on grammar translation and university entrance exams. Rapley (2010), for example, presents survey data in which Japanese junior high school students expressed various desires for learning English, the ability to pass entrance exams being the greatest desire, hence the assertion that Japanese students of English may likely place an outsized value on grammar translation. Rapley's other finding notes that a narrow majority that was surveyed agreed that English speaking was important for their future. In this respect, there is potential to commodify English discussion skills and the structures necessary to engage in discussion. The ability to express ideas such as cause and effect is important to discussion in any language, let alone English, and it is left to the teacher to not only teach those structures, but to underscore the importance it brings to students who have the goal of building their speaking skills.

As language educators aim to foster critical thinking skills in their learners, they should reflect upon their learners by asking the following questions:

1. What chronotopes are apparent in the thinking processes exhibited by their language learners?
2. As a result, what critical thinking dispositions are apparent or are likely to be exhibited by their language learners?
3. With respect to what dispositions are not present, through what aspects of language or communication can the required dispositions or chronotopes be commodified?
4. What are the differences in which the educator and their learners value language and communication?

Conclusion

Buzzwords like critical thinking tend to simplify the overarching concepts they seek to define, and thus frame its acquisition in a binary manner – in this case, either one has acquired the skills to become a critical thinker, or they haven't. This oversimplification ignores the contextual and cultural rationales that interfere with fostering critical

thinking. Moreover, by presenting a binary distinction, it tends to gloss over the different levels of emerging critical thinking skills that language learners develop over time.

The discussion provided in this paper has attempted to at least outline the importance of a more methodical approach to building critical thinking skills in language learners, as well as the means to more concretely reflect on the progress achieved in fostering those skills. It is true that it is ultimately impossible to observe the unobservable – in this case, whether language learners are thinking critically. However, if ensuring critical thinking skills among language learners is a terminal goal of educators, it is important that the literature fosters a discussion aimed at devising a more reliable way of inferring their presence.

Most importantly, perceiving that which is unobservable requires us to reflect on whether we are framing our inquiry in terms that are conscientious of what learners bring to the classroom. To frame critical thinking as a binary concept erases the potential contributions of learners and narrows the standard of critical thinking to that which matches our ratified worldview. In negotiating our learners' knowledge base with ours, from our position as language teachers, we might discover expanded and more attainable opportunities to foster critical thinking in the language classroom.

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Expanding the Textbook: Group Projects for Promoting Critical Thinking

JENNIE ROLOFF ROTHMAN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE, KANDA UNIVERSITY OF
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Abstract: Critical thinking is becoming popular throughout English education in Japan. Often teachers desire to help students become critical thinkers, yet lack a framework for implementing it. Furthermore, some are prevented from doing so by textbook requirements or the time to prepare materials. Textbook expansion projects are one way to do this without putting a heavy burden on teachers to create materials. This paper argues for the use of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) as pedagogy to promote critical thinking in the second language classroom, specifically through group projects designed to expand upon textbook content. It introduces this activity by sharing an example group project for high-intermediate first year university students which required students to connect key vocabulary or concepts in their textbook to other concepts as a way of developing critical thinking skills. This article closes with ideas for expanding assigned material into projects at the high school or junior high school levels. This article aims to show readers how they can adapt their own materials to achieve the goal of developing critical thinking abilities in their students.

Introduction

In an ideal world, every educator would have the time, resources and motivation to create their own materials so they could impart the desired knowledge to their students. Reality often exists somewhere on a spectrum of all three of these factors, which leads many to using textbooks. Some have the motivation, but lack the resources or time, while others may have the resources (read money), but do not have the motivation. Still others may desire the freedom to create their own materials, but are restricted by their context, for example, through the use of required textbooks.. It is precisely a shift into such an environment that led me to see this particular project as a way of putting my individual stamp on the content and developing students' critical thinking abilities. My hope is that the project approach introduced here will provide some inspiration to others, with students at any level, looking to inject some variety into a textbook-driven curriculum, but who may lack the time, resources or ideas to do so.

Efficacy of Critical Thinking & Group Projects in Second Language Classrooms

More and more curricula are placing a high premium on the development and fostering of critical thinking skills. Furthermore, within the Japanese context, there is increased

pressure for English language classrooms as all levels to foster internationalization and global citizenship (MEXT, 2017). The challenge is in teaching students to think without undermining or sacrificing the goal of English language acquisition. Group projects can be a great way to extend topics from textbooks and give student motivation levels a real boost. However, simply having students research something related to class content fails to truly promote critical thinking or present an intellectual challenge to the students. It does not draw on the understanding of assigned texts, but rather simply asks students to regurgitate information or demonstrate their understanding of concepts, both of which are lower-order thinking skills (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

A more effective project would be one in which students are pushed to go further cognitively that draws upon higher-order thinking, such as application, analysis or evaluation to complete the task as well as the lower-order skills in addition to adhering to Vygotskian socio-cognitive theory (Aimin, 2013) and supporting the idea that “knowledge is essentially a socially justified belief,” (Carson & Nelson, 1994). Rather than have students simply introduce new information, they should work together to select a topic which they have determined to be connected to or examples of concepts introduced in the assigned texts. After this, they prepare and give a presentation demonstrating how

it relates to the assigned material. This is critical thinking because it requires students to “consider [an] issue from various perspectives, to look at and challenge any possible assumptions that may underlie the issue and to explore its possible alternatives,” (Halvorsen, 2005).

The primary goal should be application of learned concepts and therefore, even if there are errors in the presentation of information, the content is clearly applied, explained and understood. Furthermore, by finding examples of content in other real-world contexts, students must combine their interpretations of the content with the meaning of the author’s ideas, rather than simply mimic the information they have consumed. The following explanation shows one way to do this, as well as provide other possible applications of the same approach.

In 2001, Anderson and Krathwohl updated Bloom’s (1956) original taxonomy by reorganizing and renaming its lower and higher order thinking skills. The original lower order skills of knowledge and comprehension were updated to remembering and understanding, respectively while the original higher order skills of synthesis and evaluation were switched so that synthesis, now renamed to creating, was at the top. Creating was considered to be more inclusive of thinking that went beyond tying ideas together through synthesis. Most notably, however, was the re-identification

of all six of the skills as verbs rather than nouns to illustrate the dynamic, activity of thinking. The lower order skills now comprised remembering, understanding, and applying while the higher order skills were now analyzing, evaluating and creating (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). For my classroom, this updated taxonomy and related visuals found on the internet have proven most helpful for classroom activity design (Figure 1, Figure 2). It allows for clear visualization of the thinking skills with a variety of verbs that allow teachers to quickly identify what they are including or omitting in a particular activity or project.

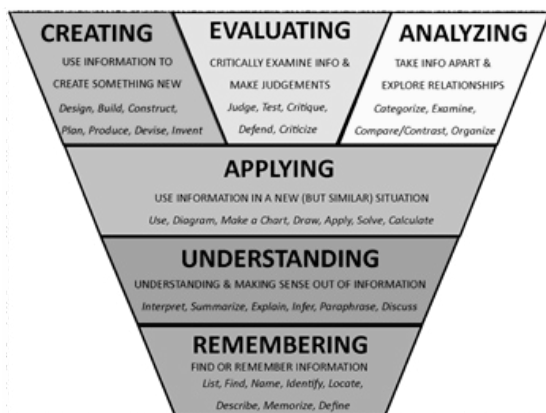


Fig. 1. Bloom's Revised Taxonomy Visualized with Verbs

Bloom's Taxonomy (Revised)

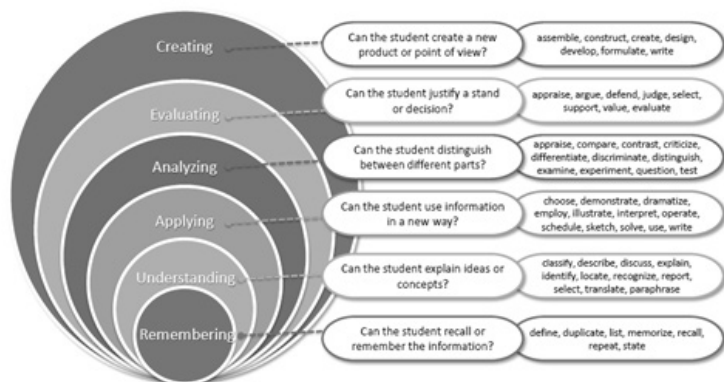


Fig. 2 Ray Hightower's Chart for Bloom's Revised Taxonomy

Group Project Implementation

The following is a detailed description of a project implemented with 22 high-intermediate freshmen in a required academic reading and writing course at a Japanese liberal arts university. Following this description will be several suggestions for application of this structure to simpler content of more relevance to educators teaching students with lower English language ability levels or of younger age.

Toward the end of the academic year, these freshmen students were assigned texts built around the theme of future studies. Two articles were assigned, one focusing on

environmentalism and economics and the other focusing on technology visions of the future. Otto Scharmer's (2013) article argued for the need for economies to undergo "a deeper shift [from in consciousness so that we begin to care and act, not just for ourselves and other stakeholders but in the interests of the entire ecosystem in which economic activities take place." By possessing an open mind, heart, and will, humanity can collectively identify issues, inspire one another and develop solutions. Warren Wagar's (1989) text, adapted for the in-house textbook of the university, predicts three futures for the world, beginning with techno-capitalism, counterculture socialism, and eventually an environmental utopia that no longer requires centralized economies or governing systems. Of particular interest with Wagar's piece is that the publication date puts his first future of techno-capitalism as happening in the early 21st century. Both of these texts easily lend themselves to application of Bloom's revised taxonomy through group projects. After reading both articles, students were put into group of two to four, asked to research a topic and then demonstrate its connection to the terms and concepts from the original texts through a brief group presentation including slides. Examples could include showing how Wagar's predictions were in/correct or explain how terms are present in technological development or instead demonstrate evidence of action on or solutions to environmental issues like those called for by Scharmer.

Over the course of two weeks, students spent approximately four 70-min. class periods researching and preparing for the 10-15 min. final presentations. The last week of classes was dedicated to presentation sharing, though it usually finishes in two full class periods. Final student presentations included a wide variety of topics, ranging from responses to climate change (sea walls, animal preservation, water wars) to cutting edge technology (stem/stap cell development, artificial intelligence, smart chips in contact lenses). Each group effectively demonstrated critical thinking by linking the texts to their examples.

How does this explicitly promote critical thinking, you ask? All six levels of Bloom's revised taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) can be easily applied to this activity (verbs italicized for emphasis) (Figure 1). This assignment requires that students remember and be able to fully understand the texts and concepts to begin their research. They are not able to find what they want if they cannot recognize the core concepts in other contexts. Furthermore, understanding requires that students be able to summarize and explain key ideas in their own words. They are applying concepts from the original text by looking for examples of it elsewhere as well as making sure they are able to explain how they are examples (understanding). It also shows how their presented information was an application of said concepts. Identifying examples also demands that students analyze and evaluate

how actions can be considered examples of concepts. It is crucial that they effectively compare their research against the texts and explore if or how their topic illustrates textual elements. The presentation of this information also requires evaluation because they need to justify their decision to their audience. Finally, the presentation itself asks students to plan and create new content for their classmates to consume, all of which is predicated on the five lower orders below it. This application of the taxonomy works easily for any level student or learner, irrespective of content because the text moderates the level and the language itself can be adapted to wherever is appropriate given student needs.

Discussion

As stated earlier, the example laid out in this article was from a university classroom at a relatively high level (as evidenced by the texts used) in comparison to what many language educators in Japan might encounter. That being said, this project structure has also been tried in a different university's low-intermediate level classrooms as well as that of a high school oral communication course. Furthermore, the projects need not require students use all six levels of thinking, but instead focus on two or three. In an academic reading course, intensive reading textbook content on gender stereotypes and roles in fairy tales was extrapolated into students rewriting fairy tales of their choice in a manner

that reversal traditional gender expectations. Following this, they gave poster presentations outlining the changes they made, the reasons for those choices, and how they challenged traditional expectations. In another project, the same students expanded on a unit about counterculture groups in society by researching such groups in Japan and explaining how they fulfilled the categories of counterculture behavior and groups according to the textbook content. In a high school classroom, after textbook content introduced a Japanese doctor building and working in an NPO in Afghanistan, students researched Japan-based NPOs and presented on them recycling the vocabulary and grammar from the textbook in their explanations. This project provided them with an authentic context in which to transfer the knowledge from their textbook they might otherwise only have studied passively. Another text included a Malaysian homestay student talking about the traditional food, nasi goreng. This could easily be expanded into a project in which students are assigned a country or region and must find a food in that area using the same or similar ingredients. They could then compare and contrast that food with Japanese food. Further still, the popular topics of Mother Teresa or Martin Luther King, Jr. in textbooks could springboard into projects on non-violent resisters such as Gandhi, Aung San Suu Kyi, etc. Connecting biographical texts with others allows for comparison and contrast of beliefs or circumstances. Having students take the base content concepts and to apply them to

similar examples or circumstances is what pushes students out of lower-order thinking skills and into the higher-order analysis, evaluation, and creation of new content to share with their classmates.

Level	Verbs for Instructions	Question Stems
Creating <i>Use information to create something new</i>	Change, combine, compose, construct, create, design, find an unusual way, formulate, generate, invent, originate, plan, predict, pretend, produce, rearrange, rebuild, reconstruct, reorganize	-What can you predict/infer from ~? -What ideas can you add to~? -How would you create/design a new ~? -What solutions would you suggest for ~? -What might happen if you combined ~ with ~?
Evaluating <i>Critically examine info & make judgments</i>	Appraise, choose, compare, conclude, decide, defend, evaluate, give your opinion, judge, justify, prioritize, rank, rate, select, support, value	-Do you agree that ~? Explain. -What do you think about ~? -What is most important? -Prioritize ~ according to ~. -How would you decide about ~? -What criteria would you use to assess/determine ~?
Analyzing <i>Take info apart & explore relationships</i>	Analyze, categorize, classify, compare, contrast, debate, deduct, diagram, differentiate, dissect, distinguish, examine, infer, specify	-What are the parts or features of ~? -Classify ~ according to ~. -Outline/diagram/map ~. -How does ~ compare/contrast with ~? -What evidence can you present for ~?
Applying <i>Use information in a new (but similar) situation</i>	Apply, conclude, construct, demonstrate, determine, draw, find out, give an example, illustrate, make, operate, show, solve, state a rule or principle, use	-How is ~ an example of ~? -How is ~ related to ~? -Why is ~ significant? -Do you know of another instance where ~? -Could this have happened in ~?
Understanding <i>Understanding & making sense out of information</i>	Convert, describe, explain, interpret, paraphrase, put in order, restate, retell in your own words, rewrite, summarize, trace, translate	-Retell ~ in your own words. -What is the main idea of ~? -What differences exist between ~ and ~? -Can you write a brief outline?
Remembering <i>Find or remember information</i>	Define, fill in the blank, identify, label, list, match, memorize, name, recall, state, tell, underline	-Who ~? -What ~? -Where ~? -When ~? -How ~? -Describe ~? -What is ~?

Table 1. Bloom's Revised Taxonomy Verbs with Verbs & Question Stems

Conclusion

The possibilities for textbook content-inspired projects are endless and nowhere near as difficult as teachers may think. Many of the activities and questions being asked in

your classrooms may already be promoting critical thinking. Review what is already there and see what can be done with it (Table 1). Having a clear frame through which to think about materials can save teachers time and energy while providing peace of mind that they are doing more than simply regurgitating the textbook themselves. The table above, along with the figures introduced previously, provides a way to easily self-evaluate what your activities and projects are achieving. The next time you find yourself staring at a textbook unit wishing for inspiration, take a moment and see if it can be expanded in a meaningful way for critical thinking development.

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Appendix

Figure 1 - SOURCE: LSA Instructional Support Services.
(2017). History and development of Bloom's taxonomy.
College of Literature, Science and the Arts, University of
Michigan

Figure 2 - SOURCE: Hightower, R. (2015, March
20). Bloom's taxonomy for learning. Rayhigtower.
com. Retrieved from [http://rayhigtower.com/
blog/2015/03/20/blooms-taxonomy-for-learning/](http://rayhigtower.com/blog/2015/03/20/blooms-taxonomy-for-learning/)

Table 1 - SOURCE: Modified from SOURCE: LSA Instructional
Support Services. (2017). History and development of
Bloom's taxonomy. College of Literature, Science and the
Arts, University of Michigan & TES.com worksheet

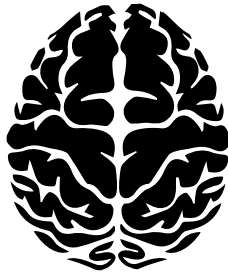


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BEST OF CT SCAN



THIS SECTION IS A PLACE FOR US TO REPRINT SOME OF OUR FAVORITE ARTICLES FROM THE CT SIG'S NEWSLETTER, THE CT SCAN. THIS ISSUE WE ARE ROLLING BACK THE CLOCK TO APRIL OF 2014 WITH AN ARTICLE FROM ANNA HUSSON ISOZAKI ON CRITICAL MEDIA LITERACY.

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Resources and passing the reins: critical media literacy for learner-empowering news media courses

By: Anna Husson Isozaki - Juntendo University, Tokyo
(Revised November, 2017: Originally published in April CT Scan of 2014)

Abstract: Being able to understand English news is challenging, but important for English learners dealing with increasing globalization. Traditional tasks of gaining news-comprehension skills, however, are now complicated by information overload and high speed changes occurring in the media scene itself. Students need strategies to effectively sort through sources and get a reliable understanding of current events. Critical thinking is crucial at every level of their engagement with the news; from access, to discussion, to response and participation. A consistent focus on strategies and critical thinking can provide a solid base for news media courses and this article introduces resources for a semester course bringing learners to independent news accessing and more critical and confident understanding, use, and response to news.

Making sense of news media English is challenging but essential for university and adult English learners who intend to become part of the global English speaking community. In this age of information overload both on and off the internet, it is more difficult than ever to sort through the deluge of information that comes under the label “news” and to make critically informed judgments as to what is relevant, which sources are usually reliable, and which are likely to be misleading or biased; especially when that information is in a second language. Discussing news, also, is a popular intellectual

exercise in many cultures, from brief small talk to in-depth consideration of events. For full participation in global English, learners need the competence to initiate or join in these critical thinking-intensive conversations, as well as to consider whether and when to act on reported news.

These concerns are not limited to Japan or even to second language English learners. Education expert Ken Robinson has said of the American school system in one of his TED talks: “... in place of curiosity what we have is a culture of compliance” (Robinson, TED, 2013). Anywhere there is a dominant “culture of compliance,” there is also reason for concern that critical thinking skills are not being encouraged. Learning to think critically about news media empowers learners and provides a solid foundation for news media and journalism courses that aim to build lifelong skills. Rather than lists of vocabulary and ever-changing acronyms or out-of-date articles, English learners need strategies to successfully track down current news of interest to themselves. They need a set of skills that enable them to get a confident grasp on current events, their backgrounds, and the forces likely to drive the events as they unfold.

This fundamental orientation is not an “academic” point but a matter of practical, daily quality of living and empowered, full citizenship. As journalist David Bornstein and social entrepreneur Susan Davis write:

“The main role of a free press is to provide citizens with the information they need to lead good lives and to help society improve” (Davis 2010, 117)

Courses intended to build media literacy and skills for constructive engagement with news in ways which learners choose based on their interest and desire to participate, rather than constrained by their lack of confidence, can be set on solid foundations if designed to build toward three simple goals: individual empowerment, discussion empowerment, and community empowerment.

Individual empowerment: learners can locate and comprehend news, check for more sources, and understand and judge what they find with reasonable confidence.

Discussion empowerment: learners have the ability and confidence to participate in discussions about news and current events, both sharing their awareness and knowledge of the world, and actively learning from others.

Community and action empowerment: Learners can respond to news of particular concern to them by finding their “issue communities” of others who share similar concerns, and can participate as actively as they choose in solving the problems together.

Critical thinking is an intrinsic thread running through these competencies, weaving together a safety net of well-informed people and communities; something fundamentally necessary for vibrant democracy. The challenges learners face are likely to seem substantial at first, but a student-centered course design with appropriate scaffolding at points of initial difficulty can make navigating those difficulties more manageable for the students and straightforward for instructors. Fortunately, it is now especially (and surprisingly) manageable if the class makes use of the new media tools and resources freely available on the Internet.

An important first step in class is to clarify the definition and process of critical thinking as it applies to following news and current events. In Japan and elsewhere, dictionaries still generally lack workable definitions for the term “critical thinking.” Practical demonstrations can help, and in Japan for example, it can be explained that critical thinking is “NOT *sonno mamma uketotte*” (Not just accepting things at face value), and also “NOT *sonno mamma hitei shite*” (Not just rejecting everything outright).

With news media, concrete examples of critical thinking can be as simple as listening or reading, checking other sources, and deciding for themselves what seems most likely, on balance, to be true. (See appendix A: “Two tricks to ‘click’ critical thinking”).

WE NEED TO SEE OUTSIDE THE BOX, TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

The head of Public Radio International, Alisa Miller, demonstrates in a very short and accessible TED talk the unbalanced view of the world most Americans have due to the abysmally low percentage of international news coverage (12%) in the most popular American news sources: local television news and, Google News (Miller, TED, 2008). A first-year student in Japan responding to Miller's talk wrote: "I watched the TED Talk! I love TED Talks actually. I knew the reality of the U.S. coverage and I thought this could be said also in Japan. So many things that we should know has been happening all over the world and we cannot know them from one coverage. That's true."



Without prompting by the instructor, the student saw a connection between concerns about balance in the U.S. media and counterparts more generally around the world and at

home, and understood the basis of critical thinking with media; looking for more sources, and a wider view.

In class these concerns are addressed on a weekly basis, with students bringing in important world news from various sources. In turn, they share the news in their own words, summarizing in ordinary English the “WH and H” answers they have found (usually all six are not possible). Students save their articles with links, developing “clippings files” for the semester, and note new vocabulary or terms they encountered and want to question. All class members memo down the new terms and simple definitions, naturally developing an extensive current collection of news vocabulary over the duration of a course. The class also discusses the news, and members have the opportunity to add comments, information, or to share their opinions, before moving on together to read either from a textbook or from an article online. Students then proceed to collaborative searching online, either for updates on the textbook topic or on current breaking news, wrapping up with group information sharing and discussion.

RESOURCES BUILDING AUTONOMY AND CRITICAL THINKING

Regarding sources, a hyperlinked “Resources” sheet, frequently updated (see appendix B) can support learners’ getting into the habit of choosing sources consciously, rather than relying on fallbacks like auto-generated and indiscriminate single-line “news” aggregators. The BBC’s learner’s site on

the sheet is an example of a site consciously and thoroughly set up for those studying English news, and Sean Banville's *Breaking News English* is another. Both sites feature articles, audio, vocabulary and resources for teachers, and *Breaking News English* has added several levels of challenge to choose from. Even the leading mainstream news sites online have been making strides in accessibility for English learners through their developments in multimedia: National Public Radio (NPR, based in the U.S.) has archived listening-on-demand via the Internet with transcripts or related articles, and BBC news, CNN and *The New York Times* often have a combination of written articles and supporting video or slideshows. Student feedback and evaluations are strongly positive about having scaffolds to support autonomous confirmation and comprehension, such as subtitles or transcripts like those on the NPR site, and academic research in listening-while-reading supports this observation as well (Chang & Millett, 2014, 2015).

Online also are experiments and new designs in media applications, which lend themselves to new ways of thinking about and evaluating news with a more critically aware perspective. Two highly useful examples are **Newseum** and **Newsmap**. Newseum's site has a "Today's Front Pages" interactive map of newspapers around the world, programmed so that simply clicking on them makes them visible as a full page, and accessing an entire paper is simply a matter of clicking again. Using the map to compare news coverage across geographical

regions instantly makes visible how the same happenings are given different prominence or reporting depending on locale and local needs, pressures, and editorial viewpoints. (<http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/flash/>)

Newsmap also makes visible the importance afforded to different stories, but in this case the size of the graphic representing the article archive indicates how many articles have been published on each news topic, comparable with a simple “mouse-over,” and promoting discussion of the decisions driving the reporting and the judgments involved in assigning relative prominence to different stories. (<http://newsmap.jp/>)

One example of utilizing these new media resources for strengthening critical thinking habits is to have students choose a major news topic and access one international news source, and then another news source that is local to and reporting on the same event (Knapp, J., 2011, appendix C). Comparing and contrasting the news reports found can lead to a number of potentially fruitful questions for students to consider and investigate, such as: “Do the reported facts match or differ?” (They often differ to a startling degree.) “Does the writing appear more objective in one source or another? How so and why?” “Can we check the reputation of each source, for example: are the sources independently run, or state-owned media?” These questions can be expanded into tasks for further collaborative classwork, such as research into media

ownership, or experimentation with fact-checking resources students can access and use (see appendix D: “More extensive sites for teachers”).

Critical thinking merits emphasizing at all levels of classwork, from dealing with a textbook, to news searching and reading, and for discussions and opinion exchanges. Implicit in critical thinking is recognizing and accepting that it is usually impossible to be perfectly certain about news events and that we can only do our best: mutually sharing sources, checking further, and deciding independently. This encourages active participation in discussions and investigations because it creates an environment where all members are free to share information, thoughts, or opinions, and all are expected to take the initiative and personal responsibility to check for other reliable sources to share in return. As an instructor it is a pleasure to observe this back and forth take place in class, with students calling up articles online to show and explain to each other.

TEACHER CONSIDERATIONS IN EVALUATING ONLINE RESOURCES, AND MEDIUMS SUPPORTING USER AUTONOMY

Online news sources are undergoing high-speed transformations in the competitive search for profitability (Rice, 2010; Regan, 2006). Periodic source re-assessment by teachers, and explaining the need for continual re-assessment to students as they gain competence and independence is

another aspect of critical thinking about media. While it has always been important, now, with the rate of change faster than ever, it is even more so.

Ideally, news sources will be committed to accuracy and upholding their own responsible roles in society. Points to consider in evaluating them for this might include if and how consistently they include context and explain the backgrounds of stories in their news reporting, and whether they visibly work to show objectivity by including an appropriate number of voices and viewpoints. (Though it is an advertisement for their own newspaper, *The Guardian* has a short video demonstrating this point effectively in “The Whole Picture”: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_SsccRkLLzU). The value of news sources can also be considered on points such as whether they demonstrate accountability factored into their work, for example, with bylines rather than anonymous writing, and published self-corrections when they have erred.

Over a period of years a reader who pays attention will develop a sense of source reliability and also will notice particular journalists’ names and whether their descriptions of situations, interpretations, or predictions generally turn out to be correct. Anthony Shadid’s career in journalism was so remarkably committed to accuracy and telling the facts on the ground that, although he inconvenienced and displeased a number of governments, his 2012 death reporting from

Syria was widely mourned, even by some representing those governments (Mackey, 2012).

A negative contrast to sources that meet the above criteria are news sites fed by news aggregators, which rely on algorithms and speed (“News aggregator,” 2017) and, analogously to automated computer translating programs, produce “information” in great quantity with such speed they may initially appear useful despite the indiscriminate low quality of their output (Isozaki, 2014). These “headline news” collections, particularly single-line news items, lack context and background to support critical thinking and tend to confuse and distract rather than inform.

Confusion and distraction are also issues, though in different ways, with television news, making online newspaper sources still a first choice for university and adult learners. Online, learners can choose topics related to their own interests and concerns. Pacing is also user-controlled, an aspect of autonomy deeply connected to maintaining motivation in learners making the effort to understand news independently. There is also generally less distraction; while intrusive advertising is undeniably an increasing issue online, television news has commercials, crawlers running along the bottom of the screen, and sometimes background music. Television’s multitasking demands make it difficult to filter and competently process content. In fact, multitasking has been shown to be measurably detrimental for the quality of mental work done in experiments

on English speakers working in their mother tongue (Flatow, 2010, 2013), and teacher, author and trainer Marc Helgesen warns against demanding it of students in an EFL classroom (Helgesen, 2012).

CONNECTING NEWS UNDERSTANDING AND DISCUSSION OF CURRENT EVENTS WITH POTENTIAL FOR PARTICIPATION

Online newspapers offer a great deal for learners, citizens, and particularly learners as global citizens: they tend to publish stories more proactively than television news, posting more usable information faster and enabling active responses by concerned readers (see for example, Ryzik, 2013, “Mine plans put,” para. 15).

Lingua Franca languages, including English, play a useful role in facilitating global discussions and communicating about issues across borders. Critical media literacy is useful for investigating and choosing if and how to respond to news. It is essential that students be able to combine these competencies. For increasing numbers of NGOs, discussing news across borders and responding worldwide is the basis of their organized citizen action. Amnesty International is of course one of the first and most well-known, predating the Internet by many years, and now furthering action online as well (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/wire-magazine/>). Since Jody Williams and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines put newly available mass communication tools to use for worldwide

citizen action (PeaceJam), other organizations have followed suit with increasing sophistication on the Internet, developing online petitions and speeding letter-composition and delivery, as well as strengthening more traditional demonstrations and other activism. For the environment, 350.org (see <http://350.org/>) was founded to coordinate international climate activism online. Avaaz is another NGO taking up a wide variety of progressive issues online since 2007, generating a tremendous membership (see <http://www.avaaz.org/en/>) as well as some controversy about methods and transparency (York, 2012), meriting careful observation.

CONCLUSION

Finally, a word about journalism itself, and journalists. A basic factor in critical thinking about media is considering the source of a report and their motivations; the same is part of the journalist's work. Reporting generally refers to delivering the facts of the present happening, probably answering "who, what, when and where," which depending on the topic may involve varying levels of critical inquiry. High-quality journalism involves more research, going deeper in the process of finding the answers to questions such as "how" and "why." Conscious citizenship acknowledges those who help us get closer to the truth, and values the efforts they make to gather those facts to share with others. In the case of reporting well, it is a public service and, at times, selfless. Some of the most courageous journalists in the world are Japanese, and sadly, Japan has lost a

number in recent years: Kenji Nagai in Burma, Hiro Muramoto in Thailand, and Mika Yamamoto and Kenji Goto in Syria. Their commitment to witness and bring back the truth cost them their lives and their work deserves remembering and recognizing what they lived for. One way that can be approached is by ensuring that our students have the skills they need to find, use, and discuss the best of the world of journalism. The growing numbers of people calling for and creating lively journalism in their own public service, helping to inform, inspire, and create the communities of the future, may be part of their chosen futures as well.

FURTHER INFORMATION

A short collection of articles regarding journalist Anthony Shadid: <http://www.thenation.com/article/167560/road-marjayoun-anthony-shadid#>

<http://www.npr.org/2012/02/17/147031757/a-colleague-remembers-intrepid-storyteller-anthony-shadid>

<http://www.npr.org/2012/02/21/147185227/foreign-policy-rip-anthony-shadid>

http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/02/17/on-twitter-an-outpouring-of-respect-for-shadid/?_r=0

ORGANIZATIONS MENTIONED AND ARTICLE LINKS:

350.org: Retrieved from <http://www.350.org/videos>

Avaaz: Retrieved from <http://www.avaaz.org/en/>

Guardian profile on Avaaz: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/mar/02/avaaz-activist-group-syria> and BBC article: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-17199253>

Blogger posting with concerns about the organization on several fronts: <http://jilliancyork.com/2012/05/29/on-avaaz/>

They have since been taking some steps to answer and show accountability: a new “corrections” section on the website: http://www.avaaz.org/en/commitment_to_accuracy/

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Appendix A

Two Tricks to ‘Click’ Critical Thinking

1. Rachael Ragalye’s dot-kitty

For many of us who undertook a liberal arts education, critical thinking was not so much a skill that we were explicitly taught as it was an implicit part of the classroom experience regardless of the discipline. As such, it can be a challenge to explain what critical thinking is in concrete terms to students who have not experienced teaching based in the Socratic method. I use connect-the-dots as a visual metaphor to explain the concept of critical thinking to my high school seniors.

To begin, I strategically draw a scattering of dots on the board, keeping in mind my final image (in this case a cat face). I then explain that each dot represents something they have heard, read, or experienced: one dot is something they learned in class; another is a news broadcast they heard at home; another is something they experienced. I then begin to connect the dots on the board as I explain that critical thinking can be understood as process of sifting through information and experiences to connect relevant ones together

to form as complete a picture as possible. Ideally I finish explaining just as I have finished making my connect-the-dots cat face, having drawn in eyes, a nose, and a mouth for effect. Of course, not all the dots I originally drew have made it into the finished product. I explain that critical thinking is also the process of evaluating information for both quality and relevancy to illustrate what I meant by “sifting” through information to link relevant pieces together.

—Rachael Ragalye Takasaki Chuo Secondary School

2. “It’s snowing!”

When introducing the term “critical thinking” and getting blank looks, I often suddenly say something surprising about the weather, for example: “Oh, my gosh it’s —ing!” and the students who quickly look out the window to check, I praise: “Thanks!” and explain that, in the simplest way, they have just demonstrated for all of us what critical thinking is. It’s being awake, active, thinking, checking, and deciding for themselves.

—AI

Appendix B

Resources and News sources for Media English:

What's new in the world?

Newseum

www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/flash/

The world at a click:

Just put your mouse on a city anywhere in the world and their newspapers pop up...

Double click and the page gets larger....you can "get in" and read the entire paper on many if you click on the link to their website.

This site changes every day with the publication of new editions of the papers.

Newsmap

<http://newsmap.jp/>

This site shows topics color-coded by topic area and sized according to the number of news articles that have been written on the topic. You can click through to the source article itself.

At the top you can also click on various countries and see what their "newsmap" looks like and the different sources, viewpoints and balance of their articles.

Google News

<http://news.google.com/nwshp?hl=en&tab=wn>

Quick and easy but indiscriminate sourcing. You can set genre and country of your choice

LEARNING ENGLISH THROUGH INTERNATIONAL NEWS:

BBC: Learning English

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/witn>

The BBC has excellent sites for helping people learn “news English” and daily life English too – with audio, video, vocab explanations, and even downloads!

Sean Banville’s BREAKING NEWS ENGLISH

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/index.html>

(Thousands of articles, archived.) Some important, some entertaining. Teacher Sean Banville has chosen them and made listening MP3 tracks available at several levels each. He also creates related exercises and quizzes – free, but he would appreciate donations.

HELPFUL TOOLS:

Forvo

<https://forvo.com/search/Tahrir/>

This site has pronunciations for almost any word we input, especially useful for hearing how to pronounce words in the news.

RNN News

<http://rnnnews.jp/>

At this site, vocabulary items are classified according to topics. It will let you print a bilingual list of vocabulary.

Pop Jisyo

http://www.popjisyo.com/WebHint/Portal_e.aspx

This useful tool can be set up for “mouse-over” pop-up definitions while reading

WRITTEN ARTICLES AND AUDIO, VIDEO:

The BBC

<http://www.bbc.com/news/>

National Public Radio

<http://www.npr.org/>

PRI: Public Radio International

<http://www.pri.org/>

CNN – U.S.A.

<http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/>

CBC – Canada

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/>

ABC – Australia

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/world/>

TVNZ – New Zealand

<http://tvnz.co.nz/world-news>

NEWSPAPERS WITH MOSTLY WRITTEN ARTICLES, SOME MULTIMEDIA NOW:

The New York Times – U.S.A.

<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/world/index.html>

The Guardian – U.K.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world>

Al Jazeera – Qatar

<http://english.aljazeera.net/>

The Washington Post – U.S.A.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/world>

The Globe and Mail – Canada

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/>

The Tyee – Canada

<http://thetyee.ca/News/>

The Independent – U.K.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/>

China Daily – China (Note: State Controlled Newspaper)

<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/index.html>

Der Spiegel – Germany

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/>

ENGLISH NEWS IN JAPAN

Asahi Asia and Japan Watch

<http://ajw.asahi.com/>

NHK World

<http://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/>

The Japan News

<http://the-japan-news.com/>

The Mainichi Daily News

<http://mainichi.jp/english/>

News On Japan (Note: multi-sourced / sometimes indiscriminate)

<http://www.newsonjapan.com/>

The Japan Times

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/>

Japan Today

<http://www.japantoday.com/>

EXAMPLE OF CITIZENS TAKING AN ACTIVE RESPONSE TO MEDIA:

The Journalism Wall of Shame:

<http://www.jpquake.info/home>

Global Voices Online

<http://advocacy.globalvoicesonline.org/about/>

SCIENCE, NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT:

Science Daily

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/>

Japan for Sustainability

<http://www.japanfs.org/en/pages/032115.html>

TED Talks

<http://www.ted.com/>

This is not a news site per se, but for learning about developing trends, and getting more in-depth background and commentary on some news, it can be interesting and helpful.

Appendix C

Comparing sources discussion questions

International source:

Local source:

What is the main news story? (who, what, when, where, why, how...?)

What is the focus of each source?

Int'l:

Local

What are some possible reasons for each source's focus?

Int'l:

Local:

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS WITH THIS EXERCISE:

Students find the event/news and choose two sources reporting on the same happening. One is an international source, one is local to the event/news.

If working independently, students SAVE the original articles and bring them to class as well as this sheet (so the instructor can confirm points of the student's homework).

The limited space on the worksheet is to strongly encourage development of summary and consolidation skills and to reinforce the instructions that these be in the student's own words.

Proposing answers for "focus" and "reasons" questions can be done with partners, or in group discussion, or alone as students develop skill and confidence. Initially it is crucial for the instructor to emphasize that the students are not expected to come up with any single or "correct" answers to these - there may indeed be no way to know these answers with certainty. Considering the questions and sharing possibilities is the goal.

Appendix D

More extensive sites for teachers of media English:

This collection may be useful for teachers but might overwhelm students. Also included here are very new sites sourced from this rapidly changing scene; therefore corrections, updates, and additions are welcomed with gratitude: anna.h.isoizaki@gmail.com

Alisa Miller: The news about the news

http://www.ted.com/talks/alisa_miller_shares_the_news_about_the_news.html

30-second video advertisement for the Guardian : “Points of View”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_SsccRkLLzU

MEDIA INSIDER NEWS SITES FOR REPORTERS AND JOURNALISM STUDENTS:

Poynter Institute

<https://www.poynter.org/training-events>

PBS

http://www.pbs.org/wnet/expose/expose_2007/blog/carl_prine/

Interesting reports by and on investigative journalist Carl Prine.

Useful for insight into current shoe leather journalism. The site below introduces more links - “how-to” and advice on following Prine’s lead, and links to an investigative reporters’ organization:

Columbia Journalism Review

<http://www.cjr.org/>

Japan noted in this article: An Economic Case for More Women in Global Journalism (5/10/2011) by Justin D. Martin and Dalia Abbas

for “astonishing” lack of women in journalism

http://www.cjr.org/behind_the_news/an_economic_case_for_more_wome.php?page=all

TED talk by Megan Kamerick on why continuing disparity matters

http://www.ted.com/talks/megan_kamerick_women_should_represent_women_in_media.html

Why We Need Women in War Zones by Kim Barker (2/19/2011)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/20/opinion/20barker.html>

SITES BY AND FOR WORKING JOURNALISTS:

Investigative Reporters and Editors:

<http://www.ire.org/about/>

Reporters Without Borders:

<http://en.rsf.org/>

Committee to Protect Journalists:

<http://cpj.org/>

FACT CHECKING:

Fact Check.org

<http://www.factcheck.org/>

Poynter

<https://www.poynter.org/channels/fact-checking>

TED talk on carrying out effective journalism research

(Note: The Markham Nolan talks are advertisements)

http://www.ted.com/talks/markham_nolan_how_to_separate_fact_and_fiction_online.html

Markham Nolan, “How to separate fact and fiction online”

<http://storyful.com/case-studies/case-study-florida-fireball>

Storyful video channels:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/storyful>

RESEARCH LINKS:

NY Times: “Newsroom Navigator”

http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/technology/navigator.html?_r=0

Useful articles on evaluating websites:

<http://irosteveperry.pbworks.com/>

[f/JOURNALISTS+2010+MARCH+16+2010rev.pdf](#)

Is it in a library? Search tool:

<http://www.worldcat.org/>

NON-PROFIT JOURNALISM IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST:

ProPublica

<http://www.propublica.org/>

Compilations on topics like government surveillance:

<http://projects.propublica.org/graphics/nsa-claims>

SOME SITES ON SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AROUND THE WORLD ONLINE:

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/tag/social-entrepreneurship/>

<http://socialearth.org/>

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/socialenterprises>

<http://www.skollfoundation.org/>

WORKING AGAINST CENSORSHIP:

Global Voices Online: bloggers reporting around the world:

<https://globalvoices.org/>

Inside the Firewall: Tracking the News That China Blocks

<https://projects.propublica.org/firewall/>

By Sisi Wei, ProPublica, Dec. 17, 2014 "ProPublica has been testing whether the homepages of international news organizations are accessible to browsers inside China."

Collateral Freedom:

<http://12mars.rsfs.org/2015-en/collateralfreedom-foiling-censorship-in-12-anti-internet-countries-a-modifier/>

Reporters Without Borders are doing something about it: unblocking censored sites for 11 countries.

FOCUS ON SCIENCE, NATURE AND PLANET:

Science Daily

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/>

Japan for Sustainability

<http://www.japanfs.org/en/>

Planet Ark

<http://planetark.org/news/>

INTERNET-USE AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS TO AID TEACHERS:

Forvo.com

<https://ja.forvo.com/search/tahrir/>

Has audio pronunciations available for most words in the news, which can help students build confidence to use the words in discussions

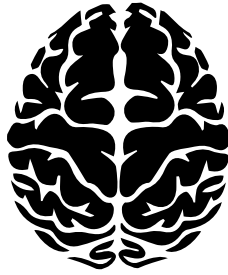
Common Craft – educational videos

<http://www.commoncraft.com/video/protecting-reputations-online>

<http://www.commoncraft.com/>

TIP FOR TED TALKS

TED talks are searchable by topic and inputting “journalism” gives a great number of constantly updated hits.



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