

Developing Critical Thinking Skills along with English Language

“Silence is by no means non-communicative and blank, and likewise verbal communication does not necessarily lead to effective leaning (Ha, 2014, p. 402).”

Matthew Gilles

Thirty sets of eyes stare back in silence as a question settles in the air. *Give it time, they are just thinking. Wait. Don't interrupt them. They will answer eventually.* A frantic monologue of thinking races through the professor's mind as the question remains unanswered. The professor's eyes seek out consciousness in the students and assesses silently whether the question was understood. Students shift in their seat to avoid direct eye contact as that may lead to an unspoken agreement to respond. *Perhaps the question was too difficult? Maybe it is because English is not their first language. Perhaps this question is linguistically too difficult? But how? I have been scaffolding and I have created a context to the materials as well as unlocked their schema. Besides, I review the procedural knowledge of answering open questions in every English Language class. But why aren't they responding to this question? I will give the question more time. They will come around. I should not interrupt them. I know they can answer this.* Though the professor assesses that the question was understood and that students are indeed conscious, silence reigns as thirty sets of eyes continue to stare back.

At this point the professor has a few options. The professor can repeat the question, probing again for a student generated answer. Or the professor may feel that the students do not know the answer and so will give the answer to the question that was posed in an effort not to waste time. After all it is a professor's duty to profess. The final option, which is still much more challenging, is to remain silent for as long as it takes for students to answer the question. But the risk is that an answer never comes and so the professor and students sit in silence waiting for one or the other to break first. Most teachers cannot afford to waste valuable time in their class especially in an English as a Foreign Language program. The burden on professors are intense enough. With so much content to cover and responsibilities to the school and assessment some professors rarely have time in class to even cover the minimum required of a course. This harsh reality makes the final option to remain silent the most difficult to justify as well as practice. The first option is of course ideal, being that a question is answered by a student. But this leaves twenty nine students with a missed opportunity to have been the one to answer the question. Potentially twenty nine different opinions and thoughts left out of the discussion solely because one student answered first. Now it is true that with some questions this is fine as the answer is cold, hard,

verifiable fact. But for many other questions, the missed opportunity to share ideas, opinions, and reasoning could diminish the learning experience for without follow up discussion and more participation of other students the question being asked may not teach much. As far as the second option goes: the teacher assessing the situation deems that the information elicited by the question is more important to be shared than the development of a student's ability to answer the question in a timely manner, and so will continue to teach the content for the day by answering the very question that they themselves posed. This though raises its own question. *Why did you even ask the question if you did not think it was important enough for students to practice answering it?* When developing critical thinking along with English one must be patient and wait for students to think and form their thoughts and respond in English.

In the language classroom, the development of critical thinking is ideal as critical thinking has many skills which can help a student hone their English skills. The only issues is that developing critical thinking can be just as difficult as developing language skills. As a language teacher is paid to teach language, developing critical thinking often takes the back burner as the responsibility of the teacher focuses their efforts on the development of language skills versus critical thinking skills. But this presupposes that critical thinking and language skills are not related. "The interweaving relationship between language and thinking renders language curriculum a natural arena for the development of critical thinking (Luk & Lin, 2015, p. 70)." Facione (1990) states that one of the best ways to teach critical thinking is through a subject's content. The challenge is developing critical thinking skills to enhance the development of English language proficiency. In any subject, Facione (1990) states that students should be curious, raise objections, and ask questions. These very simple acts in themselves are the beginning of developing critical thinking skills as they require clarification, interpretation and will be examined objectively though the context of the course and its aims (Facione, 1990, p. 33).

When considering the development of critical thinking, one must look at the core question of why individuals think and learn. Thinking is central of the human condition (Atabaki, Keshtiaray, & Yarmohammadian, 2015, p. 93). "Learning takes place from the beginning of life and drives genetic as well as cultural evolution (Chang, Mak, Li, Wu, Chen, & Lu, 2011, p. 105)." As such there can only be two ways to solve a problem: one way is to find a solution by one's self through a series of trials and errors, the other way is to copy or imitate what others do in similar situations (Chang, Mak, Li, Wu, Chen, & Lu, 2011, p. 107). As the world becomes closer through the process of globalization more and more cultures are experiencing cultural transmissions through their social learning (Chang, Mak, Li, Wu, Chen, & Lu, 2011, p. 107). Critical thinking is being culturally transmitted all across the globe as more and educators find value in holistic approaches to learning. Despite the growing desire to incorporate critical thinking in the classroom the fundamental differences of learning in the collectivist culture is different from that of the individualistic culture. The two different cultures reflect the two core methods of learning (Chang, Mak, Li, Wu, Chen, & Lu, 2011, p. 113). Fundamentally, the environment creates the need of both circumstances.

"The process of cultural evolution through social and individual learning is expected to

activate and, in turn, be aided by personality attributes according to the same frequency dependent selection. When individual innovation is deemed adaptive in an unpredictable environment, natural selection should also favor high rather than low confidence in one's own abilities as well as high rather than low interest in finding new solutions that are potentially costly. If social learning or copying existing solutions to an unchanging environment is adaptive, such personality attributes as conformity, compliance, and gullibility should also remain active in the population (Chang, Mak, Li, Wu, Chen, & Lu, 2011, p. 116)."

To sum it up, social learning and individual learning are directly connected to the environments in which they are attributed. In a stable environment social learning is passed on through the copying of the majority as well as the copying of the successful. Conforming to the norm is successful as the stability offers a circumstance that does not require a high motivation to innovate or challenge the status quo (Chang, Mak, Li, Wu, Chen, & Lu, 2011, p. 120). An individualistic culture is oriented through a person's own ability to survive the instability of the environment through the assertion of autonomy, equality, and individual detachment (Chang, Mak, Li, Wu, Chen, & Lu, 2011, p. 122). This process of relying upon the self is the first defense for coping with the uncertainty of the variable environment. Personality attributes of the individualist learner are independence, self-confidence, lack of compliance and conformity which all leads to the perpetuation of self-engaging trial and error (Chang, Mak, Li, Wu, Chen, & Lu, 2011, p. 122). Through the globalization process the world is becoming more and more interconnected. Many social shifts are occurring as more and more cultures interact. In such turbulent times, the development of critical thinking becomes even more important as more and more individuals will need to rely on their own abilities to find their place in the rapidly evolving world.

Developing critical thinking can help a person accurately communicate with others, assess societal problems and try to resolve them, as well as make important decisions based on their evaluations (Atabaki, Keshtiaray, & Yarmohammadian, 2015, p. 93). Zhou, Jiang, and Yao (2015) suggest that critical thinking is a vital skill which hopes to promote the ability to criticize, question, evaluate, and reflect (p. 83). Though critical thinking has been established as one the greatest skills anyone could develop in the age of information, critical thinking is rarely taught in English Language or English as a Foreign Language environments (Zhou, Jiang, & Yao, 2015, p. 83). Instead teachers generally put more emphasis on the explanation of new words and the analysis of grammatical structures found in difficult sentences which ultimately lead to a superficial, or at the least a very aspect based, understanding of language (Zhou, Jiang, & Yao, 2015, p. 83).

One of the main functions of education is to help students share information and knowledge which in turn encourages students to develop to be personal contributions to society and the collective of knowledge it maintains; therefore, the student must be competent in critical thinking (Thakur & Al-Mahrooqi, 2015, p. 126). Facione (1990) affirms that critical thinking is vital for students and society (p. 1). "...critical thinking is a liberating force in education and a powerful resource in one's personal and civic life (Facione, 1990, p. 3)." Ha (2014) further asserts that critical thinking develops success and productive learning that can transform societies, promote social equality and justice as well as inspire creative learners who think independently and take

responsibility for their learning (p. 392). Ha (2014) states that "...pedagogy should enable and enhance democracy, social justice, individual freedom and creativity, and generate power to challenge authority and transform society to build critical thinking capabilities (p. 394)." As such, Thakur and Al-Mahroogi (2015) highly suggest that English language users must be trained in critical thinking (p. 126). Zhou, Jiang, and Yao (2015) reinforce this idea by proposing that students are not only required to understand the classroom material, but should also be inspired to think critically about it (p. 90).

To begin the process of developing critical thinking one must first define it. deNoyelles and Reyes-Foster (2015) define critical thinking "...as the ability to purposefully reflect and challenge one's own thinking while engaging in tasks that require the evaluation, analysis, and application of previous knowledge (n.p.)." Facione (1990) defines critical thinking as a tool of inquiry which is purposeful, is self-regulatory with its judgments resulting in interpretations, analysis, evaluation and inferences, as well as explanations of evidence, conceptualization, methodological and criteriological or even contextual consideration upon which judgment is based (p. 3). Kurfiss (1988) defines critical thinking as "... a rational response to questions that cannot be answered definitively and for which relevant information may not be available (p. 20)." As conclusions cannot be tested the critical thinker must show the plausibility of their thoughts by offering supported reasoning for the justification of their thought process (Kurfiss, 1988, p. 20). All of these definitions all seem to point out that critical thinking is a binding process which integrates many mental skills to the sole purpose of mentally justifying the truth or understanding of what is perceived or experienced to the best of a person's mental ability.

As critical thinking deals with many skills and can be fluidic in nature, to develop critical thinking skills, one must first identify the skills which make up critical thinking. Facione (1990) thoroughly defines core critical thinking skills and their sub-skills as followed:

(These definitions have been directly quoted in order to maximize the potential for critical thinking development. By keeping these definitions unaltered they have the most versatility to be applied to one's teaching. Though, admittedly, paraphrasing and explaining the definitions would have been the norm, but in a paper devoted to developing critical thinking, a practical exercise was deemed best.)

"Interpretation - to comprehend and express the meaning or significance of a wide variety of experiences, situations, data, events, judgements, conventions, beliefs, rules, procedures or criteria.

Categorization:

- to apprehend or appropriately formulate categories, distinctions, or frameworks for understanding, describing or characterizing information.
- to describe experiences, situations, beliefs, events, etc. so that they take on comprehensible meanings in terms of appropriate categorizations distinctions, or frameworks.

Decoding Significance:

- to detect, attend to, and describe the informational content, affective purport, directive functions, intentions, motives, purposes, social significance, values, views, rules, procedures, criteria, or inferential relationships expressed in convention-based communication systems, such as in language, social behaviors, drawings, numbers, graphs, tables, charts, signs, and symbols.

Clarifying Meaning:

- to paraphrase or make explicit, though stipulation, description, analogy or figurative expression, the contextual, conventional or intended meanings of words, ideas, concepts, statements, behaviors, drawings, numbers, signs, charts, graphs, symbols, rules, events or ceremonies.
- to use stipulation, description, analogy or figurative expression to remove confusing, unintended vagueness or ambiguity or to design a reasonable procedure for so doing (Facione, 1990, p. 14)."

“**Analysis** - to identify the intended and actual inferential relationships among statements, questions, concepts, descriptions or other forms of representation intended to express beliefs, judgments, experiences, reasons, information, or options.

Examine Ideas:

- to determine the role various expressions play or are intended to play in the context of argument, reasoning or persuasion.
- to define terms.
- to compare or contrast ideas, concepts, or statements.
- to identify issues or problems and determine their component parts, and also to identify the conceptual relationship of those parts to each other and to the whole.

Detecting Arguments:

- given a set of statements, descriptions, questions or graphic representations, to determine whether or not the set expresses, or is intended to express, a reason or reasons in support of or contesting some claim, opinion or point of view.

Analyzing Arguments:

- given the expression of a reason or reasons intend to support or contest some claim, opinion or point of view, to identify and differentiate: (a) the intended main conclusion, (b) the premises and reasons advanced in support of the main conclusion, (c) further premises and reasons advanced as back up or

support for those premises and reasons intended as supporting the main conclusion, (d) additional unexpressed elements of that reasoning, such as intermediary conclusions, unstated assumptions or presuppositions, (e) the overall structure of the argument orientated chain of reasoning, and (f) any items contained in the body of expressions being examined which are not intended to be taken as part of the reasoning being expressed or its intended background (Facione, 1990, p. 15).”

“**Evaluation** - to assess the credibility of statements or other representations which are accounts or descriptions of a person’s perception, experience, situation, judgement, belief, or opinion; and to assess the logical strength of the actual or intended inferential relationships among statements, descriptions, questions or other forms of representation.

Assessing Claims:

- to recognize the factors relevant to assessing the degree of credibility to ascribe to a source of information or opinion.
- to assess the contextual relevance of questions, information, principles, rules or procedural directions.

Assessing Arguments:

- to judge whether the assumed acceptability of the premises of a given argument justify one’s accepting as true (deductively certain), or very probably true (inductively justified), the expressed conclusion of that argument.
- to anticipate or to raise questions or objections, and to assess whether these point to significant weakness in the argument being evaluated.
- to determine whether an argument relies on false or doubtful assumptions or presuppositions and then to determine how crucially these affect its strength.
- to judge between reasonable and fallacious inferences.
- to judge the probative strength of an argument’s premises and assumptions with a view toward determining the acceptability of the argument.
- to determine and judge the probative strength of an argument’s intended or unintended consequences with a view toward judging the acceptability of the argument
- to determine the extent to which possible additional information might strengthen or weaken an argument (Facione, 1990, p. 16).”

“**Inference** - to identify and secure elements needed to draw reasonable conclusions; to form conjectures and hypotheses; to consider relevant information and to deduce the consequences flowing from data, statements, principles, evidence, judgments, beliefs, opinions, concepts, descriptions, questions, or other forms of representation.

Querying Evidence:

- in particular, to recognize premises which require support and to formulate a strategy for seeking and gathering information which might supply that support.
- in general, to judge that information relevant to deciding the acceptability, plausibility or relative merits of a given alternative, question, issue, theory, hypothesis, or statement is required, and to determine plausible investigatory strategies for acquiring that information.

Conjecturing Alternatives:

- to formulate multiple alternatives for resolving a problem, to postulate a series of suppositions regarding a question, to project alternative hypotheses regarding an event, to develop a variety of different plans to achieve some goal.
- to draw out presuppositions and project the range of possible consequences of decisions, positions, policies, theories, or beliefs.

Drawing conclusions:

- to apply appropriate modes of inference in determining what position, opinion or point of view one should take on a given matter or issue.
- given a set of statements, descriptions, questions or other forms of representation, to deduce, with the proper level of logical strength, their inferential relationships and the consequences or the presuppositions which they support, warrant, imply or entail.
- to employ successfully various sub-species of reasoning, as for example to reason analogically, arithmetically, dialectically, scientifically, etc.
- to determine which of several possible conclusions is most strongly warranted or supported by the evidence at hand, or which should be rejected or regarded as less plausible by the information given (Facione, 1990, p. 17).”

“**Explanation** - to state the results of one’s reasoning; to justify that reasoning in terms of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological and contextual considerations upon which one’s results were based; and to present one’s reasoning in the form of cogent arguments.

Stating Results:

- to produce accurate statements, descriptions or representations of the results of one’s reasoning activities so as to analyze, evaluate, infer from, or monitor those results.

Justifying Procedures:

- to present the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological and contextual considerations which one used informing one's interpretations, analyses, evaluation or inferences, so that one might accurately record, evaluate, describe or justify those processes to one's self or to others, or so as to remedy perceived deficiencies in the general way one executes those processes.

Presenting Arguments:

- to give reasons for accepting some claim
- to meet objectives to the method, conceptualizations, evidence, criteria or contextual appropriateness of inferential, analytical or evaluative judgments (Facione, 1990, p. 18)."

"Self-Regulation - self-consciously monitor one's cognitive activities, the elements, used in those activities, and the results deduced, particularly by applying skills in analysis and evaluation to one's own inferential judgments with a view toward questions, confirming, validating, or correcting either one's reasoning or one's results.

Self-Examination:

- to reflect on one's own reasoning and verify both the results produced and the correct application and execution of the cognitive skills involved.
- to make an objective and thoughtful meta-cognitive self-assessment of one's opinions and reasons for holding them.
- to judge the extent to which one's thinking is influenced by deficiencies in one's knowledge, or by stereotypes, prejudices, emotions or any other factors which constrain one's objectivity or rationality.
- to reflect on one's motivations, values, attitudes and interests with a view toward determining that one has endeavored to be unbiased, fair-minded, thorough, objective, respectful of the truth, reasonable, and rational in coming to one's analyses, interpretations, evaluations, inferences, or expressions.

Self-Correction:

- where self-examination reveals errors or deficiencies, to design reasonable procedures to remedy or correct, if possible, those mistakes and their causes (Facione, 1990, p. 19)."

These explanations are very thorough and are worth quoting directly as they can be a great reference when promoting critical thinking in the English language classroom. Moreover, the thoroughness of these explanations offers room for interpretation as to what critical thinking looks like in

class. The manipulation of these skills through their definitions can help a teacher to evaluate students' critical thinking. Teaching critical thinking skills becomes much more manageable when one focuses on a particular skill to practice in a lesson; even more so when that skill helps facilitate the learning of an English language concept. From the explanation of the core critical thinking skills one can see that critical thinking is a holistic and multi-dimensional process that can happen in nearly every moment of a person's mental process. By activating interpretation, inference, analysis, evaluation, self-regulation, and explanation a person may engage in critical thinking in one way or another in every waking moment. In its simplest form, critical thinking takes on aspects of curiosity. This curiosity can be encouraged and the closer one comes to understand the topic of their curiosity the more they engage in critical thinking. But in some places of the world, these skills though used individually are not always collectively valued or used.

Critical thinking, traditionally an individualistic culture-specific social practice, has been introduced in basic and higher education in many countries over the last few decades (Luk & Lin, 2015, p. 67). Critical thinking has been promoted in education as an essential skill for surviving the 21st century (Luk & Lin, 2015, p. 67). "Critical thinking is believed to be an essential skill that will enhance the competitiveness and employability of young people in the global arena (Luk & Lin, 2015, p. 68)." Despite these potential benefits, critical thinking has been criticized as being too ethnocentric and that the cultural norms of self-expression and perspectives from cultures that differ from individualistic cultures may be too difficult for students to integrate and too culturally inappropriate for collectivist societies to utilize (Luk & Lin, 2015, p. 70-71). Luk and Lin (2015, p. 67) postulate that though critical thinking holds high social value in the English language classroom, it is seldom used outside of school. Ha (2014) suggests that teaching critical thinking can be relevant and helpful, and though progressive for global education, it may undermine local pedagogies and practices which may be successful in the immediate context (p. 394). Furthermore Luk and Lin (2015, p. 71) state that as critical thinking is observed only through speaking or writing, an English learner may be disadvantaged as they may culturally be predisposed to refrain from vocal critique. When developing critical thinking it is important to understand the cultural identity of the learner, but this can sometimes pose a threat to the cultural learning practices which make up the learner's native approach to language development especially if critical thinking is not the norm of acquisition (Ha, 2014, p. 394). There has been ample response to this notion as many scholars have found that preparing students to participate in the global community promotes thinking beyond their current frame of mind and is required to develop tolerance, social justice, and increase their understanding of the relationships of power, knowledge, and language (Luk & Lin, 2015, p. 71).

Exploring this further, Luk and Lin (2015, p. 69) found that culturally collectivist students might lack the linguistic and cognitive skills to express critical thinking in English even though they may be able to convey critical thinking skills in their native language. Luk and Lin (2015) discovered that even when English language users could use critical thinking skills in English it took much longer than if they had been thinking of the same things in their native language. The research of Luk and Lin (2015) "...contend that the inability to express critical thinking in a

second language should not be conflated with the inability to think critically (p. 69-70).”

When considering the development of critical thinking a teacher should assess not whether the answer is right, but whether the student came to their conclusion through sound critical thinking (Facione, 1990, p. 2). Critical thinking classrooms should be less exam-oriented on mechanical practices, and more focused on teacher modeling of critical thinking and attitudes with more space for students to share and develop their own ideas (Luk & Lin, 2015, p. 73). “ESL students need to develop communicative resources in English to enable them to talk back or write back as a legitimate speaker in global contexts (Luk & Lin, 2015, p. 73).” Through critical thinking, students can begin to look past their culture and the cultures of others in such a way that they can use their own knowledge, experience, and perspectives to form thoughts and opinions in an effort to reduce the intake of propaganda and misinformation and create independent and creative thought processes that will last their whole life (Luk & Lin, 2015, p. 75).

Wilson (2010) suggests that language is created by society and is naturally political and with this understanding the practices of critical thinking can help students recognize their own ideologies as well as the ideologies of others. Thus by making meaning from examining constructed viewpoints students can become more flexible and reflective in their approaches to knowledge and certainty (Wilson, 2010). By becoming skilled critical thinkers students can express their own experiences, voices, and identities to create a more powerful discussion which can have a greater impact on their lives (Wilson, 2010).

Wilson (2010) asserts that if a language learner’s identity is always positioned as deficient or remedial, the rhetoric of deficiency may shape their identity. To anchor this theory, Japanese English language users will often say that they are poor English users despite the lack of empirical data to suggest otherwise. This low self-esteem may be caused by the social feeling of what it means to be a Japanese English learner in Japan. If the Japanese English language learner were to look at themselves using critical thinking, they may be able to recognize the play of power involved in this stereotype and in so doing may acquire some space with which they can reconstruct their identity as an English speaker. Moreover, Wilson (2010) asserts that students who reconstruct their identities through critical thinking can adapt or resist the dominant discourse and engage with these concepts rather than avoid them out of fear or anxiety. This is critical as Wilson (2010) points out that some students in an effort to avoid further devaluation of their abilities will mentally withdraw from participating in the classroom and ultimately their English language ability. Through critical thinking, English language learners can view and be viewed as valuable contributors to the academic community, thoroughly utilizing their experiences, culture, and skills to negotiate the language being taught (Wilson, 2010).

Wilson (2010) suggests implementing the four strategies of critical textual practices, critical talk, community building, and critically oriented writing assignments to increase critical thinking alongside English language development. Though these strategies work best for developing critical writing, the mechanisms will work the same for speaking in English. Namely, by doing critical thinking drills, practices that focus on a particular skill in critical thinking, talking critically with other students and the teacher, and building a community which creates a safe environment for

students to grapple with concepts, students may be able to develop their critical thinking by great depth when they engage in assignments. When students share their critical thinking, the whole class can learn from one another; moreover, students benefit from being challenged to speak and express themselves clearly in English their second language (Wilson, 2010). By using critical thinking students can draw on or incorporate their own voice, ideas, and ideologies (Wilson, 2010). Wilson (2010) finds that assignments that empower students often encourages them to invest themselves and their experiences using critical thinking.

Giving support to developing a student's critical thinking is a priority in education (deNoyelles & Reyes-Foster, 2015). Facione (1990) suggests that teachers should nurture critical thinking skills as they are legitimate learning goals of education (p. 20). Moreover in the international community, developing critical thinking skills will allow individuals to have many beneficial attributes such as generally being well-informed, alert to opportunities, reasonable in their inquiries, honest of their own biases and prejudices and willing to reconsider ideas and premises that may change with new experiences (Facione, 1990, p. 25). By purposefully selecting strategies that activates and strengthens critical thinking, educators help develop critical thinking skills in students while also nurturing them to analyzes evidence and make informed decisions in a complex world education (deNoyelles & Reyes-Foster, 2015). An individual with critical thinking skills will then be able to clearly state their inquiries, work diligently through complex concepts, will be able to seek out and determine relevant information and apply a reasonable criteria, demonstrating care and focus as they persist though difficulties (Facione, 1990, p. 25).

Teaching critical thinking skills along with English is not easy as it requires a moderate amount of personal effort from students from a collectivist culture; therefore, students must foster independence, motivation, the ability to self-monitor, the desire to develop ones critical thinking, and attention to details in general (Facione, 1990, p. 28). This can be very daunting for a student, but the end result will be a student who can be self-reliant and find meaning and truth in every moment of language exposure.

When trying to teach critical thinking alongside English language skills the greatest ally a teacher can have is patience. In class the collectivist nature of students puts a lot of pressure on the teacher to supply answers and to be the sole provider of information. But the relationship between language and culture is so close that to teach English without incorporating individualistic methods of communication would be a disservice to the global students who seeks fluency in English and must work closely with many countries as equals in order to find solutions for the many troubles in the world.

The very nature of human thinking will automatically develop critical thinking in a person so long as they are trying to understand a concept as the definitions previously provided demonstrate. Through practicing these critical thinking skills teachers can help students learn English faster as they become more experienced at understanding concepts and mentally processing information. With each new skill students will have more options to evaluate and learn aspects of the English language, ultimately leading to their ability to move beyond English as a subject and into the realms of English as part of their lives. A language used just as much as it is studied.

In the classroom, inspire students' English development with curiosity and critical thinking will develop naturally as it has in humans for thousands of years, for it is the human condition to find meaning through skills of interpreting, inferring, analyzing, evaluating, self-regulating, and explaining. These sets of skills are natural to human beings and students will find themselves critically thinking even if they do not want to. But in the English language class, one must be prepared to give them time to think and process and develop their thoughts in English. Critical thinking skills offers the scaffolding and apparatus to work though concepts in English. Though this takes valuable time in class, it is the most effective way to develop an English language learner who can engage in English fluently. At first, they will need time to learn the language, and then they will need time to express themselves in the language. But the big step that is missing is the time it takes students to learn to think in English. With more practice thinking in English, thoughts will come quicker.

The secret to developing critical thinking along with English is to allow students the time they need to think. If a teacher feels pressure and answers the question for students it denies the students the time and practice needed to form their own thoughts. Moreover, if a teacher, in the interest of time, asks a question but only allows one student to answer it, only one student will be benefiting from the question being posed. Therefore, a teacher must incorporate questions in an environment where students participate and add to the discussion for higher functions of critical thinking to present themselves. In time students will be able to engage more frequently and with greater insights. But this cannot happen if students are not expected or are not held accountable for their own thinking. Give the students something to think about, and then wait for them to think.

The teacher patiently waits for the class to respond. *It's important that they try to think in English.* A student smiles and looks directly at the teacher ready to try and express themselves in English. Others students begin to stir as their own thoughts form in English. Smiling, the teacher waits expectantly...

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