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The Development of Critical Thinking Skills
in Beginner Adult ESL Classrooms

A Plan B Project Presented to
the Graduate Faculty of
Minnesota State University Moorhead

By

Kwangmi Kim

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in
Teaching English as a Second Language

May 2022

Moorhead, Minnesota

Acknowledgements

Special gratitude is extended to my professor and advisor, Dr. Linda Houts-Smith, for her support, advice, and expertise throughout the process of this master's program. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the other committee member, Aimee Hilgers, for her support and constructive advice.

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Abstract

In the U.S. education system, critical thinking skills have become essential for students in the 21st century, but they are still not fully discussed in the ESL field. This is especially true for adult learners at the beginner level. Beginner-level students lack the language to participate in critical thinking skills and that it hinders their development is a general assumption. However, critical thinking skills cannot be developed quickly in a short amount of time and students need to have opportunities to practice them often while developing language. This means that teachers of adult beginner ESL students must choose class activities carefully to make sure that students develop both language proficiency and critical thinking skills. In this project, the author first reviewed nine general ESL textbook series and six ESL activity resource books to see how critical thinking is introduced to students. Next, the author has suggested a total of 14 activities per characteristic of critical thinking skills that can be used in beginner adult ESL classrooms.

Chapter 1: Introduction

There was a group of students who studied English as a second language, they studied hard, and they could even read news articles and find out what was happening. Therefore, they achieved a level of proficiency on the multiple-choice reading test that showed they no longer needed ESL classes. This was a huge achievement indeed. However, when somebody asked, “So, what do you think about this event/news?” These students could not say more than two sentences about it.

When ESL students take standardized English test(s), many questions focus on finding facts and information that are already given to the students. These essential elements of information are important features. However, as a teacher, we sometimes spend too much time in class only to find this information and lecture them on how to find these. However, let’s think of the daily news we usually read/listen to. How many people got injured and the place where the incident happened is crucial, but it should go beyond basic factual information. Students should have literacy skills that allow them to interpret and evaluate information on their own, especially for those who have been exposed to a wide variety of sources on the internet by certain interests or algorithms such as millennials and Gen Z. As Yang and Gamble (2013) mentioned, 21st-century learners require the ability to evaluate multiple sources of information, judge the usefulness and reliability of its content, and make decisions about what to believe: abilities classified as critical thinking (CT) skills. That is why as ESL teachers, we should

not be satisfied just because our students are good at finding the information that was written or inferred. This is also to confirm our view of the important objectives of education as a teacher. Is a teacher a person who delivers knowledge or helps students think and learn?

In general, assessment tools themselves are valuable resources to measure where students are in the development of critical thinking skills and what they need to improve; Also, classes can have effective curricula and knowledgeable teachers. However, authentic linguistic situations outside of the classroom that students face every day are far different, and it may be difficult to address every possibility in class.

The students build fundamental skills, but they need to apply them and synthesize opinions independently in their new environments. Therefore, ESL teachers should not only teach the language itself but also teach strategies and skills that allow students to think and apply them in various ways to fit in their communities, in their new culture. This is why students need opportunities to practice critical thinking skills in class.

Critical thinking skills are not a new concept. However, the importance of critical thinking skills continues to emerge as one of the core values in the United States education system. (Evans, 2020; Ferlazzo, 2016; Hughes, 2014). Of course, this is closely linked to the employment, long-term career of students and the general culture of the United States. Although critical thinking skills can challenge students who grew up in the United States, these expectations may add to the difficulty for some adult ESL students who struggle with two issues: lack of formal education and lack of encouragement to think critically and express opinions due to their cultural background. First, some adult students do not have any formal education background. Another reason issue may be that

some students may have been highly educated in their home country, but their community may not have encouraged critical thinking. The student's culture may prefer that they listen to what elders, higher-ranking individuals, or the leadership say, and expressing their own opinion may not be appreciated unlike in the United States (Davidson, 1998; DeWaelche, 2015; Lin, 2018; Salmani Nodoushan, 2016). Hence, even if these students were invited to share their insight, they may not be able to adjust their thinking process in a new environment. In both cases, these struggles may not indicate that students cannot think critically, but that it takes time to learn this concept and apply these skills and techniques.

In order for ESL students to become more comfortable expressing their opinions, they need to get influenced by critical thinking skills and need to practice expressing their thoughts in the ESL class from lower levels. When teachers value the students' thinking process in the classroom, students will also try adopting their own critical thinking processes and give attention to developing these strategies. These strategies will connect to students' metacognition and can increase their motivation and help them achieve goals. With this view in mind, many educators and teachers in the ESL field attempt to improve their teaching methods and curricula to support students' critical thinking skills.

Statement of Problem

Despite the willingness of the educators and teachers to improve, it seems that the activities to improve critical thinking skills are not yet clearly seen in the classroom setting especially for beginning language learners due to the following constraints and assumptions: 1) Students' language achievement needs to improve in a limited period. That is, teachers do not have enough time to get prepared for developing activities toward

critical thinking skills, or teachers do not provide sufficient time for critical thinking in class. 2) The student's language level does not reach a higher-order skill level. That is, students lack needed background knowledge for improving critical thinking skills, or teachers believe only certain students can perform higher order thinking. 3) Curriculum stresses only the acquisition of facts, ideas, and concepts. (Aliakbari & Sadeghdaghighi, 2013).

Especially at the beginner level, ESL classes have many types of activities, but these activities tend to be playful and game-based correspond to students' low language level and may not always be conceptually appropriate for adult students. When we think about how we teach critical thinking, even some educators believe that critical thinking skills should be taught after acquiring some language first. Reboot Foundation's survey results shows this: Among teachers, 41 percent think that students should engage in critical thinking practice while learning basic facts, while 42 percent think that students should learn basic facts first [in ESL classroom, English language first], then engage in critical thinking practice. (p. 6)

However, critical thinking skills cannot be learned in a short amount of time and always try to expose these skills from low level of ESL courses. Critical thinking skill is a process of thinking, not an ability that has obvious steps to follow. As Vogt and Echevarria (2021) said, even though English learners may not yet be fully proficient in English, they are capable of higher-level thinking. Asking English learners, a preponderance of low-level questions, assuming they cannot understand higher-level questions, is unacceptable (Ch. 5, para. 1)

Purpose of Study

As it is generally known, critical thinking skills are important in English language-based cultures, and students need much time to master these skills. Therefore, English language learners should become familiar with them while practicing the language as a beginner. This allows English language learners to have opportunities to think critically and to adapt their thinking process to an English-speaking culture easily.

Thus, following the perspectives of DeWaelche (2015) and Ennis (2015), this study research and suggests classroom activities and tasks that emphasize the view that ESL classroom education should be conducted to cultivate critical thinking ability even for students at the beginner level of English language instruction. Therefore, this research project is conducted with the following research question in mind: What activities can help to improve critical thinking skills in a beginner ESL course for adult learners?

Scope of the Project

Since the adult students in this study tended to have limited English language skills but have also been contributed as a member of society, methods with meaningful practices that encourage adult students were explored. There are many fun and beneficial learning activities, but only those that could stimulate and improve students' thinking processes were considered. Since this project's focus is on the beginner level students, communication tended to be limited between students and teachers. As a result, some instruction in activities may be limited. In the present study, it is assumed that students and teachers are familiar with the use of computers and other devices. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the circumstances and environment in which learning takes place have changed greatly. In particular, the usage of computers and technological tools has

increased in everyday life, and the assumption that adult ESL students can use these tools relatively comfortably is generally accepted.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

A review of the literature was conducted to explore how ESL educators included teaching critical thinking skills in the classroom environment, particularly paying attention to activities and tasks. For this purpose, the definition of critical thinking skills in the ESL classroom and how they helped in the ESL classroom for adult learners is researched. Second, the activities and tasks discussed in the existing articles and books are reviewed.

Definition of Critical Thinking

As Evans (2020) said, the critical thinking literature is rooted in three fields: psychology, philosophy, and education. These disciplines reflect different approaches for defining critical thinking (p. 3). Therefore, there are many broad, deep definitions of critical thinking skills. However, there is a consensus of the definition.

Ennis (2015) said critical thinking is reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do (p. 6). DeWaelche (2015) said, an ability related to assessing, judging, or evaluating a given problem or topic, as well as evaluating your own reasoning (p. 135). It also emphasized that to achieve this [critical thinking], there should be a focus on meaningful learning in student-centered settings rather than on rote learning in the teacher-fronted classrooms (p. 135). Brookfield (2004) said that it [Critical Thinking] is a lifelong learning project and that it is in adulthood that critical thinking is learned and lived at its deepest and most significant level. He said that critical thinking

can be analyzed in terms of process and purpose. As a process, critical thinking involves adults in recognizing and researching the assumption that undergird their thoughts and actions. (p. 341) When we think critically, we start to research these assumptions for the evidence and experiences that inform them. In particular, we try to see our assumptions from as many unfamiliar perspectives as we can. Also, there is an interesting part from this article: Critical thinking is not a smooth flowing voyage along a river of increasing self-knowledge and self-actualization. It involves anger and anxiety as well as joyful moments of insight. (p. 343) Cordell (2015) also mentioned critical thinking emphasizes logical reasoning based on the judicious analysis of information. The critical thinker gathers data from a variety of sources, then interprets, evaluates, organizes, and reflects upon the accumulated evidence, ultimately using the knowledge gained to make decisions or create new products (p. 7). Dummett and Hughes (2020) made the three Rs of critical thinking: reflective thinking, rational thinking and reasonable approach.

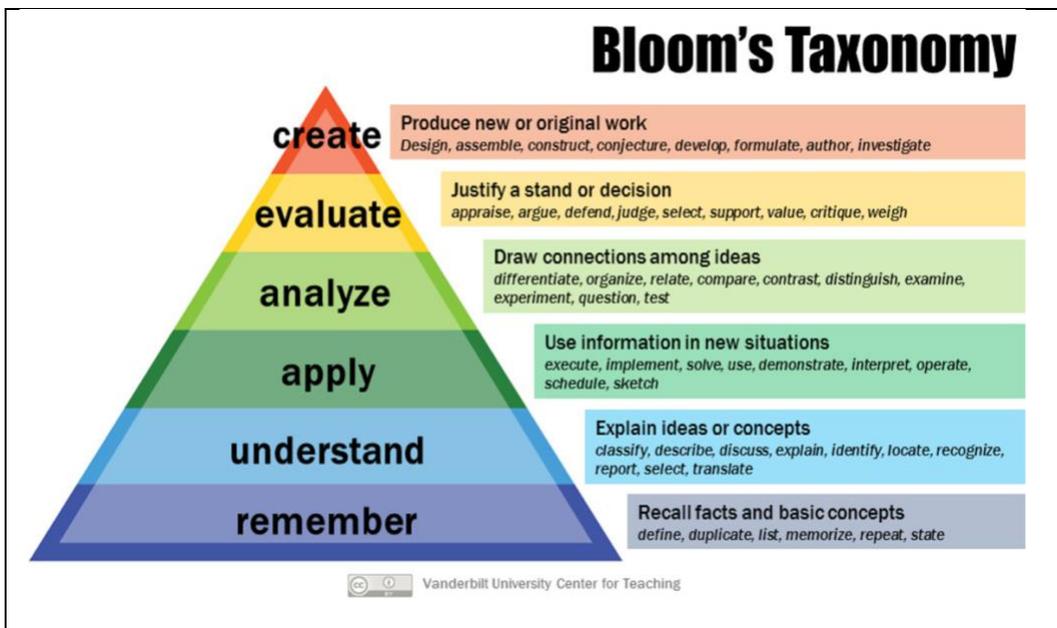
From these statements, we can see that critical thinking skills are defined as the steps an adult takes of evaluating what they know and making their own decisions in a logical way. The thinking process itself is a core value that we need to focus on. Students have a chance to rethink what they know, gather the information with rational reasons, and make a decision based on the thinking process with their beliefs.

Along with the discussion of critical thinking skills in the education field, Bloom's Taxonomy is often mentioned. Bloom's taxonomy is a framework for categorizing educational goals, which is often cited in setting the student's step-by-step goals. Bloom's taxonomy embeds the critical thinking skills defined by writers within his larger framework. Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze, Evaluate, and Create are

development stages (See Figure 1), and ESL is also presented as an item for teachers to keep in mind for students' efficient learning. Critical thinking skills are essentially the same as the Apply and higher stages, as students should be able to derive their thoughts and opinions on a rational basis through analysis and evaluation procedures, rather than simply remembering and understanding.

Figure 1

Bloom's Taxonomy, 2001 revised version



Note. Armstrong, P. (2010). Bloom's Taxonomy. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching. Retrieved [04.25.2022] from <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/>

Critical Thinking and ESL Classroom

I have looked at what critical thinking skills are in general. As Evans (2020) notes that critical thinking skills have suddenly become a popular goal that is even being included in the core value of education in the 21st century. In this part, I will see how this concept has been applied in the ESL field. Critical thinking skills have been gradually employed in the ESL field in the past, and ESL is also presented as an item for teachers

to keep in mind for students' efficient learning. As a result, Bloom's Taxonomy is introduced to teachers of ESL and to mainstream teachers who have ESL students in their classes. Some may have a misconception that because Bloom's taxonomy shows stages, suitable goals vary depending on the level of the student, such as Remember and Understand stages for beginner level students, Apply and Analyze stages for intermediate level students, which is a wrong approach. For example, while teaching on the topic of "family and hobbies" with beginner level students, it is possible to conduct classes that are properly mixed with the stages of application, analysis, evaluation, and creation. In addition, language teachers should be aware that when students stepping up one stage does not eliminate all these lower stages, but another stage comes much like a wheel, the stages are regularly revisited and repeated to develop students' thinking process. In other words, students have to constantly learn and use these concepts from the beginner level.

Elafatihi (2017) gives four reasons why ESL classes need to include critical thinking skills:

The first is philosophical reasons related to the connection between language and thought. The second is cognitive and metacognitive reasons dealing with how critical thinking skills influence and are influenced by processes such as memory, comprehension, and metacognition. The third is pedagogical reasons related the fact that many modern language teaching methods and techniques today require the learner to engage in problem solving, evaluation and decision making. The last are socioeconomic reasons linked to the requirements of the job market (p. 1).

El Soufi and See (2019) assert that even in university classes there is lack of understanding and developing of critical thinking skills, and the educators do not know

how to approach teaching critical thinking skills. They said the most promising approaches (higher quality study) to teaching critical thinking skills develop general critical thinking skill; Training students to define arguments, evaluate reliability of sources, identify fallacies and assumptions, use inductive and deductive logic, synthesize information, make inferences, etc. (p. 145) In addition, debate, assessment techniques (conferencing, peer-review, peer-evaluation, self-evaluation), use of literary and narrative texts, brainstorming, journal writing, scaffolding, collaborative writing and dialogic thinking (p. 146) were followed. However, the author points out that all this research needs to expand the research sizes although it may be helpful since most of the research results are positive.

As I mentioned previously, the cultural gap can be a big issue for some ESL students. Many cultures discourage criticism in some areas such as the religious and political spheres, etc. (Davidson, 1998; DeWaelche, 2015; Lin, 2018). Therefore, as Davidson (1998) mentioned, even more than the L1 teacher, L2 teachers have good reason to introduce students to aspects of critical thinking to get familiar with the new society (p. 121). I need to point out that some scholars disagree that “culture, cultural gap” is one factor that affects which critical thinking skills should be taught to students even though they agree that some societies clearly have fewer interests in critical thinking skills (Dummett & Hughes, 2020).

Salmani Nodoushan (2016) focused on the Iranian college students (EFL)’ writing. I think this is in line with what I argued earlier; some cultures prevent students from expressing their opinions. The author said when the students entered this course, they are already formed with all mechanical answers from their previous education

backgrounds, and it is hard for students to write with their own argument paper(s) with their process of thinking. Therefore, the author opened a three-week workshop treatment aimed at reconstructing students' critical thinking and argumentation abilities for experimental groups and it boosted students' appropriate argumentation skills in some way. The findings are interesting. The lower-intermediate group showed no statistically significant difference between the experiment and control groups, while the upper-intermediate group shows differences. The author said it is because the lower-intermediate students have to focus on their linguistic functions and cannot give much attention to the critical thinking process. The workload and the requirements of the task (time limitation and set length of an essay, etc.) push them away from three weeks of workshop learning. This paper is meaningful for the following reasons: 1) It presents an example where a culture gap toward critical thinking shows up in the ESL classroom 2) It partially confirms ESL teacher's concern about proficiency level and critical thinking development 3) It explains why critical thinking skill development needs to begin earlier because the amount of time needs to be long.

From what I have seen so far, many teachers agree that critical thinking skills are necessary to teach in ESL classrooms, but they do not seem familiar with or confident in how to teach in a classroom setting, especially for beginners. In order to help students to learn English for this society, teachers should present activities that can improve not only the students' language skills but also the students' critical thinking skills. Activities are usually a step that is expanded after the topic is covered and practiced. Many creative activities lead students to apply and interpret as they understand the concept. At this free practice stage, if the teacher introduces students' activities that allow them to develop

language and critical thinking skills together in various ways, it is expected that students will be exposed to enough critical thinking without having to practice them mechanically.

Recommended Instructional Strategies

Many articles say that critical thinking skills, directly and indirectly, helped students' English proficiency, but many experiments from the articles are targeted at advanced learner-centric or college-level students. However, some strategies can be applied in beginning level classes, too.

Ferlazzo and Sypniewski (2016) suggest some ideas of classes/activities that develop critical thinking skills, and I briefly introduce five items that can use in beginner classes here.

- **Inductive Learning:** In inductive lessons, students can categorize words, text passages, images, and so forth, provide evidence to support their conclusions, and find additional examples to expand the content in their categories. This method can be used to teach grammar, text structures, phonics, and so on, as well as knowledge needed in content classes (p. 53).
- **Graphic Organizer: Word Webs and Venn Diagram** – Both are easily adoptable in the classroom, especially into a classroom game.
- **The importance of Asking Questions:** Give students a list of quotes about asking good questions. After they choose one quote, they make a paragraph with their thoughts about the quote and remake their own quote.
- **Introduction to Literal and Interpretive Questions:** This activity is showing question-starters deductively and explaining the interpretive question-starters are giving chance to think and learn more.

- Literal Question-Starters: Where, When, What is, What happened, Who, How many, Which
- Interpretive Question-Starters: Why, How, What if, How would you compare, What would you predict
- Tests “in Reverse”: Give students the test lists the answer, and they have to develop the questions using question-starters.

Hughes (2014) gave 20 ESL specific activities that apply critical thinking skills to ESL classes. Of these 20, three can be applied in beginning level classes, and they are fully described in Chapter 4.

Interestingly, Hughes (2014) and Ferlazzo and Sypniewski (2016) both gave many activities that related to the questions (Making questions, Revising questions, Questioning before, during, after-). It seems not wrong to believe that many teachers can improve students' critical thinking skills just by asking good questions. Could it be said that critical thinking is ultimately linked to knowing what a problem is and being able to raise the questions?

Velasco (2021) uses authentic materials (newspapers) to do text analyses to enhance students' understanding of the concepts of transitivity. While students found the “who does what to whom, and how” information and fill the tables from several articles from different views with the same topics, students can compare and analyze and understand the author's view, tone, and what is referred to even from short statement sentences.

Lin (2018) conducted experiments to improve critical thinking skills for Chinese high school students using infusion lessons. Infusion lessons are conducted like the

following: 1. The teacher clearly shows the learning objective and the concept of critical thinking skills. 2. The students complete the tasks in groups that are related to their thinking skills. 3. Teacher gives feedback when students present their results to the class. 4. Teacher gave other very similar tasks to solve. The goal of this lesson approach is not only to make students better understand the concept of critical thinking but also to make them use it more confidently. When collecting data, mixed methods were used; students' tests result and interview questionnaire. The results revealed that students' improved performance in using critical thinking in the thinking tasks and English writing, and The California Critical Thinking Skills Test, suggesting infusion lessons can help students to improve students' performance in using critical thinking (Effect on Critical Thinking Performance, para. 2)

Gomez (2010) compared two groups, the control group read and followed the textbooks' reading activities without expansion and the experiment group read and followed the expanded activities. In the experimental group students started with comprehensible questions and moved to the complex activities: application, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis. When the reading was about means of transportation in two cities, analysis part covers "What do you infer about the physical demands for people who use these two forms of transport (p.46)?" After that following synthesis part is asking to invent a new form of transport. Evaluation activity is following:

If given the option of using any of the two forms of transport in appropriate conditions in your country, which one will you use daily? Explain. What solutions/ideas would you suggest avoiding the problems these two forms of transport have according to the author? (p. 46)

Even though the finding does not show any sufficient evidence that students' critical thinking skills increased during the research time, the students' survey results said it was very meaningful and helped students' thinking process. This also pointed out that even more than the lack of vocabulary to express their ideas about issues raised through the questions, it was students' lack of experience or consciousness about critical thinking processes that affected the results (p. 42). This shows that ESL classes should not end with simply teaching students the language.

In this chapter, I have looked at what critical thinking skill is, how it is used in ESL, and what kind of general strategies have been found useful to develop critical thinking skills. There were articles before, but it seems that critical thinking skill has been actively discussed in the ESL field since the 2000s. Many research articles are targeted intermediate and advanced level learners with critical thinking skill development as if it is insignificant for beginners. In Chapter 3, I will look at the ESL books in more detail and look for sections that take into account the improvement of critical thinking skills.

Chapter 3: Analysis of Critical Thinking Skills in Books

There are a lot of books out there, but when choosing books for this project, it was inevitable to be subjective. It is impossible for me to look at all the textbooks in the world, so I analyzed 16 books that are easily accessible from libraries. The books reviewed here fall into two categories. 1) General ESL textbooks for adult learners, for beginner and early intermediate level, in the traditional classroom environments (Teacher and multiple students in a room). I reviewed nine books in this category for this project. 2) Books introducing practices and activities as teacher training or resource books for ESL teachers. I reviewed six books in this category for this project.

During the review I divided the general textbooks into three categories. 1) Books that do not reveal critical thinking skills, 2) Books with embedded critical thinking skills, and 3) Books clearly reveal critical thinking skills.

Unfortunately, many Level 1, Level 2, and beginner books do not have clear sections for increasing students' critical thinking skills. Only two of the nine that I reviewed targeted critical thinking skills directly. The other seven either embedded critical thinking skills or did not address them at all (see Table 1). Since books that do not reveal critical thinking skills have nothing to discuss, I will only discuss the other two groups in more detail.

Table 1*ESL Textbooks for the General Adult Classroom*

First Author	Title	Critical Thinking Not visible	Critical Thinking Embedded	Critical Thinking Targeted
Jack Richards	Interchange	✓		
Jack Richards	Strategic Reading 1		✓	
Joan Saslow	Connectivity		✓	
Nancy Douglas	World Link		✓	
Peter Lucantoni	IGCSE English as a second language coursebook		✓	
Sarah Lynn	Future		✓	
Susan Stempleski	World Link		✓	
Jaimie Scanlon	Q: Skills for Success (Reading and Writing / Listening and Speaking)			✓
Becky Tarver Chase	Pathways: Listening, Speaking and Critical thinking			✓

Note: The full bibliographic information for each book can be found in References.

Books With Embedded Critical Thinking Skills

Most books have a part for group/pair discussion about their choice with reasons.

For example, when the unit covers occupations, students are making a list of guests

whom they want to invite famous people for a dinner party with reason(s) (Stempleski, 2011, p. 50). Talking about their own opinion with reason is a good practice for critical thinking skills such as judging and reasoning, but it would be more meaningful if it includes a summary of classmates' choices and/or a comparison of two choices with pros and cons as such discussion would address both evaluation and analysis. It is also necessary to show the activities/tasks to cultivate students' critical thinking skills more clearly in the textbook. Although activities and questions to expand critical thinking skills are condensed throughout many textbooks. It would have been better if such contents were revealed clearly in many features, suggesting the importance of this to students and teachers.

Many beginner textbooks include critical thinking skills along with other skills, but only as a formality. There are many activities that can be used for developing critical thinking skills such as: judging, clarifying, analyzing, recognizing, categorizing, assessing, selecting, synthesizing, inferencing, etc. However, many textbooks tended to think that persuasive speaking is a main way to develop critical thinking skills. Creating good questions and expressing their own opinions for clear reasons in a group or pair made successful critical thinking activities. Many activities have not deviated from "Tell Me Your Opinion." Instead of considering the process of finding their own opinions and thoughts as a core process, it ends with solving comprehension questions by reading and listening. And of course, many comprehension questions are full of finding definitions, main ideas, and reasons. Moreover, this part is two or three sentences only from the section, so, there is a sense that it is an activity that teachers and students can easily skip. There were textbooks that did not have a clear goal of expanding critical thinking skills

or did not have an accurate understanding of the expansion of critical thinking skills, so many activities were missing that could be sufficient for the beginner students. Jack

Richards, J., & Eckstut-Didier, S. (2012), Strategic Reading 1 and 2

Although this book, like the other books in this category, does not explicitly target critical thinking skills, I can see these books are written with the development of critical thinking skills in mind in some parts. This book is for young adults and adult learners of English. As the introduction said, it is designed for reading, vocabulary-building, and critical thinking skills (p. vi).

Each unit has three readings, and each reading starts with preview questions related to the topic for students' interest and background knowledge and students' thinking process. The questions are mostly interpretive questions that require students' explanations.

After preview questions, a more before-reading session is following. It consists of two Reading Preview and Skimming/Scanning, and the Reading Preview is introduced as one of the four following: Predicting, Reviewing Vocabulary, Thinking about the topic or Thinking about what you know. Similar to the unit preview, students connect their knowledge to the topic while they use many thinking skills such as identifying, predicting, and comparing.

In the post-reading session, the Reading Strategy sections and Relating Reading to Personal Experience sections are related to critical thinking skills. In the Reading Strategy section, some of the reading strategies are simply introduced; paraphrasing, Recognizing, Applying, etc. Then, students solve the problems that are related to those strategies. Relating Reading to Personal Experience is mostly discussion and/or open-

ended questions. This book lacks a visual organizer or any activities that are helpful to active learning because of too much focus on reading quantities. However, it is a good book that balances well to help students with critical thinking skills and successful reading skills.

Books That Clearly Reveal Critical Thinking Skills

Below I will review more closely the two books with targeted critical thinking development. Rather than copying the contents of the book and introducing it, I simplified it by mentioning the contents of the book and putting my thoughts and opinions on it.

Chase, B. T. (2013), Pathways 1: Listening, Speaking and Critical Thinking

As this book's website mentioned, carefully guided lessons develop the language skills, critical thinking, and learning strategies required for academic success this book is for adult learners who are looking for academic success. The level 1 book that I reviewed is leveled for Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) A2-B1 level learners.

As the title says, this book focuses on critical thinking skills in many ways. Especially in the scope and sequences, critical thinking skills were directly identified along with other skills that are taught in the textbook. Here I am copying some examples of this scope and sequence section in order to get some ideas about how this book focuses on critical thinking skills. Even at a quick glance it is impressive how the authors paid great attention to considering improving critical thinking skills:

Unit 1: Living for Work.

Making inferences

Evaluating career options

Explaining a job's impact on the world

Reflecting on the content of an interview

Using a chart to organize notes for a presentation

CT focus: Identifying Main Ideas

Unit 9: Our relationship with nature.

Reflecting on one's own culture

Drawing conclusions follow a talk

Evaluating two studies

Forming judgment

Using a graphic organizer to plan a presentation

CT focus: Making Comparisons (p. v)

Unlike many textbooks that deal with critical thinking skills in the discussion section / group activity sections, this book has separate discussion sections and critical thinking skills sections.

Here are some critical thinking skills focused strategies from the book: The front page of each unit starts with Think and Discuss section with the picture and title. This is a simple list of questions, but it stimulates students' thinking by asking them to explain their thoughts. And the answers require students' critical thinking skills such as judgement, analysis, etc.

There are two or three critical thinking sections under one lesson. 9 Units have two lessons respectively, so in rough total, there are at least 36 critical thinking skills sections in a level one book. Even though sometimes the question itself is similar to the

other general English learning books, this book explicitly reveals what they are focusing on and what students need to learn. Some examples include comparison, finding alternatives, agree-disagree discussion, etc.

All units end with the presentation session. Preparations for this presentation session are also systematic. Rather than simply saying, “Present on this topic in five minutes,” give students a visual organizer such as tables, charts, etc. to organize themselves. It provides an opportunity to think about scope and sequence as well as opinion and stance with a whole page of help. Some may think throughout the unit, students already practice all these steps with clear objectives, and giving another pageful of helping tools is unnecessary and more bundle to students. However, I think this well-structured tool is a great way to help students’ thinking process include critical thinking skills while they have more chance to review what they learn so far. It also makes systematically familiar with this presentation preparation, presentation, and feedback session from a beginner level which is required in core value in academic/career success in this society.

This book also has a small section called Critical Thinking Focus, which directly explains why improving critical thinking skills is necessary and how to. In this section, students can directly see what is required of them. Critical thinking can be developed through activities that are naturally included in the classroom environment, but I think it is also an important process to clearly recognize it through these straightforward stated parts.

Lynn, S. (2014), Q: Skills for Success: Reading and Writing 1, & Scanlon, J. (2014), Q: Skills for Success: Listening and Speaking 1

As the book introduction part mentioned explicitly, this book focuses on critical thinking thoroughly in many ways. Many questions are asking students opinions and activities encourage students to use critical thinking skills, such as making inferences or synthesizing information from different texts to give many perspectives. This book also uses many critical thinking enhancing tools such as T-chart, Graphic organizer. Furthermore, this book offers the steps of thinking process that students can easily follow. Another thing that sets this book apart is the group discussion section. Many general English language series books were included in the discussion section. However, those books are focusing on communicative tasks and oral fluency more even in the discussion section. Students need tasks that are effective for the language but also stimulate their thinking with the logical process.

Each unit, there is a part for sharing their own ideas. Most of these questions are for group discussion; ask students' preferences or compare two or three options, pros, and cons, etc. Each unit in the Listening and Speaking book includes the Prepare and Speak section. Here, while students learn, they practice how to gather and organize their ideas for the speech, which is a great help to improve critical thinking skills. As a small side section, these books include Critical Thinking Tips. It gives students a chance to get some ideas on how they use their critical thinking skills with strategies.

ESL Teachers' Resource Books for Practices and Activities

Many resource books commonly use activities to improve critical thinking skills. For example, error analysis, brainstorming, questioning, persuading, visualizing help, preparing a presentation, prediction, changing role, revision, etc. These activities are very well known for critical thinking skills, so I will not introduce every detail even though it

is introduced in these books. I reviewed six books here and divided these resource books into three categories as well (Table 2). 1) Books that do not reveal critical thinking skills, 2) Books with embedded critical thinking skills, and 3) Books clearly reveal critical thinking skills. I am covering the detail critical thinking skills activities from these books in chapter 4.

Table 2*ESL Teacher's Resource Books*

First Author	Title	Critical Thinking Not visible	Critical Thinking Embedded	Critical Thinking Targeted
Adrienne L. Herrell,	50 Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners	✓		
Laurel Pollard	Zero Prep		✓	
MaryEllen Vogt	99 Ideas and Activities for Teaching English Learners with the SIOP Model		✓	✓ (Chapter 5)
Paul Dummett	Critical thinking in ELT: A working model for the classroom			✓
Renee Weiss	Classic Classroom Activities		✓	
Suzanne W. Woodward	Fun with Grammar	✓		

Chapter 4: Examples of Critical Thinking Skill Enhancing Activities

In Chapter 3, I reviewed nine books of beginner, low intermediate level general English books for adult learners and six books of classroom activity idea books. There were many great ways to introduce critical thinking concepts and activities to improve this skill. In fact, five books seem especially useful.

Books with Useful Activities for Beginners

Zero Prep was written by Pollard and Hess (1997). When I first glanced at this book, I was not getting much impressed, since it was quite old, but many activities are organized implicitly to enhance students' critical thinking skills. The authors also inspire with the following philosophy: if you teach less, they will learn more. (p. xvi) Giving students many tasks with strategies in the classroom is another core to students becoming critical thinkers.

The book *99 ideas and activities for teaching English learners with the SIOP Model* by Vogt and Echevarria (2021) has many activities that use strategies for critical thinking skills. In fact, they include critical thinking explicitly in their model for instruction as Feature 15: “A variety of questions or tasks that promote higher-order thinking skills – e.g., literal, analytical and interpretive questions” (Ch. 5, para. 5). Many activities included predicting and questioning for integrated thinking processes as well as hands-on practice and application.

Weiss, Adelson-Goldstein, and Shapiro's 2008 book, *Classic Classroom Activities*, is characterized by providing practical materials that can be used immediately; copy and print out. This book included ten types of activities. Round-table Label, Survey, Mixer, Information Exchange, Double Crossword, Picture difference, Drawing Dictation, Role Play, Take a Stand, Board game. Surveying and taking a stand are common activities to enhance critical thinking skills from beginner level. I describe examples of activities that can apply in beginner classes (type of activity and description below are from p. viii).

Finally, Paul Dummett and John Hughes (2020) wrote *Critical thinking in ELT: A working model for the classroom*. In this book, the authors introduce critical thinking activities related to many skills. Critical thinking in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, receptive skills, productive skills. Pronunciation is not often considered with critical thinking skills, so it is inspiring. Numerous activities were explained, but I introduce here some activities that are not mentioned in this project paper yet but can be applied to beginner-level classes. Hughes (2014) also wrote another book, *Critical thinking in the language classroom*, with useful ideas for activities.

Activities for Beginners from Books and Articles

I collected fifteen activities from the books I reviewed that seem especially useful for beginning adult learners. I present them in Table 3 for quick reference, and then I describe each in more detail, organized alphabetically by the activity title.

Table 3*Activities from Books*

Activity Title	Source
Agree or Disagree	Vogt & Echevarria (2021)
Aware of One's Audience	Dummett & Hughes (2020)
Classroom Management Tasks	Pollard & Hess (1997)
Comparative Analysis	Dummett & Hughes (2020)
Connections Between Topics	Hughes (2014)
Emotional, Social, Cultural Aspects of Words	Dummett & Hughes (2020)
Find a Sentence	Pollard & Hess (1997)
In Charge of my Own Learning	Pollard & Hess (1997)
Pipe Cleaner Practice	Vogt & Echevarria (2021)
Predicting the Content of a Text	Hughes (2014)
Recognizing Context	Hughes (2014)
Survey	Weiss, Adelson-Goldstein, & Shapiro (2008)
Squeepers	Vogt & Echevarria (2021)
Take a Stand	Weiss, Adelson-Goldstein, & Shapiro (2008)
What I Need	Pollard & Hess (1997)

Agree or Disagree

Many opinion-making activities similar to this one is very often used in the classroom already. Students read an article/essay and choose one side of a statement. This activity is quite ordinary but is considered to be the epitome of critical thinking activities by many educators. Students have to set their own stance and persuade the opponent by supporting their opinion based on the facts and the reasons for it. But this is

a task that requires a lot of practice. If I imagine this activity in a beginner class, the teacher gives an outline/template, and filling in the student's points would be ideal.

Aware of one's audience (As productive skills-writing, speaking- focused class)

There are two activities under this title. The first one is preparing a presentation with an audience in mind, with a list of questions. A list of questions to ask themselves is shown in the steps: intro-main points-conclusion. While students answer these questions they can think about the audiences' expectations and prior knowledge about the topic. The second activity is to read the two paragraphs that are written for the same event but for different audiences and find out who this article is intended for. Students highlight some words that support their thought. After that, based on the paragraph they just read, they make another paragraph for a new audience.

Classroom Management Tasks

In their introduction, Pollard and Hess suggests teachers let students do classroom management tasks. Teacher gives students initiative and expects students to become critical thinkers while they do classroom management with ownership.

Comparative Analysis (as grammar focused activity)

Students have to analyze and compare different grammatical structures for this activity. Students get a set of sentences that shows different tenses for the grammar feature and are asked to explain the differences. After this task is done, students have to write a sentence to make the meaning of the first sentence clearer.

She is selfish. vs. She is being selfish.

- Explain the difference.
- Create a sentence to make these sentences clearer. (p. 30)

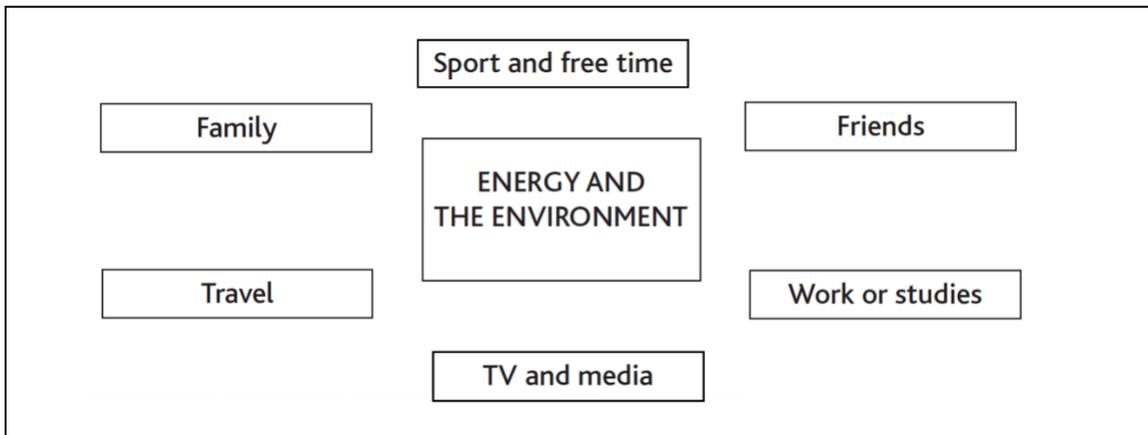
Note: The authors chose C1 as the proper level of this activity, but I think if the teacher prepares easier grammar and sentences, this will be a good activity for beginners as well.

Connections Between Topics

With one unfamiliar topic (today's topic) in mind, the teacher asks students to say four or five familiar words that they can talk about easily. After the words are chosen, the teacher writes the topic in the center. Then, they ask students to connect this main topic with familiar words (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Making Connections Between Topics Example



Note. Hughes J. (2014). Critical Thinking in the Language Classroom. Retrieved [04.25.2022] from

https://cdn.ettoj.pl/pdf/resources/Critical_ThinkingENG.pdf p. 12

Emotional, Social and Cultural Aspects of Words (a vocabulary focused activity)

The authors assert that knowing words' connotations and understanding the implied meaning is an important key to being a good English learner as well as a good critical thinker. Give students some sentences and ask them to label those as positive,

negative or neither. Discuss the answers with others. Make an example of when you might use these sentences.

Example sentences (p. 39)

- She never stops talking. She's very chatty.
- It's not an expensive dress. It's a cheap dress.

Find a Sentence

In reading comprehension hour, this activity will be engaging while it improves students' critical thinking skills. With a reading passage, teacher ask students to choose one sentence and write down to share with the following options (more examples are in the book p. 51):

- beautiful sentence
- very interesting sentence
- surprising sentence
- sentence that reminds the students of something

With these sentences, students tell why they chose that sentence. In common reading comprehension class, students are asked to find main ideas and following reasons and/ or some questions that have a fixed answer. However, in this activity, these questions do not have a fixed answer. Students are asked to organize their thoughts freely with the sentences they have chosen. Still, they are asked to give rational, reasonable reasons to support their own thinking process.

In Charge of My Own Learning

This activity is for meta-cognition. The suggested level is intermediate and up, but I think teachers can simplify and/or adjust for the beginner level. Each student gets a

table with four columns; What I want to do in my new language / Why I need to do / What I do now to improve my skill / Other things I could do. While students fill up the table in pairs, students get to know each other's styles, strategies, weaknesses, etc. Switch the pair and discuss freely. After they gather peers' ideas, they can make their own papers about themselves with various ideas. This is a great critical thinking-enhancing activity because they can understand and compare each other and apply it to their own life.

Pipe Cleaner Practice

This activity is indicated for most secondary science with ESL classes; however, I think this can be used very well in adult general language courses, too. This hands-on activity is simply making their own image with Pipe-cleaners after the class topic has been covered. If we use Play-Doh or craft sticks instead of pipe-cleaners, these activities can be good hands-on activities that are enhancing critical thinking skills. This book introduced with science concept to making a model of science term, however, I think this can be good for beginners with various topics. For example, when they are learning about community worker(s) such as servers, librarians, police officers, etc., students can make a thing that represents the roles and present why and how they choose these images. It is possible to do it as a drawing, doodling instead of pipe-cleaners, however, using these materials will give students much more opportunity to think deeply, critically to characterize the concept.

Predicting the Content of the Text

Before students read/listen to a text, the teacher shows a title or an image that is related to the text. Then, students can pair/group and list 6 or 7 items of information they expect to read or hear. After students read/listen to the text, they can check their items

and discuss the information they predict but not in the text and share why it is not there; They weren't relevant or did not support the main argument? Or are they still relevant and could be used in another text on this topic?

Recognizing Context

Choose an interesting image, show it to the students, and ask questions and/or group discussion questions:

- What does it show?
- Where do you think you might see it?
- Did the person who made or took the image have a particular message?
- If it was an image on a film poster, what is the name of the film and what is it about?
- If it was the front cover of a book, what is the name of the book and what is it about?
- If it were an advertisement for a product or service, what would it be and what advertising slogan would be on the advert?

Survey

Students ask and answer questions about personal preferences and work individually to record the results on a graph.

Example:

- What do you want for dinner?
- What's your style?
- What's the best way to travel?

Squeepers (SQP2RS)

This activity consists of six sections for reading, and the text should be limited to informative or expository text. Each letter stands for one step:

1. Survey: Before reading, students infer through titles, bold points, pictures, etc.
2. Question: students formulate questions that they think will find the answers to.
3. Predict: predicting what important concepts are in a text.
4. Read: while reading, confirming step 2 and 3's questions and prediction. This step is not as a right and wrong answer finding, but to check if the prediction and questions are confirmed or not in the text.
5. Respond: Discuss about their previous steps to clear understanding.
6. Summarize: Summarize the key content concepts that were introduced and discussed in the text.

This book (Vogt & Echevarria, 2021) noted that this activity's best benefits were the students who struggled in reading and got some strategies that they could use throughout the reading.

Take a Stand

Students read and analyze topic statements, choose their own position, create original statements, and discuss their opinion.

Example:

- Learn English at home or at school?
- An apartment or a house?
- Home cooked meals or fast food?
- School uniforms – Yes or No?

What I Need

As a new community member, students can feel disconnected until they establish a new routine (p. 16), and classmates can help. In this activity students bring their real concern in their new community such as driver license, place to live within their budget, etc. Students write their concerns in the paper and other students read these papers aloud. While they listen, they can raise their hands if they can help. After all the questions are introduced, students gather as a group and talk about their concerns and suggestions. This will be a good critical thinking activity since students have to analyze the other students' concerns and apply their situation to others.

Activities Developed by the Author

The activities from the books for beginners are good; however, as we see in Chapter 1, it is still not enough, and it would be more beneficial if more options were introduced for future educators and seasoned teachers. Also, many tasks and activities from the books are focusing on the reasoning and persuading skills instead of various critical thinking skills. I have created various critical thinking activities that teachers can use in the beginner level adult classroom.

I also tried to offer additional materials as processing tools, such as a table, graph, etc., that allow thinking about the answer from many perspectives with a critical mindset. This is because, like many critical definitions mentioned in Chapter 2, critical thinking is the core of the thinking process itself.

Finally, the topics covered in the activities were chosen from Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) A2, B1 level descriptions and books that I reviewed from chapter 3. All the activities are made for the after-class (sometimes

called free practice or communicative practice) activity. When I imagine a one-hour class conducted as before-during-after, all the vocabulary and key expressions related to the topic is all covered and simple practices are all done, and students got familiar with all the day's objectives. Table 3 shows the list of activities in alphabetical order and the critical thinking skills in each. Then I give a full description of procedures with notes on the topics and processing tools added.

Table 4*Activities per Critical Thinking Specific Skills*

Number	Activity Title	Embedded critical thinking skills				
		Analysis	Evaluation	Inference	Synthesis / construction	Self-reflection
1	Choose a destination for a group trip: T chart + Roleplay	✓			✓	
2	Describe the Family: Writing, Listening		✓	✓		
3	Find your first career: Table	✓	✓		✓	✓
4	House chores that I like: Graph	✓				✓
5	House hunting: Table	✓	✓		✓	
6	How do you treat illness: Survey	✓			✓	✓
7	I want to try this hobby: T-chart	✓	✓			
8	Make Plans for holidays: Information gap	✓				✓
9	Prepare for a flea market: Decision Making, Table	✓			✓	✓

10	Promote your hometown/neighborhood: Writing	✓	✓		✓	
11	Questionnaire about holiday: Survey	✓		✓		
12	Shopping list: Decision Making	✓	✓			✓
13	Sorting chores: Categorizing	✓	✓	✓		
14	Which one are you?: Survey			✓		✓

Choose a Destination for a Group Trip

Topic: Trip

Processing tool: T-chart + Roleplay

Embedded critical thinking skills: Analysis, Synthesis

Procedure:

- The teacher can give situation cards (Situation A is an example) about a group (family/friend) trip that students may encounter.

Situation A

Your family wants to visit somewhere together, but they disagree about the destination. Decide one destination after considering everyone's requirements and interests.

Your trip members: Parent-in-law, your spouse and your two children (teenagers)

Place they want to visit: Ocean access with family-friendly activities vs Hiking in the deep quiet nature.

- As a pair or small group students read the situation and decide which destination they will pick.
- Ask student to create a T-chart of the group member's view.

- Students consider everyone's perspectives and decide one destination that suits the group the best.
- Students decide their role as a group member from scenario card.
- Students act out the role that they disagree first and make a good decision.

What to expect:

While students make a T-chart, students can think more critically with a visual organizer. This opportunity will contribute to improving students' critical thinking skills as they consider and compare everyone's personal taste, health condition, budget, etc.

Describe the Family

Topic: People (Appearance, Personality)

Processing tool: Writing

Embedded critical thinking skills: Evaluation, Inference

Procedure:

- Prepares images of famous families in the culture that students are currently learning. Or the teacher gives the students famous families' names and lets them look them up on the Internet directly. For example, the president's family, celebrity's family, a family from the movie or cartoon, etc.
- From the images and their background knowledge students create stories by describing them.
- If students do not know much about these families, they can just make creative stories with images that come to mind when they first see them.
- Everyone shares their writing.

- Listen to each other's stories and find the similarities between their own and other students and record those in the table under students' name
- Compare what was common

What to expect:

Through this activity, students will realize that they can talk about many different things while looking at the similar scenes / same people, while they can practice speaking and listening. Comparing and recognizing the differences in perspective is a good critical thinking activity.

Find Your First Career

Topic: Workload

Processing tool: Table

Embedded critical thinking skills: Analysis, Evaluation, Synthesis, Self-reflection

This activity is suitable for students who want to start a career in a new society through employment, part-time work, or volunteer work. When students want to get social experience while learning English at school, sometimes the problem is a schedule conflict. Which is a good critical thinking activity that requires analyzing various situations. Also, it can be a great real-world associated activity for adult beginner learners. This activity can be sensitive to students' conditions, so teachers have to let students it is ok to make -up the situation not matching as real students' situations. This activity can connect to their real-life career/experience since many students do not know their options and what is out there.

Procedure:

- Let students write their weekly schedule as a table.

- Several work options are given with a fixed schedule such as retailer, nanny, delivery driver, tutoring, community volunteer (hospital, library), etc.
- Ask students to choose a job that fits their schedule and other conditions that they need to consider; physical condition, career prospects, financial situation, qualifications to work like visa status.

What to expect:

Students individually thinking about their conditions with work options is a great way to enhance critical thinking skills. However, students sharing and discussing their career conditions will bring much bigger impactful results.

House Chores That I like

Topic: House chores

Processing tool: Graph (See figure 3)

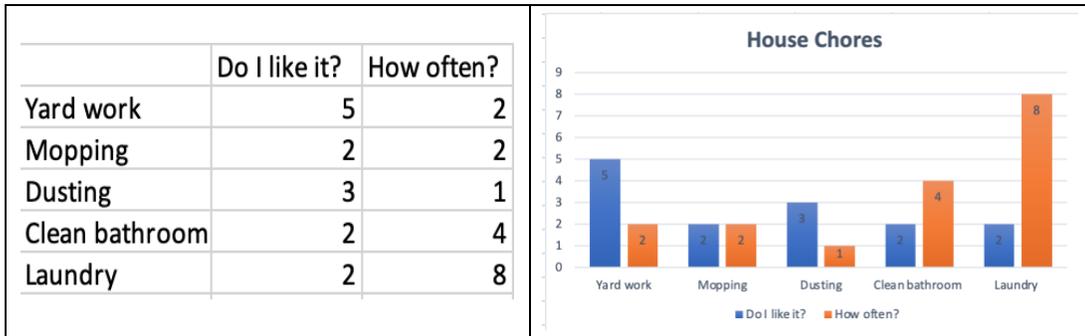
Embedded critical thinking skills: Analysis, Self-reflection

Procedure:

- Give a vocabulary list of house chores
- Ask student to make a graph with two questions: 1) Do I like these chores? 2) How often do I have to do in a month?
- If students are not familiar with Excel, it is a good chance to get to know a simple graph function.
- Students share their graph and present what they like the most and what they do not like but often do, etc.

Figure 3

Example Activity: House Chores with Graph



What to expect:

Before discussing, students get an opportunity to consider house chores’ preferences in order. While doing this activity, the students can organize and evaluate their preferences with a critical mindset.

House Hunting

Topic: Housing

Processing tool: Table

Embedded critical thinking skills: Analysis, Evaluation, Synthesis,

When adult students live in a new society, they need to find a place to live happily, and this is a very necessary, important topic.

Procedure:

- Teacher prepares two or three real neighborhood houses online.
- Students make a note what factors they will consider in their previous hometowns and here (their new town). For example, weather, location accessibility, and crime rate, the age/condition of the house (some prefer the old house for style,

fundamentals, some prefer the new house for layout, facilities) and fenced vs. open space, window size, direction, etc.

- Student can discuss what is important and not with their reasons for a new home.
- Make a list what to ask to a realtor for their new home.

What to expect:

Through this activity, students have a chance to listen to other people's opinions as well as their preferences. The process of comparing and synthesizing the opinions of several different individuals will lead to the improvement of critical thinking skills.

How Do You Treat Illnesses?

Topic: Symptoms, Treatment

Processing tool: Survey

Embedded critical thinking skills: Analysis, Synthesis, Self-reflection

When learning about symptoms and treatment the teacher can give some examples of how people treat differently, such as when they caught a cold, some take medicine, some rest, and some drink supplement teas, vitamins, etc. Even in the same culture group, there are so many different approaches/remedies that we experienced with Covid19.

Procedure:

- Give students one or two examples of treatments
- Ask students to make a survey question with symptoms: sprained back, pink eye, nosebleed, motion sickness, etc.
- Students predict the possible answers first and make it as a choice option.
- Ask everyone to participate in peer students' surveys.
- Present their findings with their prediction (How similar/different it is)

What to expect:

This activity gives students an opportunity to formulate questions, and hypotheses (with their options), assessing peers' opinions and putting those in categories. They will also compare their findings from various perspectives.

I Want to Try This Hobby

Topic: Hobbies

Processing tool: T-chart

Embedded critical thinking skills: Analysis, Evaluation

Procedure:

- Gives a list of popular hobbies from online sources
- Make sure to know all the hobbies from the list
- Choose one hobby that they want to try in the future
- Make a T-chart (2x2 tables with pros and cons)
- Fill up the T-chart while thinking about this hobby suits their situation or not
- Present whether the hobby is a good fit for your life or not.

What to expect:

Students are going to have a chance to think about one hobby critically and analyze whether it is fit for them or not while they make a T-chart.

Make Plans for Holidays

Topic: Holidays

Processing tool: Information gap

Embedded critical thinking skills: Analysis, Self-reflection

Procedure:

- Two different reading materials about holidays activities, events (A: Christmas B: Thanksgiving)
- Each group fill up the table with their finding
- Meet other group and share their finding
- Back to original group and make their own holiday plans based on their findings
- Add couple of creative ideas what they can do on those holidays: Get some hints from their own tradition while considering circumstance
- Present special holiday plan

What to expect:

While students share their findings from reading and their own ideas student will do many brainstorming about holidays and analyzing what is good fit or not to the special occasion while considering the conditions.

Prepare for a Flea Market

Topic: Shopping

Processing tool: Table

Embedded critical thinking skills: Analysis, Synthesis, Self-reflection

Procedure:

- The teacher prepares some household images, items that are found on the flea market often (clothing, bags, shoes, toys, games, books)
- Students consider these as their own items and think of conditions, necessary, preferences, etc.

- Students choose several items they want to sell, and several items they want to keep with good reason.
- The teacher explains most students have these items in their house, and everyone has a different view toward items. For example, some students may want to sell old CDs to make their life belonging minimal, but some students may not want to sell them because of their memories.
- Students share their decision with reasons.

What to expect:

This activity can be a good evaluating activity while it is a fun and engaging discussion between groups with different opinions.

Promote Your Hometown/Neighborhood

Topic: Travel

Processing tool: Writing

Embedded critical thinking skills: Analysis, Evaluation, Synthesis

If a student lives in one place for their entire life, they do not know what the good thing for their hometown/neighborhood, but most of the students (as adult ESL students) leave the place and settled in a new place, so if the teacher highlights and encourages this view, it can create well products.

Procedure:

- Ask students to make a little brochure or a blog post about their previous hometown or current neighborhood.
- Students have to think about where they live/have lived from various perspectives and promote the good points among other places.

What to expect:

Students will be able to determine and summarize the advantages of their hometowns or neighborhoods by comparing them with other places while thinking or researching them.

Questionnaire About Holidays

Topic: Holiday

Processing tool: Survey

Embedded critical thinking skills:

Procedure:

- Students make their own question about holidays. (Avoid yes-no question)
 - For Example:
 - What do you want to eat for Thanksgiving?
 - What do you want to get for your son/daughter for Christmas?
 - What is one sentence that you definitely write in the Christmas card?
- Students walk around and ask other students.
- Present their findings with a speaking template for survey result.

What to expect:

Students can create their own questions about holidays. Students gather and synthesize other students answers and think deeply for the various options.

Shopping List

Topic: Shopping

Embedded critical thinking skills: Analysis, Evaluation, Self-reflection

Procedure:

- Give a situation card like the example below per pair of students.

Your budget: \$_____

Hosting Event: (friends movie night / birthday party / weeknight meal, etc.)

Participant:

Online shopping website: _____.com

- Students make a list with their budgets and events in mind.
- Students present their list

What to expect:

This activity is a very common real-life activity and requires critical thinking skill to make a decent outcome. Students need to analyze and evaluate the participants, features of the event and budget, etc. Planning according to the situation is a small but critical thinking activity that cannot be missed in daily life.

Many activities like this including plan, apply, and create according to the situation should be presented from the beginning level often.

Sorting Chores

Topic: House chores

Processing tool: Categorizing

Embedded critical thinking skills: Analysis, Evaluation, Inference

Procedure:

- Ask student to put house chores words in three different categories

- Category title is missing, and students have to create their own category titles with a reason.
- Share how they divided and what to put in where. (Example: usage of tools, time spending, who is in charge, etc.)

What to expect:

While doing this activity, students have to think about how and why they categorize some similar vocabularies. With this, they can organize and analyze their thinking process and present their table based on their reasoning.

Which One Are You?

Topic: Hobbies

Processing tool: Survey

Embedded critical thinking skills: Inference, Self-reflection

Procedure:

- Give two hobby-related choice questions to students as an example.
- Students create two questions in which others must choose one of two choices.

Example:

I listen to music while I read a book. VS I like being quiet when I read a book.

I like doing my hobbies myself. VS I like doing my hobbies with other people.

I like watching a comedy movie. VS I like watching an action movie.

- Asks to others (in classroom and/or outside classroom) with these two options.
- Students make one graphic organizer (graph, table, etc.) to show their own results.
- Present their findings

What to expect:

Even though the subject is a very small amount, students can experience judging and drawing conclusions from survey results. This will help students' synthesizing skills.

Final Comments on Activities

Above, I have collected 15 activities for beginner level adult students and created 14 additional activities that can be used in classroom settings. What I think while creating these activities was that most of the activities are already being used in the classroom in many ways. However, the additions are things that can provide students with sufficient time and the proper environment to think thoroughly rather than simply giving a question from a teacher or from a textbook and proceeding to the discussion

In addition, since these activities are related to the topics and objectives frequently encountered by beginner students and they often already use these thinking processes in their real lives, teachers and students will have no difficulty in carrying out these activities in the classes. It will be expected to students can naturally be stimulated to think critically in many ways.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

One research question that guided the overall project was this: What activities can help to improve critical thinking skills in an adult beginner ESL classroom? To answer this question, first I looked at the definition of critical thinking skills. Critical thinking, which was easily thought to persuade someone with logic and reasons, was much more diverse and complex than that. However, some are clear: It is necessary to have constant exposure to students, the student should practice finding answers according to rational factors and their own values, not mechanical templates. Also, to make a good choice (answer), it is necessary to organize our thoughts in a variety of procedures. Lastly, good questions and good answers require a more in-depth practice process than the communication itself.

Also, I researched a few articles and reviewed general ESL textbooks and resource books to see how critical thinking classes are being conducted in the ESL environment. Most of those materials had a lot of ideas for advanced learners, and they often approached them as tasks rather than a thought process. Many textbooks implicitly present features to expand critical thinking skills. However, textbooks often demonstrated critical thinking skills through questions, discussions, and speaking activities.

As an ESL teacher, I need effective critical thinking activities that could be used in the classroom setting, especially from a beginner level. Therefore, I created 14 activities for beginner ESL students. These activities are made with the following goals in mind: 1)

beginner topics, relevance to class objectives 2) relevance to real-life 3) activities for the logical thinking process. Therefore, I expect ESL teachers to be able to use these with their beginner students easily.

However, this project has some limitations. First, this project is limited to the subject of beginners and adults. This can gradually be expanded by age group and to intermediate and advanced levels. Next, the definition of critical thinking is still vague. I have read and thought about critical thinking skills from different sources, but still the concept of critical thinking skills is abstract and there is no best or clear way to achieve this skill. Also, the activities that I created are from my conjecture before further investigation and practical studies into how and what to develop critical thinking skills. In many ways, I have tried to improve critical thinking skills in a classroom setting by stimulating different areas, but we know that critical thinking is not a concept that develops in a short period time, nor can it be accurately measured. However, as an ESL teacher, it is obvious that this is something to consider when presenting a variety of activities to students, keep improving while looking at efficiency.

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