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Introduction

Many students who go through ESL or EI programs are taught a style of writing that is conducive for most majors within the school of Arts and Sciences, such as English hand history. However, each major within the school is inherently different in its writing style and requirements due to the study's content. Furthermore, when student choose a major outside of the Arts and Sciences, such as engineering or business, they are faced with new writing styles and requirements that may differ greatly from the basic tools they have been equipped with prop to engaging in these courses. When studying higher education at a university not in their mother tongue, students face a multitude of challenges, two of which are: writing academically in a foreign language, and writing academically within the context of their study. In order to achieve both of these tasks, students are asked to think critically.

In western higher education, academic writing and critical thinking are two components students must have in order to attain academic success. But what does critical thinking *actually* mean? According to its mission statement, "Gonzaga [University] cultivates in its students the capacities and dispositions for reflective and critical thought…" (University, 2013). While its mission confirms a need and development for critical thought, it fails to explain what that exactly entails. Therefore, in order to know how to prepare international students for academic success, the term, critical thinking, must first be defined and contextualized.

Literature Review

Critical thinking is a necessity for students who wish to succeed in higher education. For international students studying in countries where Western pedagogies on education are reinforced, the need for critical thinking becomes imperative. However, defining critical thinking

poses a challenge. As Kutieleh & Egege (2004) point out, the presence, or lack, of critical

thinking is easily recognized across various academic disciplines, yet cannot be explicitly

defined. Moreover, depending on the context, its definition may differ within each discipline. In

a literature review surveying definitions of critical thinking, Petress (2004) provides definitions

from eight fields: journalism, philosophy, psychology, education, media, science, technology,

and fine arts. Although each definition reflects similar descriptors, such as *analyze, compare,*

evaluate, anticipate, observe, describe/report, correlate, diagnose, interpret, identify, etc., these

various disciplines have formulated a definition that would satisfy its own contextual needs. In

her own definition, educator, Diane F. Halpern, not only addresses what she defines critical

thinking to entail, but also acknowledges that this must happen within an appropriate context:

> "Critical thinking is the use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable
>
> outcome…to describe thinking that is purposeful, reasoned, and goal directed…involved in solving problems,
>
> formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions, when the thinker is using skills that are
>
> thoughtful and effective for the *particular context and type of thinking task* [italics inserted]" (Halpern,
>
> 2003).

Rather than specify its definition based on itemized content, philosophers Michael Scriven and

Richard Paul define critical thinking in universal terms:

> "the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing,
>
> synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience,
>
> reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action…based on universal intellectual
>
> values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound
>
> evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness" (Scriven & Paul, 2003).

Despite the convenience of a universal definition, it is impossible to conceptualize critical

thinking as universal when it is actually *cultural*. According to Kutieleh & Egege (2004),

western ideology on critical thinking is not a universal view, but rather one of many that was

birthed from cultural influences. Providing a brief history on its origins, Kutieleh & Egege

(2004) compare the beginnings of classical Greek and Chinese critical thinking. Both views were the consequence of specific socio-political factors. Through examining these origins, the differing views provide evidence of cultural influence on current views of critical thinking.

Considering this fact, international students are indeed equipped with critical thinking abilities, but have not yet learned how to use them within a western context. Not only are students faced with the challenge of studying in a different language, but are also forced to adapt their mentality. In addition, the lack of clarity in defining critical thinking leaves students unaware of the expectations they are required to meet in an academic setting. Moreover, neither of the definitions above provides guidance as to *how* students may cultivate critical thinking skills. This issue will be further investigated and analyzed within the findings and discussion of this study.

Even when students understand the standards they are expected to meet, *how* they meet these expectations becomes the real issue. In order to become a better writer, one must receive feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. Feedback serves as a learning guide and a system of support to advance a writer's growth. In addition to identifying strengths and weaknesses, feedback should include suggestions for future reference and possible avenues for correcting specific errors. As facilitators of student learning, Lee (2009) and Séror (2011) suggest these as the kind of feedback teachers should be giving their students. According to their research, many teachers tend to rely more on error correction rather than providing a system of scaffolding to support their students' progress, or helpful comments to encourage and motivate improvement.

Concentrating her study on the correlation between beliefs and practices, Lee (2009) found ten mismatches between teachers' beliefs and practices in written feedback. Half of the mismatches Lee (2009) identifies target the issue of error correction. Despite their beliefs,

teachers tend to focus primarily on language form, mark errors comprehensively rather than selectively, locate errors for students instead of allowing them to grow autonomously, respond more to students' weaknesses than strengths, and continually give more attention to written errors. The remaining mismatches found by Lee (2009) include the use of error codes, grades, "one-shot" written assignments as opposed to process writing (2009, p. 17), and little change to teaching practices. According to her data analysis, a majority of these mismatches were attributed to policy requirements, exam preparation, little faith in students' abilities, and the effectiveness of the teachers' own feedback.

In his ethnographic study, Séror (2011) researches the influence and impact of alternative sources of feedback on L2 students' academic writing. Séror (2011) defines these alternative sources of feedback as individuals sought out by the students who provide them with feedback on their writing, having no direct correlation to the course's assignment (i.e. friends, roommates, tutors, writing centers, etc.). His findings revealed that through these alternative sources, students were able to receive, "good" feedback, as opposed to the short, unfocused meetings students generally had with their professors when seeking feedback. In the students' view, "good" feedback includes face-to-face interaction and more, explicit correction and suggestions. These sources had a positive impact on students' writing, but required students to sacrifice time, energy, and grades from other courses due to the added effort they put into their writing assignments. In conclusion, Séror (2011) suggests that content instructor feedback has a tendency to focus primarily on student weaknesses rather than providing students with possible solutions, give short responses, and subscribes to monologic interaction, all of which he refers to as "institutional qualities". Conversely, alternative sources of feedback align themselves with more "pedagogic qualities", which include dialogic interaction, focused suggestions that will

lead to solutions for improving students' writing, and increased time and opportunities for negotiating feedback to ensure understanding and implement change (p. 135, 2011).

The notions of Lee (2009) and Séror (2011) are joined by Çavdar and Doe (2012), who explore critical thinking strategies through writing assignments. In a beginning level comparative politics course, Çavdar and Doe (2012) implemented a two-stage writing assignment consisting of two papers: a draft and final essay. After students had been give the writing prompt and completed their first draft, students were given a higher standard and additional steps, including integration of outside research and a postscript reflection on their learning process. Focused on the application of critical thinking, Çavdar and Doe (2012) believe critical thinking requires students to rationalize and demonstrate their conclusions through reflective analysis and evaluation. In other words, students must be able to state their purpose, but also clearly explain and demonstrate the steps they have taken to arrive at such conclusions. As observed by Lee (2009) and Séror (2011), Çavdar and Doe (2012) verify that the current, typical instructor-student interaction does not allow for immediate opportunities for students to apply the feedback they receive. Fewer opportunities for revision only perpetuate the lack of communication that is already present between instructors and their students. With the two-stage writing process and reflection, this feedback loop provides an opportunity for open conversation, leading to meaningful feedback, and a chance for students to apply corrections while demonstrating their thinking, writing, and learning process. As a result of this study, Çavdar and Doe (2012) found that scores for the final paper generally increased by ten points and students' arguments and distinctions were much clearer. Students also appreciated writing the postscript because it gave them the opportunity to reflect on the entire assignment and their learning process. In addition, it challenged students' ideas and made them reevaluate the purpose and concepts of the essay.

Lastly, students reported that they were able to make connections between their own learning and real world application.

Methodology

To acquire university expectations and contextual definitions of critical thinking, a survey was administered to Gonzaga University undergraduate faculty. In preparation for administering the survey, data on the declaration of majors for international students was collected. The data showed that a majority of international students at this university tend to declare business and engineering as their majors. Commonalities in core requirements for each subject were then found, indicating that English, history, and philosophy are courses that all undergraduate students in these fields, and others, must take. Following, the writing objectives for each school and major were examined for commonalities or department-specific requirements. Once found, questions regarding various writing components and how they are viewed by undergraduate faculty were formed. Although most English language learners enter a four-year university as a first year, the progression from 100 level to 400 level courses was important for this study. If ESL/EFL teachers are to prepare their students for undergraduate academics, they must know not only what is expected at the entry level, but also how skills and expectations evolve throughout a student's academic career. For these reasons, the goal of this survey was to capture a macro and micro snapshot of university expectations for writing, collectively as a university and individually within each department.

Aside from expectations, the survey elicits information concerning types of assignments implemented, forms and concentrations of teacher feedback, and personal definitions for critical thinking and academic writing. Participants were also asked to answer these questions as they

pertained to each undergraduate level (i.e. 100 level, 200 level, 300 level, 400 level). In hopes of bridging the gap between university instructors and their international students, the survey also asks participants to express what types of resources would be most helpful for them when working with international students. The full survey may be viewed in the Appendix.

After the survey was created with Survey Monkey, it was administered through email to all undergraduate faculty members, amounting to 577 instructors. The survey remained open for two weeks. After accumulating and analyzing the results with Survey Monkey, data from 90 respondents were synthesized generally and then specifically according to each subject area. For the purpose of this study, definitions of critical thinking are only presented and examined. The concentration of this study is critical thinking, therefore, definitions for academic writing were observed, but have been set aside to be integrated for further research at a later time. In this paper, following the data results will be an analysis and discussion about university expectations, application of this information in the ESL/EFL classroom, and possible avenues for university professors to use when interacting with international students in their classrooms.

Data Results

The survey was administered to 577 undergraduate faculty members at Gonzaga University, with a total of 90 respondents. Only five areas of study did not respond, those being Art, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Native American Studies, Sport and Physical Education, and Computer Science. For the purposes of this study, questions 2, 3, 5, 7, and 8 will be analyzed and synthesized for a later discussion on what the data suggests about teacher expectations for international students studying at Gonzaga University, and the influence these expectations may have on student preparation in the ESL field. Although the survey provided multiple options for

selection in each question, I will only present and later discuss the implications of the top three choices selected, and those closely related, by survey participants in the first four questions observed. The fifth survey question observed will present definitions of critical thinking from five areas of study: business, engineering, philosophy, history, English and. In addition, since the concern of this study is not only geared towards international students, but particularly ESL students preparing for undergraduate study, I will give more attention to data reflected within the 100 to 300 level range to see how students should progress. Data concerning 400 level classes will be lightly touched on, but are not included in the main focus.

Question 2: What types of writing assignments, if any, do you implement in your course(s)?

For this question, participants had nine options to choose from: essays, in-class responses, reflections, journals, research, data analysis, creative writing, literature reviews, and lab reports. According to the survey results, the most implemented assignment across each level (100, 200, and 300) is the essay, followed by in-class responses and reflections. Within 100 level classes, participants gave 25% to both essays and in-class responses, which would presumably make up 50% of all assignments. 200 level classes also focus on essays, in-class responses, and reflections, but give less attention to the latter two. In addition to sharing this commonality, 200 level classes introduce students to a 5% increase of research assignments from those given in 100 level classes. The percentage of research required of students at each level steadily increases as students progress through their college career. From 100 to 400 level courses, research assignments increase from 6.3% to 19.3%. As previously mentioned, essays are important in 300 level classes as well, but other assignments have taken greater precedence. Whereas the essay and in-class response were given greater stock at the 100 and 200 level, the essay has decreased

to 20% and the in-class response to 15%, while research has increased to 14.7% and literature reviews from 2.4% to 10.4%. Lastly, literature reviews, data analysis, and research all increase as students advance through the levels. From 100 to 200, literature reviews have about a 2% increase, but then see a 6% increase from 200 to 300, which maintains from 300 to 400. On the other hand, data analysis has a very small, but steady increase, rising from 7% in 100 level to only 10.5% in 400 level. Research has the largest increase of all, starting from 6.3% in 100 and ending at 19.25% in 400 level.

Figure 1

Q2 **What types of writing assignments, if any, do you implement in your course(s)?**

Answered: 90   Skipped: 0
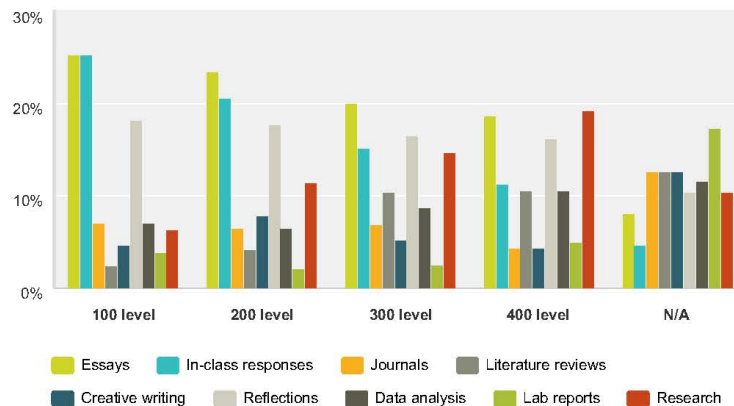
	Essays	In-class responses	Journals	Literature reviews	Creative writing	Reflections	Data analysis	Lab reports	Research	Total Respondents
100 level	**25.20%** 32	**25.20%** 32	**7.09%** 9	**2.36%** 3	**4.72%** 6	**18.11%** 23	**7.09%** 9	**3.94%** 5	**6.30%** 8	127
200 level	**23.40%** 33	**20.57%** 29	**6.38%** 9	**4.26%** 6	**7.80%** 11	**17.73%** 25	**6.38%** 9	**2.13%** 3	**11.35%** 16	141
300 level	**19.91%** 46	**15.15%** 35	**6.93%** 16	**10.39%** 24	**5.19%** 12	**16.45%** 38	**8.66%** 20	**2.60%** 6	**14.72%** 34	231
400 level	**18.63%** 30	**11.18%** 18	**4.35%** 7	**10.56%** 17	**4.35%** 7	**16.15%** 26	**10.56%** 17	**4.97%** 8	**19.25%** 31	161
N/A	**8.05%** 7	**4.60%** 4	**12.64%** 11	**12.64%** 11	**12.64%** 11	**10.34%** 9	**11.49%** 10	**17.24%** 15	**10.34%** 9	87

The percentages of the survey results indicate that some assignments are constant while others will be gradually integrated. In regards to essays and in-class responses, these are more

prominent and pertinent at the beginning of a student's college career. Students are more apt to face these assignments in their 100 and 200 level classes where they will be the bulk of the assignments for that class. Although these assignments are still given in 300 and 400 level classes, their emphasis is much less, and more attention is given to other areas, such as research and literature reviews. Reflection papers show very little fluctuation throughout the levels. According to the percentages reflected in Figure 1, reflection assignments maintain precedence throughout 100 and 400 level courses. This may reflect the importance of Gonzaga's Mission Statement, which aims to produce well-rounded students through thoughtful and meaningful reflection.

Question 3: What skills and characteristics do you expect your students to demonstrate in their writing?

The data from this question of the survey suggests that all four levels expect students to demonstrate clear articulation of ideas and a logical structure in their writing. These skills were the top two expected by every level. When looking at the third skill expected for each level, the demands are as follows: focus (100), concise expression (200), critical thinking strategies (300), and synthesis of data (400). These skills not only represent each level, but also a natural academic progression. Students must first be able to hold and maintain focus in their work; once this has been established, the task of consolidating information becomes the next challenge. While critical thinking strategies are the next main focus, it is possible to question if critical thinking strategies are being developed prior to reaching this level. Contextual definitions of critical thinking will later be presented and examined. Lastly, as critical thinking skills are cultivated and improved, students learn how to not only understand data and various forms of

information, but to also interpret, connect, and unify data into a cohesive presentation of thoughts and conclusions.

Figure 2

Q3 What skills and characteristics do you expect your students to demonstrate in their writing?
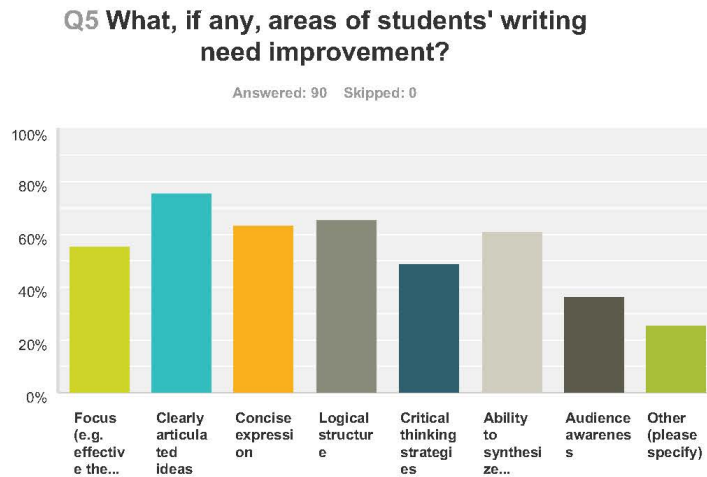
Answered: 90   Skipped: 0
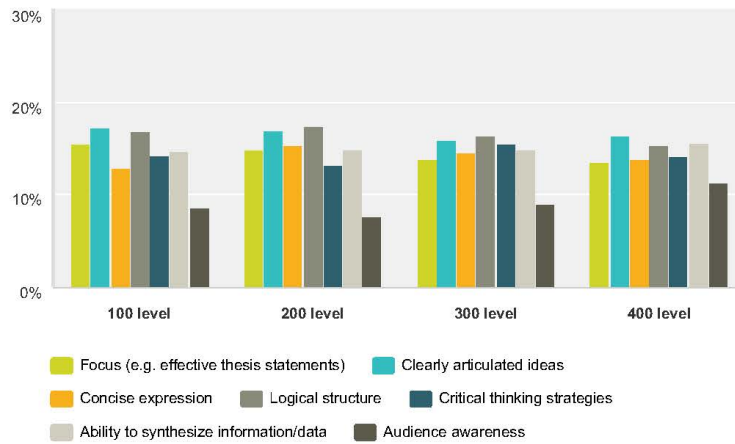
- Focus (e.g. effective thesis statements)
- Clearly articulated ideas
- Concise expression
- Logical structure
- Critical thinking strategies
- Ability to synthesize information/data
- Audience awareness

	Focus (e.g. effective thesis statements)	Clearly articulated ideas	Concise expression	Logical structure	Critical thinking strategies	Ability to synthesize information/data	Audience awareness	Total Respondents
100 level	15.52% 36	17.24% 40	12.93% 30	16.81% 39	14.22% 33	14.66% 34	8.62% 20	232
200 level	14.83% 35	16.95% 40	15.25% 36	17.37% 41	13.14% 31	14.83% 35	7.63% 18	236
300 level	13.85% 54	15.90% 62	14.62% 57	16.41% 64	15.38% 60	14.87% 58	8.97% 35	390
400 level	13.48% 43	16.30% 52	13.79% 44	15.36% 49	14.11% 45	15.67% 50	11.29% 36	319

Question 5: What, if any, areas of students' writing need improvement?

Areas of improvement suggested by participants of the survey reflect the same skills expected in Question 3. Collectively, participants ranked areas of improvement in the following order: clear articulation of ideas, logical structure, and concise expression. In general terms, the implications shown here indicate that students are struggling to efficiently articulate their ideas in a concise and organized fashion. Ability to synthesize information ranked as a close fourth with only a 2.2% difference. Synthesis and concision are closely related, which explains the narrow gap separating them in this question, however, focus and critical thinking strategies do not seem to be as problematic. These results also suggest that students are capable of establishing a thesis and culminating support for it, but organizing the support and possibly drawing strong enough conclusions may still be lacking.   **Figure 3**

Q5 What, if any, areas of students' writing need improvement?

Answered: 90   Skipped: 0

| Answer Choices	Responses	
Focus (e.g. effective thesis statements)	55.56%	50
Clearly articulated ideas	75.56%	68
Concise expression	63.33%	57
Logical structure	65.56%	59
Critical thinking strategies	48.89%	44
Ability to synthesize information/data	61.11%	55
Audience awareness	36.67%	33
Other (please specify)	25.56%	23
Total Respondents: 90		

Question 7: When giving feedback, what aspects of students' writing do you focus on, primarily?

When giving feedback, participants collectively give primary focus to content, clarity, and organization/structure in all four levels. In addition to these, grammar is examined more closely in 100 and 200 levels, while accurate use of source materials is given more attention as students advance from 100 to 400 level courses.

Figure 4
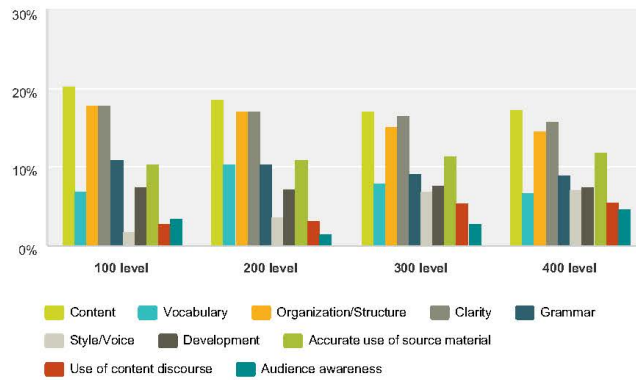
	Content	Vocabulary	Organization/Structure	Clarity	Grammar	Style/Voice	Development	Accurate use of source material	Use of content discourse	Audience awareness	Total Respondents
100 level	20.23% 35	6.94% 12	17.92% 31	17.92% 31	10.98% 19	1.73% 3	7.51% 13	10.40% 18	2.89% 5	3.47% 6	173
200 level	18.65% 36	10.36% 20	17.10% 33	17.10% 33	10.36% 20	3.63% 7	7.25% 14	10.88% 21	3.11% 6	1.55% 3	193
300 level	17.09% 54	7.91% 25	15.19% 48	16.46% 52	9.18% 29	6.96% 22	7.59% 24	11.39% 36	5.38% 17	2.85% 9	316
400 level	17.32% 44	6.69% 17	14.57% 37	15.75% 40	9.06% 23	7.09% 18	7.48% 19	11.81% 30	5.51% 14	4.72% 12	254

Question 8: How do you define critical thinking within your discipline?

To categorize each participant's definition of critical thinking, Bloom's Taxonomy was used to deconstruct these definitions into isolated action verbs. These isolated words were then used to form workable definitions for each field of study. In the table below are key words/ideas extrapolated from each definition provided to form an overall, collective definition for each academic field. Bolded words are action verbs used from Bloom's Taxonomy.

From physical appearance alone, there are considerable differences between each field's expectations for critical thinking. Overall, there are strong connections linking most of them with logic and reasoning, clear expression and articulation, identifying key / main ideas and significance, and drawing conclusions. Despite these commonalities, there are distinguishable differences among the fields that are specifically tailored by the content.

Looking at business and engineering, both areas capitalize on the use of logic, identifying main ideas, clear articulation, and application of knowledge; however, the context of the content is where these two separate. In business, logic is used to distill or identify issues in a given situation. The next step entails looking for alternative solutions, requiring students to apply what they have learned about business. Strategies formed to solve these problems are within the context of the business realm, which differs from problem-solving strategies for engineering. While this may be an obvious point, it is important to pay attention and be aware of the context and one's audience. The concerns of a business audience differ greatly than the concerns of an engineering audience. Whereas business tailors itself to the needs and desires of corporate businesses, profits, advertising, and the like, engineering is shaped by not only the needs of corporate businesses, but also by building materials, financial constraints, environmental factors,

Figure 5

Key Terms	Translated Definition	View
Business		
Logic/Reason **Problem-solving** **Application of content knowledge** **Distill main ideas** **Clear expression**	Critical thinking is **identifying** the main idea(s) of an issue and finding alternative solutions to **solving** the problem, all while **applying** content knowledge and logical **synthesizing** and **analytical** strategies to clearly express one's argument or stance.	Objective
Engineering		
Logic/Reason **Identify main ideas/issues** **Synthesize** **Analyze** **Audience awareness**	Critical thinking is the ability to **understand**, **analyze**, and **synthesize** complex information, **identify** its significance, **articulate** particular engineering criteria, and **assess** the audience's technological familiarity, or knowledge.	Objective
Philosophy		
Comprehend **Examine** **Determine Validity** **Logic/reason** **Clear articulation** **Defend**	Critical thinking is the ability to **comprehend** any given argument, **examine** its parts to **determine** its validity, and **develop** an argument using logic and reason to **defend** your stance in a clearly articulated fashion.	Objective
History		
Identify significance, particular elements, validity **Ask questions** **Micro to Macro thinking (12 steps)** **Discover insight** **Logic/reason** **Draw conclusions**	Critical thinking is the ability to **ask** the necessary questions that will facilitate micro to macro thinking, leading to the **identification** of particular elements of a source, its significance and validity, **discover** insight, and to use sound logic and reason to draw **conclusions**.	Subjective
English		
Personal experience **Reflection** **Understand/Comprehend** **Interpret** **Analyze** **Objectivity** **Consider multiple perspectives/ outcomes** **Identify significance** **Ask questions** **Discernment** **Evaluate** **Infer** **Defend** **Connect ideas** **Beyond the text**	Critical thinking is the ability to **understand**, **analyze**, and **evaluate** the text beyond its surface meaning with discernment; **identify** its significance; **connect** ideas through **inference**, **interpretation**, and personal experience; be aware of one's own perspective while **considering** multiple perspectives through **objectivity**, **asking** questions, and **reflecting**; and to **consider** multiple outcomes.	Subjective

such as topography, weather, and climate, and many others. Despite similar foundational requirements, the contexts in which these are used differ greatly due to content and audience.

When defining critical thinking, history and philosophy also share some similar characteristics. Both fields emphasize the need for logic and reasoning to determine validity and draw conclusions. Asking questions is also a viable avenue for determining validity and conclusions, however, the basis and goal for asking questions differs between the two. The questions asked within the context of history are questions that lead to evaluating the significance of the event, document, or artifact. Questions should evolve from basic, surface inquiries to deep, analytical explorations that allow students to interpret meanings and connections of various historical elements and discover new insights. Conversely, philosophy encourages students to ask questions that will test the validity of an argument. Arguments supporting or opposing a particular stance must be developed with sound evidence that will withstand a defense. Therefore, in terms of critical thinking, it would be safe to assume that history permits more of a subjective view while philosophy enforces a more objective view.

Similarly, English not only permits, but requires subjectivity when thinking critically. According to participants' definitions provided for English, many of the same traits shared with the other subjects, such as identifying significance, analyzing, evaluating, and defending, are included in critical thinking. In addition to these requirements, students are encouraged to ask questions, use personal experience, infer, reflect, and go "beyond the text", a common phrase found among English professors responding to this question. In English, critical thinking is not only dissecting a text, but also interpreting it; finding subtle commonalities between various pieces of work; personally connecting with the visions, images, and voices of the author and

their writing; understanding and respecting multiple perspectives with objectivity, and doing all of this in a clear, concise manner.

The viewpoints of these subjects are either objective or subjective. As previously observed, business, engineering, and philosophy take an objective stance when thinking critically – look at the facts and make an informed, strategized decision. Conversely, history and English, despite some objectivity, are liberal with subjective interpretation – look at the facts, but make some conclusions based on personal experience, consider other perspectives, and try to find something new. As a department, the School of Arts and Sciences sum up the essentials needed for critical thinking. Below is a compilation of common words and phrases used by survey participants to define critical thinking, in their own words:

- Understand
- Critique/Evaluate
- Discern
- Connect ideas
- Identify patterns
- Reflect
- Analyze
- Identify/Extract main point(s)
- Use logic/reason
- Ask questions

- Go beyond the text/situation
- Consider multiple perspectives
- Synthesize
- Interpret
- Create meaning
- Objectivity
- Audience Awareness
- Make everything relative
- Use empirical data
- Apply content/knowledge/skills

Having analyzed the accumulated data and drawing some conclusions, there remains a lasting, unanswered question: what does this mean for international students, and what should ESL/EFL teachers do? In the last section, I will summarize university expectations for academic writing,

suggest possible solutions for ESL/EFL teachers preparing students for academic readiness, and provide suggestions for university professors on how to work with international students on their writing.

Discussion

University expectations

According to the survey results, essays remain the general staple assignment across the disciplines and levels. In-class responses and reflection papers are also becoming increasingly common for many disciplines, but mostly for first and second year students. For these assignments, students must be able to demonstrate their ability to make connections and reflect on material. Usually no longer than a page or two, in-class responses and reflections focus on the thinking process, helping students direct their thoughts for a specific purpose. These assignments also prime students' synthesizing skills by giving direct questions that require concise answers.

In addition to concise expression, a multitude of professors from all levels expect clarity and organization in students' writing. In return, what students need to improve the most, both domestic and international, are exactly what professors expect: clear articulation, concise expression, and a logical structure. Lastly, when giving feedback on students' writing, professors concentrate on content, clarity, and organization.

Suggestions for ESL/EFL Teachers

1. Teach some history

Considering university assignments, expectations, and perceived areas for improvement, international students must be able to produce clear and organized writing. However, to be clear

and organized, students must be concise when expressing ideas and those ideas must be connected. In most cases, organization is often found through logic. Despite most native speakers intuitively knowing what this means, international students may struggle with the western concept of "logic" due to differing cultural views and perceptions. To mitigate this foreseeable impasse, I turn to Kutieleh & Egege's (2004) suggestion that promotes a little bit of history. To help students understand American university ideas about logic, let's give them some history on the topic. A unit or section on where America's ideology on logic and reasoning stems from and how it came about would give students a starting point. If students can understand its beginnings, then they are more likely to understand and successfully use logic within a western context. Furthermore, it would also be beneficial to compare different cultural perceptions of logic and reasoning to the western context. This will allow students the opportunity to compare their own cultural perceptions of logic, in addition to those of their peers, with the new context and notice the similarities and differences.

2. Emphasize in-class responding

According to the survey results, professors commonly assign essays, as well as reflections and in-class responses. While essays currently stand as a staple in the ESL/EFL realm, in-class responses are given some attention, as well; however, I suggest that it be given more. In-class responses require students to understand the material and choose the most important information for their response. To correctly answer this type of assignment, students are given little room to write multiple possibilities that detract from the main focus. Instead, students must concentrate and express only the most pertinent information in a limited amount of time and space. Through proper scaffolding, in-class responding could help students begin developing synthesizing skills and concise expression.

3. Process and reflect

As many ESL/EFL teachers know, revisions are essential for international students in the writing process. In addition, reflection should be included in this process. From their recent study, Çavdar & Doe (2012), along with the students from their study, confirm the benefits of asking students to reflect during and after the writing process. It is through reflection that students not only notice what they have done well and what needs improvement, but are also held accountable to recognize if they are properly understanding and conveying important stakes and claims in their papers. For international students, it is critical for them to be given every opportunity to have multiple revisions when writing. If given the opportunity to reflect on their process and gradual progression, with the help of teachers and their feedback, students will be able to identify areas that are unclear, disorganized, or derail focus. Through process writing and reflection, students will also be able to grow autonomously while gaining advanced writing skills. Let's align our beliefs with our practices and provide students with multiple opportunities to practice and develop accountability.

4. Have a little bit of everything

From the survey, the various shades and hues of critical thinking from various contexts is salient. However, international students still must be informed about their differences. Instead of waiting for students to be introduced to multiple contextual definitions when they enter the university, let's introduce them now. Students should have the opportunity to work with these ideas before stepping into academic classrooms, in a safe and supportive learning environment. Gradually introduce and explain varying viewpoints regarding critical thinking. Give students an overt explanation that clearly demonstrates how each definition is used within its proper context. Content-based writing will prepare students for the assignments they will encounter when they

begin academic classes. If there is a specific concentration of students going into a particular field, it would behoove the teacher and the students to introduce critical thinking skills required from that area of study in their ESL/EFL assignments.

Suggestions for university professors

For many university professors, working with international students can be challenging. When students are struggling, it may be difficult to assess the situation, or even find a viable and beneficial solution. Some may suggest that professors should be doing more. Considering the typical schedule of a university professor, most have very little, if any, extra time to meet with students, domestic or international, outside of class time or office hours. To relieve some stress and promote learner autonomy, encourage students to use alternative sources of feedback (Seror, 2011). Encourage students to work with other classmates or other native speakers they may know. If possible, ask or assign native speaking students to an international student in your class and have them work together. In this situation, the native speaking student could act as a mentor or tutor for the international student. Furthermore, this partnership would promote cultural awareness and help international students integrate into the university. While the chance for plagiarism is entirely arguable, I believe there are possible solutions that may be enacted to ensure academic safety. If there are any campus resources, such as departmental or general writing and tutoring centers, make sure students know about them. Although it is often expected for all students to be accountable for finding and using campus resources, international students may not be aware of them and would benefit greatly from some assistance.

Conclusion

To achieve academic success, students must be able to think critically. However, the success of international students depends on their awareness of university expectations. If students are unaware of what is expected from them, their likelihood for success begins to dwindle. Now knowing what the university expects of all students, it is important that this information be shared with international students preparing to enter the university and those who have already begun their academic studies.

In efforts to ensure academic success, ESL/EFL teachers should explain the history of western logic and how this affects university standards for critical thinking. In addition, multiple aspects of contextual critical thought and how to use them appropriately should be integrated into ESL/EFL curricula. Since in-class response writings are on the rise, teachers should consider including more of this writing in the classroom to develop synthesizing skills and concise expression. The inclusion of reflection during and after the writing process to promote learner autonomy and clear, organized writing should also be considered. Lastly, university professors are encouraged to notify international students about potential alternative sources of feedback to help them with their writing.

For future research, I would like to expand this study, looking closely at academic writing and how it is viewed within each discipline. A guide for university professors on how to interact and work with international students would also be of interest, as well as comparing university expectations among various institutions in the greater Northwest.

Appendix

International Student Writing

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your contributions are much appreciated!

The survey consists of 10 questions and should take no longer than 10 minutes.

*1. What discipline(s) do you teach? Please check all that apply.

☐ Art	☐ Mathematics	☐ Accounting
☐ Biology	☐ Modern Languages	☐ Special Education
☐ Catholic Studies	☐ Music	☐ Sport and Physical Education
☐ Chemistry and Biochemistry	☐ Native American Studies	☐ Civil Engineering
☐ Classical Civilizations	☐ Philosophy	☐ Computer Engineering
☐ Communication Studies	☐ Physics	☐ Computer Science
☐ Criminal Justice	☐ Political Science	☐ Electrical Engineering
☐ Economics	☐ Psychology	☐ Engineering Management
☐ English	☐ Religious Studies	☐ Mechanical Engineering
☐ Environmental Studies	☐ Sociology	☐ Human Physiology
☐ History	☐ Theatre and Dance	☐ Nursing
☐ Integrated Media	☐ Women's and Gender Studies	
☐ International Studies	☐ Business	

*2. What types of writing assignments, if any, do you implement in your course(s)?

	100 level	200 level	300 level	400 level	N/A
Essays	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In-class responses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Journals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Literature reviews	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Creative writing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reflections	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Data analysis	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lab reports	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Research	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify)

[   ]

International Student Writing

✳ 3. What skills and characteristics do you expect your students to demonstrate in their writing?

	100 level	200 level	300 level	400 level
Focus (e.g. effective thesis statements)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Clearly articulated ideas	☐	☐	☐	☐
Concise expression	☐	☐	☐	☐
Logical structure	☐	☐	☐	☐
Critical thinking strategies	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ability to synthesize information/data	☐	☐	☐	☐
Audience awareness	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify)

[   ]

✳ 4. How do you define academic writing through your disciplinary lens? (At minimum, please provide one sentence.)

[   ]

✳ 5. What, if any, areas of students' writing need improvement?

☐ Focus (e.g. effective thesis statements)

☐ Clearly articulated ideas

☐ Concise expression

☐ Logical structure

☐ Critical thinking strategies

☐ Ability to synthesize information/data

☐ Audience awareness

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

International Student Writing

*6. What opportunities do you provide for your students to receive feedback on their writing?

	100 level	200 level	300 level	400 level
Scores/Letter Grades	☐	☐	☐	☐
Written comments	☐	☐	☐	☐
Scoring rubrics	☐	☐	☐	☐
Verbal comments	☐	☐	☐	☐
Peer reveiw	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify)

[ ]

*7. When giving feedback, what aspects of students' writing do you focus on, PRIMARILY?

	100 level	200 level	300 level	400 level
Content	☐	☐	☐	☐
Vocabulary	☐	☐	☐	☐
Organization/Structure	☐	☐	☐	☐
Clarity	☐	☐	☐	☐
Grammar	☐	☐	☐	☐
Style/Voice	☐	☐	☐	☐
Development	☐	☐	☐	☐
Accurate use of source material	☐	☐	☐	☐
Use of content discourse	☐	☐	☐	☐
Audience awareness	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify)

[ ]

*8. International students know that "critical thinking" is important; however, they are unsure of its precise meaning. How do you define critical thinking within your discipline? (At minimum, please provide one sentence.)

[ ]

9. What kinds of resources on international students and writing would you find helpful for your teaching? (i.e. texts, faculty development workshops, etc.)

[ ]

International Student Writing

10. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview to discuss your perspectives on international students and writing in your discipline?

◯ Yes

◯ No

If yes, please provide your preferred contact information.

[ ]

You are finished!

Thank you again for taking time to share your thoughts. I am most grateful for your responses and thoughtfulness.

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