

Academic Writing: University Expectations and TESOL

Gonzaga University
Brittany Dortch

Context

- ◆ Research class
- ◆ Graduated ESL students
- ◆ The missing link
- ◆ Types of writing – numerous!

Mission Statement



“...Gonzaga cultivates in its students the capacities and dispositions for *reflective* and *critical thought*...”

Research Q & A

- ◆ First Question: What is *critical thinking*?

- ◆ Kevin Petress (2004)

 - Eight different fields

- ◆ Diane F. Halpern (2003)

 - “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).

Research Q & A

- ◆ Michael Scriven & Richard Paul (2003)
 - ◆ “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).



Research Q & A

- ◆ Salah Kutieleh & Yvonne Egege (2004)
 - ◆ Culture and Beginnings
 - ◆ Multiple cultures = multiple definitions
 - ◆ America's definition?...Gonzaga's definition?
 - ◆ Next Research Question...

Research Q & A

- ◆ Second Question:

What are the university's *expectations*?

- ◆ Third Question:

How can students meet these standards?

- ◆ What every writer needs: **Feedback**

Research Q & A

- ◆ Lee (2009) Séror (2011) Çavdar & Doe (2012)
 - ◆ Limited instructor -- student interaction & application of FB
 - ◆ Error correction
 - ◆ Comprehensive errors
 - ◆ Locate errors
 - ◆ “one-shot” writing assignments

Research Q & A

Séror (2011)

- ♦ Alternative sources - friends, roommates, tutors, etc.
- ♦ Good FB



Excellent Sally.

You have got really good results.

Your graphs are very clear.

Add more detail to your conclusions.

Start with:-

"My results are like this because friction...."

- ♦ Conclusion: dialogue – focus – negotiation

Research Q & A

Çavdar & Doe (2012)

- ♦ CT = **S**tate **E**xplain **D**emonstrate
- ♦ Two-stage writing assignment
 - Draft
 - Final + higher standards + research
 - Reflection
 - FB loop = conversation, meaningful, apply , demonstrate

Results = 10pt increase, clear, reevaluate

Methodology

- ◆ Declaration of major – Business and Engineering
- ◆ Core commonalities – English History Philosophy
- ◆ Writing requirements
- ◆ Survey questions
 - ◆ Expected skills, assignments, feedback, personal definitions, resources

The Survey

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.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics | <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biology | <input type="checkbox"/> Modern Languages | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Catholic Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Sport and Physical Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry and Biochemistry | <input type="checkbox"/> Native American Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Engineering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classical Civilizations | <input type="checkbox"/> Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Engineering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Physics | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Political Science | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Engineering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economics | <input type="checkbox"/> Psychology | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Engineering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Sociology | <input type="checkbox"/> Human Physiology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Theatre and Dance | <input type="checkbox"/> Nursing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's and Gender Studies | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> 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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In-class responses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Journals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Literature reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creative writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reflections	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lab reports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearly articulated ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concise expression	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Logical structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Critical thinking strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to synthesize information/data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Audience awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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)

The Survey

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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Written comments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scoring rubric	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbal comments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Peer review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocabulary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization/Structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clarity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grammar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Style/Voice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accurate use of source material	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of content discourse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Audience awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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!

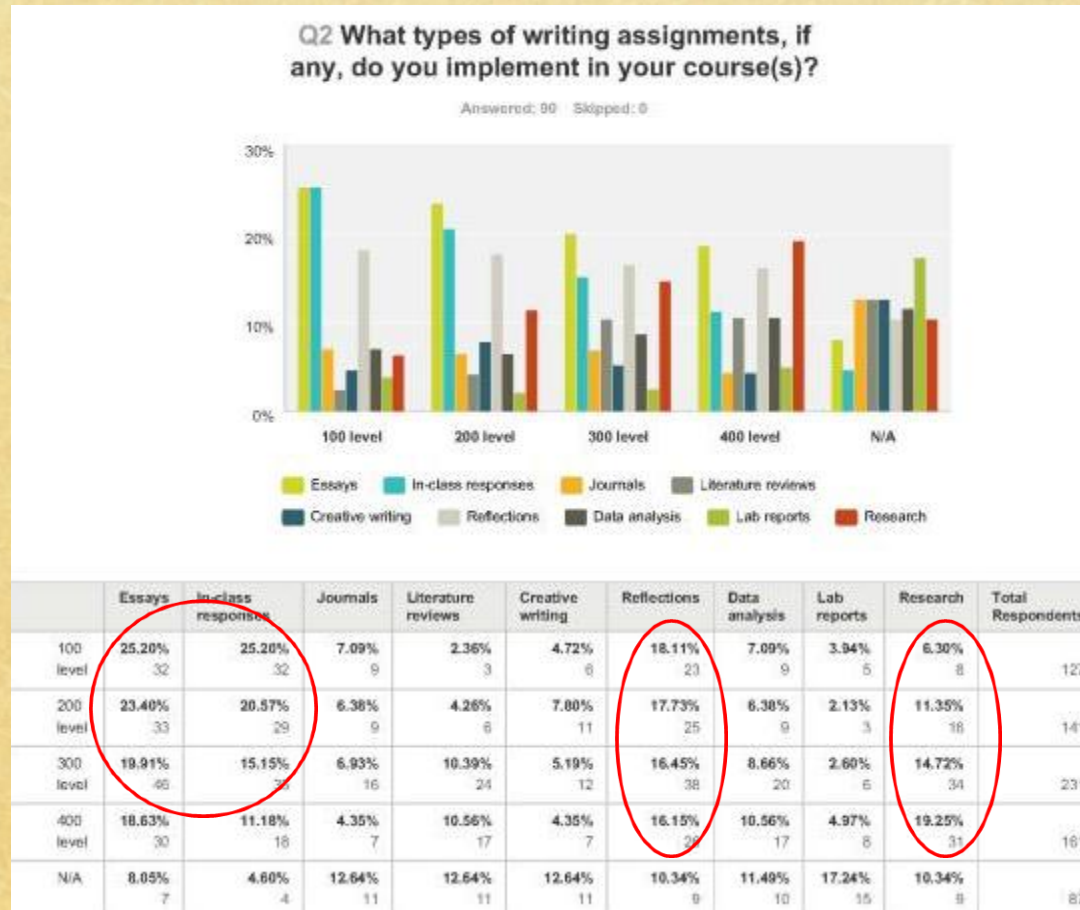
Thank you again for taking time to share your thoughts. I am most grateful for your responses and thoughtfulness.

Survey Results

Total Responses		90
Engineering	12.22%	11
Business	10.0%	9
English	12.22%	11
History	6.67%	6
Mathematics	6.67%	6
Psychology	6.67%	6
Philosophy	4.44%	4
Biology	3.33%	3

Question 2

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



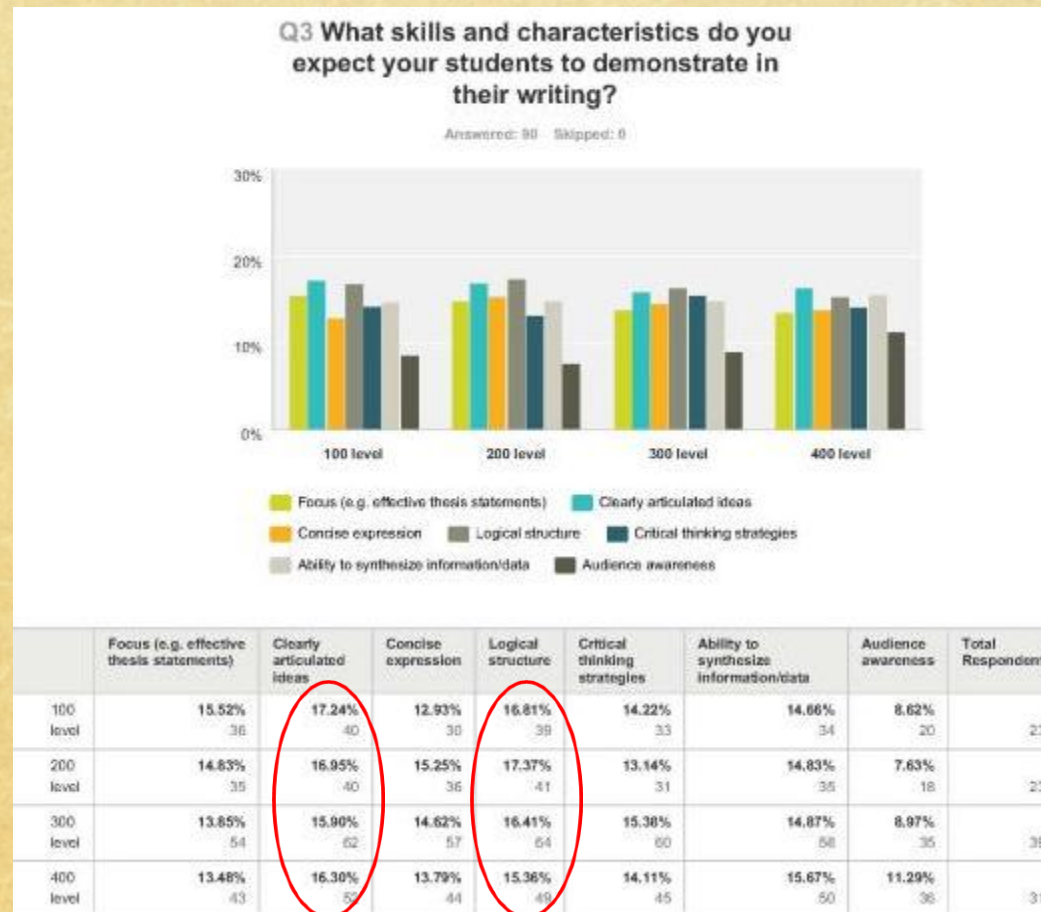
Essays

In-class responses

Reflections

Question 3

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



100 – Focus

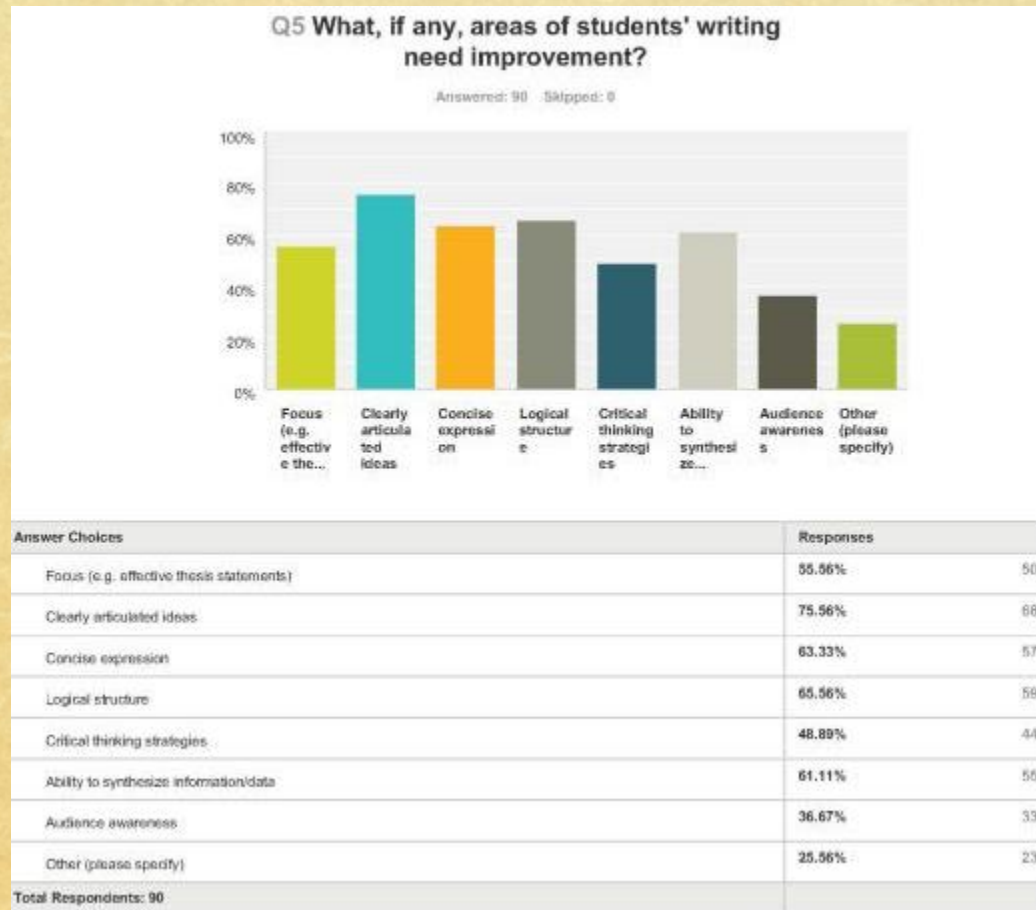
200 – Concise Expression

300 – CT Skills

400 – Synthesize

Question 5

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



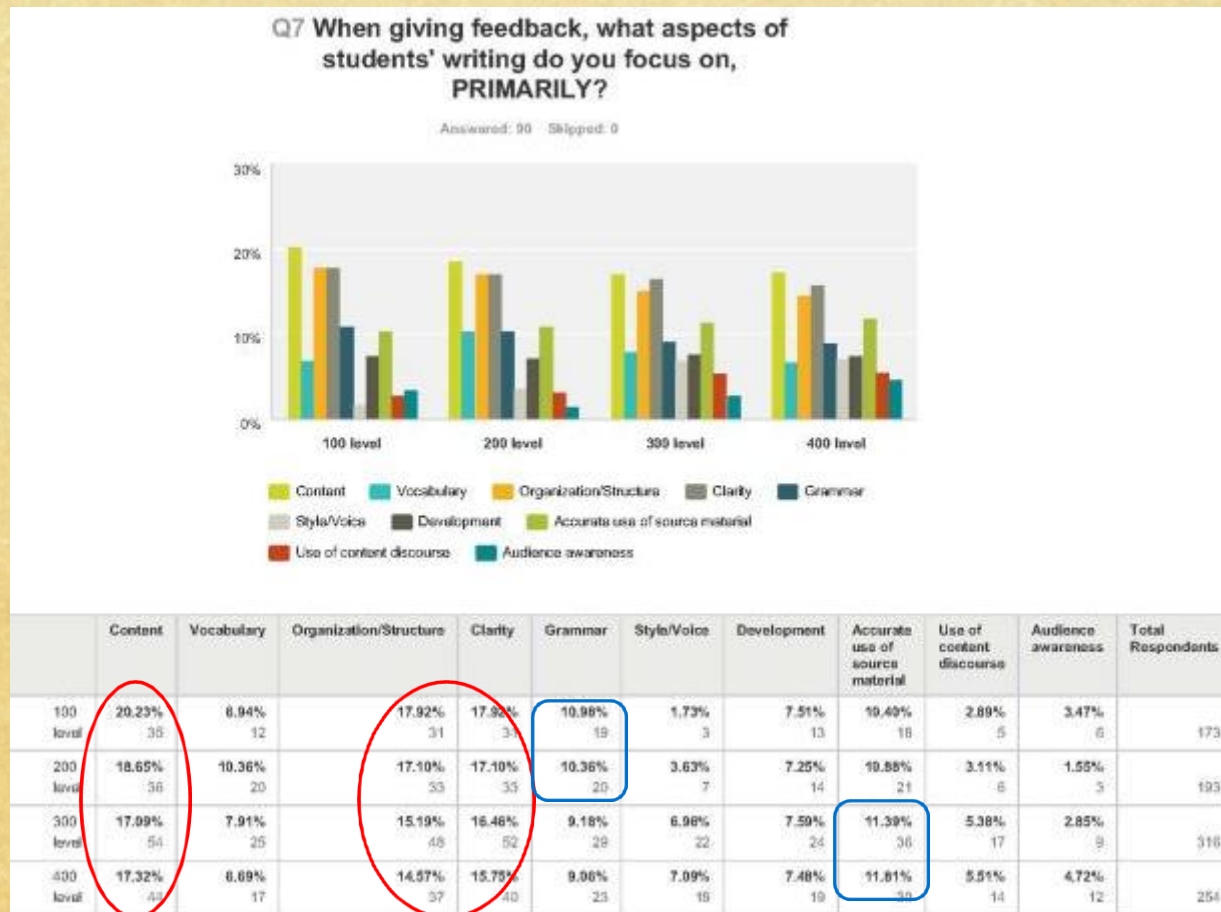
Clear 75%

Logical 65%

Concise 63%

Question 7

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



Content

Organization/Structure

Clarity

Question 8

How do you define critical thinking within your discipline?

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

Key Terms	Translated Definition	View
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

School of Arts & Sciences

Terminology

- ◆ 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

University Expectations

Assignments

- ◆ Essays, In-class responses, reflections
- ◆ Thinking process, direct, concise responses

Skills & Improvements

- ◆ Concise expression, clarity, organization

Feedback

- ◆ Content, clarity, organization

Suggestions for ESL/EFL Teachers

1. Teach some history

- ✓ Organization = logic
- ✓ Compare origins

2. Emphasize in-class responding

- ✓ Comprehension & limited, focused responses

3. Process and reflect

- ✓ Multiple revisions, applying FB
- ✓ Accountability, learner autonomy

4. Have a little bit of everything

- ✓ Introduce contextual CT strategies

Suggestions for university professors

Encourage use of **Alternative Sources** of FB

- ◆ Promote learner autonomy
 - ◆ Promote audience awareness
 - ◆ Promote cultural awareness
-
- ◆ Classroom mentors

