



Integrating Critical Thinking Skills into the Exploration of Culture in an EFL Setting

Unit 4 – Interpretation, Reflection, and Beginning Lesson Planning

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Overview of Unit 4: Interpretation, Reflection, and Beginning Lesson Planning | 2 |
| Unit 4: Description versus Interpretation | 3 |
| Unit 4: Description versus Interpretation – Follow-on Quiz | 4 |
| Unit 4: Depth of Reflection: A Rubric..... | 13 |
| Unit 4: Depth of Reflection – Follow-on Quiz..... | 19 |
| Unit 4 Discussion: Description versus Interpretation – Your Personal Experience (optional)..... | 19 |
| Unit 4: Generating Ideas for a Lesson | 21 |
| Unit 4: Your Lesson Plan..... | 23 |
| Unit 4 Self-assessment | 30 |
| Unit 4 Summary | 30 |



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Overview of Unit 4: Interpretation, Reflection, and Beginning Lesson Planning

In this unit, we will cover two more key skills in critical thinking and get you started on formulating a lesson plan on culture and critical thinking. Work on lesson plan development will continue in Unit 5.

We will start our current unit by investigating the difference between **descriptions and interpretations**. Being able to distinguish between these two is essential for examining assumptions, reducing bias, and distinguishing fact from opinion.



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All of these skills form part of reflection. Deep reflection is critical thinking at work. In order to understand what deep reflection looks like, we'll look at an instrument for measuring **depth of reflection**. The rubric that we will look at describes seven levels of depth when it comes to reflection. Working with this rubric will A) give you the opportunity to work with a rubric to assess complex tasks, and B) give you a framework for recognizing different levels of depth of reflection.

Our Unit 4 discussion will be a discussion about the role of interpretations in intercultural encounters.

At the end of the unit, you'll be given some guidance for generating ideas for creating lesson plans about culture and critical thinking to use in your classes. This will set us up for Unit 5, which is dedicated to the process of lesson planning.

Below you see a list of each Unit 4 activity.

1. **Read** a passage about distinguishing objectives from interpretations (30 minutes).
2. **Answer** a comprehension check quiz on “Description versus Interpretation” (20 minutes).
3. **Read** about the Depth of Reflection rubric and watch a video (or read its transcript) where two educators talk through how the rubric works (35 minutes).
4. **Answer** a quiz where you apply the Depth of Reflection rubric to some writing samples (25 minutes).
5. **Discuss** with other participants the role of interpretations in intercultural encounters (30 minutes – optional).
6. **Read** ideas about how to decide what cultural lessons to teach and how to get your students to engage with the ideas (15 minutes) and then, on your own, explore ideas (30 minutes).
7. **Review** a lesson plan template that can help you in your lesson planning (20 minutes).
8. **Take** a self-assessment that helps you reflect on your participation in the MOOC. This self-assessment includes ideas from the Depth of Reflection rubric (20 minutes).
Work on this throughout the week. We will discuss it next week.
9. **Read** a summary of the unit (10 minutes).

Unit 4: Description versus Interpretation



[“Concentración”](#) by Eduardo Yepes via Flickr is [licensed under CC BY 2.0](#)

As critical thinkers, we must be able to know the difference between what we have observed and our interpretation of what we have observed.

This is important for us as educators too. Good teaching requires accurately understanding what is happening with our students on an on-going basis. We need to adjust our lessons so that they are pushing our students towards more learning but not so “above their heads” that they cannot follow what is happening in class.

For example, imagine you are observing a class. You might, with your familiarity with classroom activity, look at the class and think, “They are learning,” while for one specific student you think, “She is unhappy” and for another student you might think, “He is bored.”

But do you know this with certainty? All of those are interpretations. Let’s look at each case and look at why we came to these interpretations.

Interpretation: “They are learning.”

This was based on the *observation*, “They are answering the teacher’s questions correctly.”

It may be true that they are learning. But there are other possible interpretations that could also be correct. The students might be able to answer the questions correctly because they already knew the material before the lesson. Or it might be that the teacher is asking questions in such a way that the correct answer is obvious, even if the students don’t understand why.

Interpretation: “She is unhappy.”

How about for our unhappy student? We based our interpretation on the *observation*, “She is frowning.” But perhaps this student makes a frowning face when she is concentrating. She may be quite content but simply concentrating.

Interpretation: “He is bored.”

Finally, let’s look at the student who we think looks bored. Our basis for this conclusion was the *observation*, “The student is looking at the clock.” It is true that some people look at clocks when they are bored, but just because someone looks at a clock does not necessarily mean that they are bored. This student might simply wonder how far along in the lesson they are.



[“Bored or Not Bored?”](#) by Gina Asalon is [licensed under CC BY 4.0](#)

An observation is something you notice by watching or listening¹. Our three classroom observations discussed here were:

- They are answering the teacher's questions correctly.
- She is frowning.
- The student is looking at the clock.

It is natural to make interpretations based on our observations. Many times our interpretations will be correct – but not always. Critical thinking requires us to be able to distinguish between observation and interpretation. As we saw in “What Is Critical Thinking?”, if we want to think critically about a situation, we need to be aware of our assumptions, and imagine and explore alternative interpretations.

¹ Observations can sometimes be made through other senses, such as touch or smell.

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Unit 4: Description versus Interpretation – Follow-on Quiz



“Question mark” by
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In this quiz, you will see 15 images (twice you will see an image repeated). Each image will be accompanied by a statement. You must decide if that statement is **an observation** or **an interpretation**.

NOTE: This quiz requires you to look at photos. If the photos do not load properly in your browser, you can view them below.

You must score at least 70% on each quiz in this MOOC in order to continue in the module. For this quiz, that means that you must score at least 11 out of 15 points. You may take the quiz as many times as you like. Be sure to read the feedback that you receive after each attempt. Your grade will be your highest score.

<<This diagnostic can only be completed online.>>

1. This is a mother and daughter.



"Untitled" by London Scout via Unsplash is licensed under CC0

2. This is a diner.



"Diner" by Tracy Hunter via Flickr is licensed under CC BY 2.0

3. These are forks.



"Untitled" by Alejandro Escamilla via Unsplash is licensed under CC0

4. This is a wedding.



"Untitled" by StockSnap via Pixabay is licensed under CC0

5. This boy is very young.



"Untitled" by kazuend via Unsplash is licensed under CC0

6. The glass is half full.



"Half what?" by Kalyan Chakravarthy via Flickr is licensed under CC BY 2.0

7. The man in the photo is bending over.



"Untitled" by August Schwerdfeger via Flickr and is licensed under CC BY 2.0. This derivative is licensed under CC BY 4.0 by FHI 360 for use in the AE E-Teacher program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State.

8. Several people in this photo are raising their hands.



"Untitled by dschap via Pixabay is licensed under CC0

9. These little girls are learning a lot.



"Untitled" by 12019 via Pixabay is licensed under CC0

10. Most but not all of the women in this photo are wearing head scarves.



"Untitled" by felixoncool via Pixabay is licensed under [CC0](#)

11. The boys in this photo are nervous.



"Untitled" by cordens via Pixabay is licensed under CC0

12. The girls in this photo are studying English.



"Untitled" by andros1234 via Pixabay is licensed under CC0

13. The man standing up is a scientist.



"Untitled" by cordens via Pixabay is licensed under CC0

14. This is a lecture hall.



"Untitled" by nikolayhg via Pixabay is licensed under CC0

15. There has been flooding in the area where this photo was taken.



"Flooded park bench" by August Schwerdfeger via Flickr is [licensed under CC BY 2.0](#)

Unit 4: Depth of Reflection: A Rubric

There are some things that we can learn through memorization, but there are many things that require deep thinking and reflection to learn. The development of intercultural competence is in this second category. In order to develop intercultural competence, we need to think and reflect deeply on our lived experiences with cultures and intercultural encounters.

Another area where deep reflection is necessary on a frequent basis is in our professional development as EFL teachers. To stay relevant and effective, we should regularly reflect on our lessons.

Given 1) these facts and 2) our MOOC objective of knowing how to incorporate critical thinking into our lesson, we are now going to work with a special rubric called The Depth of Reflection Rubric. The Depth of Reflection Rubric was developed as a way to check how deeply pre-service and in-service teachers are reflecting on their teaching experiences. The rubric consists of seven levels of mastery but only one evaluation criterion, which is *depth of reflection*. For each level, observable behaviors are described in the quality definitions. These behaviors are ones that have been found to indicate depth of reflection in teachers (Luk, 2008; McBride, 2010; Robinson & Kelley, 2007). When you look at the rubric, note the way in which it establishes observations as the foundation of reflection. Deeper reflections include interpretations that use the observation as a guide.



["Untitled"](#) by Chetan Menaria via Unsplash is [licensed under CC0](#)

The purpose of you learning about and working with this rubric is twofold:

1. Learning the indicators for *depth of reflection* can help you push yourself (and your colleagues) to think more deeply about your teaching in the future, and
2. By applying the rubric to writing samples (in the next exercise), you will gain experience working with a rubric to assess a complex task.

Let's familiarize ourselves with the rubric.

We suggest that you first look over the rubric (included below); then read the explanation below and watch the video (or read the transcript); and then look at the rubric again before starting on the next activity.

The Depth of Reflection Rubric is used to analyze a teacher's written reflection on a classroom experience. These are the steps for using the rubric:

1. Choose a text to analyze. The text should be a teacher's reflection on a classroom experience.
2. Divide the text into sections. Each section should describe *one basic idea*. This could be as little as one sentence or as much as a paragraph or two.
3. Read the first section of text, and then look at the rubric. Which *quality definition* best describes that section of text? What is *the highest number* you can assign to that section of text?
4. Repeat this for every section of the text.

Now that you know how the rubric is applied to a text, look over the rubric again. You will probably still have many questions about how to use the rubric. That's okay! Next, please watch this video, or read the transcript below, for further explanations.

[Video available online for viewing. Script below.]

Andy: Hi, Kara

Kara: Hey, Andy, how are you?

Andy: I'm fine thanks. And I'm very interested in this depth of reflection the rubric that you were telling me about. I think it's something that I can use with my students to help them improve their observational skills and also their reflective practice.



“Dr. Kara McBride and Andy Noonan” via Depth of Reflection: A Rubric video by World Learning is [licensed under CC BY 4.0](#)

Kara: Yeah, I think so. I have used this rubric in a number of classes and I find that it helps people to write more in-depth reflections.

Andy: Do you think maybe some of your students just follow the descriptions so that you will give them a higher grade?

Kara: I'm sure they do that at the beginning, but after following these suggestions for how to reflect on something, eventually these guidelines become habit and leave them to reflect more deeply.

Andy: Ah. I see. But I was wondering if you could talk me through the rubric. There are some things about it that I don't understand.

Kara: Sure, I'd be happy to.

Andy: So, to start, my understanding is that level I is the least amount of depth and level VII is the greatest amount of depth.

Kara: That's right.

Andy: And I think the idea also is that every higher-level on this rubric contains the characteristics of the previous levels.

Kara: Yes, that's right!

Andy: Okay, well, level II says that something must be observed. Why does there have to be observation for there to be depth of reflection?

Kara: Excellent question, Andy. This rubric was originally developed for reflecting on classes and what happened in the classroom. So if the teacher is just talking about something that he thinks but isn't referring to what actually happened in the classroom, then he's not really reflecting on the classroom. When we use this rubric for other occasions, this idea of description can be interpreted more generally.

But the basic idea here is that you must refer to the actual characteristics of the thing you are reflecting on, and not just restate your personal beliefs.

Andy: Okay. That makes sense. Then the next level adds one more characteristic. Here we should be using specific terminology special to what we are studying.

Kara: That's right. So for example in this class about culture, talking about intercultural competence, critical thinking, depth of reflection, or even culture itself can fit this requirement.

Andy: I see. It almost seems like it would be difficult not to do that.

Kara: For some people, yes, and for some people, no.

Andy: Then the next level, level IV, what's different about this level?

Kara: At level IV a person is not only describing what happened with the proper terminology, but she is also talking about her perspective on it and thinking about how this could affect others.

Andy: Okay, then at level V what is added is to not only think of one's own perspective but to think about multiple perspectives.

Kara: Yes, and this is the real hallmark of depth of reflection: to look at something from more than one perspective.

Andy: Okay then level VI and level VII are really special I guess.

Kara: That's right, it's very rare actually to find level VI and level VII in people's reflections. But it's what we're shooting for.

Andy: So it looks like at level VI the person is not only thinking about other perspectives but actually working to change his or her own perspectives on this situation.

That's right. That's why this level is called "critical" reflection. At this level the practitioner is really questioning his or her own assumptions.

Andy: And then finally at level VII we bring in ethical and moral issues and we start looking towards the future. Can you say a little bit more about that?

Kara: Yes, at this final level, the practitioner is not only thinking about what has happened and trying to understand it from multiple perspectives and really questioning his or her own beliefs, but in addition to that he or she is really thinking about how this can have an ethical or moral impact on others and what that means for how he or she should act in the future.

Andy: So one thing that I can take from this rubric is the idea that truly deep reflection is likely to change the person who's deeply reflecting.

Kara: That's absolutely right, Andy. And that's why we try to achieve deep reflection in our classes. If what you learn doesn't change you at all, then in some ways you haven't really learned anything.

Andy: Okay! Well then I'm excited to see what lays ahead.

References

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The Depth of Reflection Rubric was first published here:

McBride, K. (2010). "Reciprocity in service learning: Intercultural competence through SLA studies." *Selected proceedings from the International Conference on the Development and Assessment of Intercultural Competence*, 235-261.

The rubric was developed primarily from these two sources:

Luk, J. (2008). Assessing teaching practicum reflections: Distinguishing discourse features of the 'high' and 'low' grade reports. *System*, 36, 624–641.

Robinson, L., & Kelley, B. (2007). Developing reflective thought in preservice educators: Utilizing role-plays and digital video. *Journal of Special Education Technology* 22(2), 31-43.

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Depth of Reflection Rubric

| Level | Type of reflective thought | Defining characteristics | Example text from a teacher's reflections | Comments: Comments in this column refer to the text in the column to the left |
|-------|----------------------------|--|---|---|
| 1 | None | Statement; no observation | It's really important for teachers to limit their talking time and for students to have time to participate actively. | <i>While we agree with what this example text says, this quote does not report any observed actions.</i> |
| 2 | None | Description of something observed | The lesson today was on prefixes and suffixes. I began by reading children's books that explain each. Then I spent almost 20 more minutes explaining again what was in the books and giving my own examples using PPT. Students were looking at me most of the time, and many nodded from time to time. But this took so long that I didn't have time for the three other activities. I talked a lot and the students didn't. | <i>This quote reports on what happened. It includes some details of the students' behavior, but much of it is what the teacher did. (You can observe yourself!)</i> |
| 3 | Technical Rationality | Description of observed event with technical terms | I spent over half the class time on the Preview or Lead-in Stage of my lesson introducing prefixes and suffixes. Students maintained eye contact with me and some nodded occasionally. But my teacher talking time was way out of balance because after the books I summarized all the same points and gave my own examples. I rushed through the practice activities giving almost no time for meaning-focused interaction. | <i>This quote also reports on what happened. Unlike the example for Level 2, it includes technical terms such as "Preview or Lead-in Stage," "teacher talking time," and "meaning-focused interaction."</i> |
| 4 | Descriptive Rationality | Looks at impact on others | By spending so much time on the lead-in, and including a long lecture, my pacing left very little time for students to differentiate between the new affixes and get feedback during the activities. Without real communicative practice, I don't think they had a full opportunity to integrate or internalize the new material. I primarily heard students produce high frequency affixes that were familiar before the lesson. | <i>The teacher analyzes the impact the lesson had on the students by thinking about their learning process (differentiate between... opportunities to integrate/internalize new material...).</i> |

Adapted from: McBride, K. (2010). "Reciprocity in service learning: Intercultural competence through SLA studies." *Selected proceedings from the International Conference on the Development and Assessment of Intercultural Competence*, 235-261.

| Level | Type of reflective thought | Defining characteristics | Example text from a teacher's reflections | Comments: Comments in this column refer to the text in the column to the left |
|-------|----------------------------|---|---|--|
| 5 | Dialogic Reflection | Uses multiple perspectives (teacher and students', usually) | I thought students needed clarity about the affixes before they started practicing and some like the security of knowing the rules and patterns directly before producing. But, actually, I think students were pretty clear and eager to try after the books, and many lost interest and some may even have got confused by the long lecture and PPT examples. They are less metacognitive and generate meaning more from active experimentation than from listening. | <i>The teacher's perspective during the lesson focused on providing clarity. In this reflection, the teacher considers the students' perspective: "eager to try," "may have got confused," and "they generate meaning from active experimentation."</i> |
| 6 | Critical Reflection | Considers entire context; discourse with self and explores possible reasons for actions | I believe it's important to capture the students' attention at the beginning of the class and that's why I read the children's books. They conveyed important information about suffixes and prefixes in a fun way. But my lack of trust that the students could grasp what was important from the books and from the following more indirect/interactive activities lead to an overly long and boring first stage of the lesson and kept students from important practice. I felt I needed to be directive and frontload information to ensure all was clarified. I felt in my planning, it was part of my role as teacher--the one who knows. | <i>This quote answers questions such as,</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Why did the teacher decide to read the children's books?</i> <i>• Why did the teacher present more examples after the books?</i> |
| 7 | Reflect-on-Action | Ethical and moral issues; considers implications for future practice | I know that learners need to be active in their own learning. And yet, I and my teacher community, still have thousands of hours learning from teachers who took the role of transmitter of information and expected students to listen and learn. We know now that this doesn't promote critical thinking, independence, and life-long learning--and these are the purpose of education, and we/I have to break this outdated role. It's important for me to remember to give students time to puzzle things out, to experiment, and get feedback. In terms of lesson pacing, I need to keep the lead-in and directive input to a minimum and provide sequenced practice activities that move from more support to more independence and that allow students to clarify, gain confidence, and integrate the new material actively and through exchange of meaning. I also want to support learners who want stated rules and examples. I can elicit these after activities and provide a period of reflection to write or record what was learned. I can also ensure that students have the clarity they need to carry out activities feeling secure, by having several demonstrate before independent practice. | <i>Here the teacher considers the lesson's affect not only on the students' learning about affixes but also their development of critical thinking and becoming lifelong learners.</i> <i>The teacher generalizes from the reflection and formulates guidelines for future lessons. These are marked with phrases such as "It's important for me...," "I need to...," and "I can...."</i> |

Unit 4: Depth of Reflection – Follow-on Quiz



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Now that you have reviewed the “**Depth of Reflection**” rubric and watched the video (or read the transcript) of two colleagues discussing how it works, let’s see if you can use the rubric to evaluate the depth of reflection present in some teacher’s reflections on their classes.

There are five passages. For each one, determine the level of depth of reflection of that passage. It is not necessary to have a copy of the rubric with you as you work through these examples, but that might make it a bit easier for you.

Remember, each of these passages was written by a teacher talking about something that happened in his or her classroom.

You must score at least 70% on each quiz in this MOOC in order to continue in the module. For this quiz, that means that you must score at least 7 out of 10 points. You may take the quiz as many times as you like. Be sure to read the feedback that you receive after each attempt. Your grade will be your highest score.

<<This diagnostic can only be completed online.>>

Unit 4 Discussion: Description versus Interpretation – Your Personal Experience (optional)

What we observe, we know to be true. Our **interpretations**, on the other hand, may or may not be true. For example, the interpretation “The students are learning” may be a true and accurate interpretation of what we observe, but it may not. One way to check to see if that was a correct interpretation would be to test the students’ comprehension.

Other interpretations are true for some people and not true for other people. For example, the same two people can listen to a speaker and leave with very different impressions. One person says, “She is a great speaker” and another person says, “She is not a very good speaker.” Both interpretations are true for the people who have made them.

In cultural matters, these differences of interpretation often have to do with our expectations and the **symbolic meaning** that we attach to certain behaviors. For example, the same greeting might be considered very warm and appropriate



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by some people, while causing the opposite reaction in others (see “Intercultural Encounters” from Unit 1).

Share with us a time when you mistook your interpretation as an observation. You can choose to share a story from your teaching experience, or a story of an encounter with someone from another (micro-) culture.

In your post, please address the following:

1. Tell us the story. Be brief, but also include enough information for everyone to understand the story. (Suggested length: approximately 100 words)
2. Tell us how you eventually realized that your interpretation was just an interpretation, not fact. (Suggested length: Another approximately 100 words)

Later, please come back soon and respond to (at least) one other participant's post. As you engage online, consider how your contributions to the forum would score on the *Depth of Reflection* rubric.



“Hug” by Tania Cataldo via Flickr is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Unit 4: Generating Ideas for a Lesson

We have covered a lot of ground in this MOOC! We have explored multiple aspects of culture and critical thinking, and we have looked at activities and techniques to promote both. Now the question is, how will you take these ideas and adapt them to make effective and interesting lessons for your students? We'll get started on this process in this unit. The next (and final) unit will present you with a number of issues to consider when developing lesson plans. You will get more out of that material if you start developing a lesson plan idea now. So, let's begin!

What do you want your students to learn?

The first step is to decide what you want your students to learn. In terms of culture, learners are in the best position to understand other cultures when they have a good understanding of their own. Three activities that we have seen that can help learners with this are 1) **the cultural iceberg activity** (Frank, 2013, pp. 3-4, 35), 2) **quizzes** to help learners understand their cultures' values (Frank, 2013, p. 6), and 3) **the "Identities Wheel" activity** (Unit 2).

The Frank (2013) article described multiple ways of exploring other cultures in class. These include **cultural collections** (p. 7), **web quests** (p. 7), **visits from cultural informants** (p. 8), **role plays** (pp. 8-10), **cultural observations** (p. 10), and **keeping a culture journal** (p. 10).

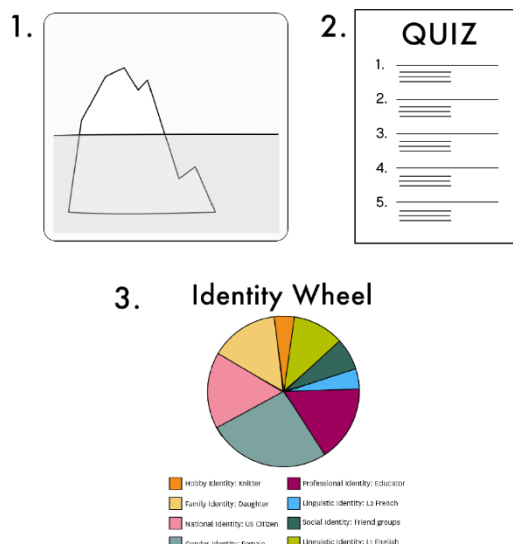
The critical thinking aspect of your lessons is found in the way in which learners approach information about culture and the extent to which they are able to

- examine assumptions
- remain as free as possible from bias and prejudice
- distinguish fact (observations) from opinion (interpretations)
- imagine and explore alternatives, and
- maintain clarity, consistency, and fairness.

Be explicit, and give your students enough time

As the teacher, you need to structure activities and instructions so that your students approach cultural information and cultural experiences with the attitudes listed above. Research shows that critical thinking is more easily learned in class when the teacher's instructions are explicit (Marin & Halpern, 2010). That is, say what you mean. For example, if your objective is for students to examine a situation from multiple perspectives, they are more likely to do it if you *tell them* explicitly that they should look at the situation from multiple perspectives.

Another common finding in planning lessons on culture and critical thinking is that this kind of lesson requires more time than some teachers originally plan for. We need to allow time for discussion. But in the right class level, this can be excellent opportunity for language practice!



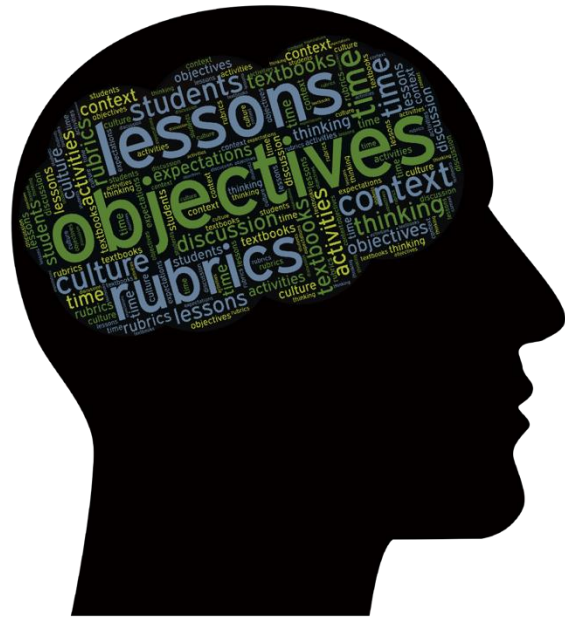
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Your next assignment is one that you will have to do outside the MOOC, but it is a very important one: begin planning a lesson for your students that will teach them about culture and critical thinking.

If you are looking for inspiration for lesson ideas, in addition to the examples listed above (from Frank and from this course), consider these sources:

The textbook you use: Consider taking some cultural information found in your textbook and expanding on it, to make sure that your students are able to explore the topics with some depth.

- **Your and your students' context:** Where are areas in your daily lives where intercultural competence is needed? You can explore these areas in class.
- **Cultural misunderstandings** (or cultural “bumps,” as they are sometimes called): These are rich grounds for exploration. You might find some interesting possibilities from this unit’s discussion forum, or perhaps from misunderstandings you have heard about from your students.
- **The English Teaching Forum:** This is an online and print journal that is published four times a year by the United States Department of State. Each issue is full of cutting-edge, classroom-tested teaching ideas. This is where Frank’s (2013) article was published.



"Man Light Bulb Brain" by GDJ via Openclipart is licensed under CC0; "Wordle" by Gina Asalon is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Use these sources to help you begin planning a lesson for your students that will teach them about culture and critical thinking. Use these questions to guide your planning process:

1. What are your learning objectives? That is, what do you want your students to learn?
2. What activities will you do?
3. How much time do you need?
4. How will you assess whether the learning objectives are met? (Perhaps a rubric?)
5. How will you communicate to the students what is expected of them? (Perhaps a rubric?)

Set aside a solid 30 minutes or more to think through these questions in depth and come up with a plan. On the next page, you'll find a lesson plan template that you can use and a self-assessment rubric to help you think about how well developed your lesson plan is.

Reference

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Marin, L. M., & Halpern, D. F. (2011). "Pedagogy for developing critical thinking in adolescents: Explicit instruction produces greatest gains." *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 6, 1-13.

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Unit 4: Your Lesson Plan

Once you have an idea for your lesson, you should start writing it out. While there are many lesson plan formats that you could use, we suggest using [the lesson plan template provided below](#), which was created for planning lessons that cover both culture and critical thinking. Follow these steps to write your lesson plan out:

1. Look over [the lesson plan template](#). You may want to first look at a blank template and then look at [an annotated version of the template](#) (included below - it is the same as the blank template, plus some explanations).
2. Plan a sample lesson that focuses on both culture and critical thinking, using the lesson plan template. If you have Word, download the [Word version of the template](#) that you can fill out on your computer.
3. Assess your lesson plan using [this self-assessment rubric](#) (included below).
4. If possible, discuss your lesson plan with a colleague.

| LESSON PLAN | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|
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This activity is an opportunity for you to work out a lesson plan that uses concepts from this MOOC. The more you put into this activity, the more you will get out of it. You will not submit your lesson plan through Canvas.

Lesson Plan Template

Name:

Length of lesson:

1. Overview description of your students (how many, age, language level, and purposes for studying English)
2. What aspect(s) of critical thinking does this lesson work on?
3. What aspect(s) of intercultural awareness and culture does this lesson work on?
4. In this lesson, I anticipate students will be challenged by:
5. To address these challenges, I plan to (note the specific activities that will address these challenges):
6. This is the way I will assess my students (note specific stages and specific activities that you will use for assessment):

Objective(s): By the end of the lesson, students will be able to...

Detailed Lesson / Activity Plan Steps

| Time | Lesson content / Activity stages | Students will... (what they will do and how they will interact with each other and the content) | Language focus (what kind of language will the students be using / practicing) | Role of the teacher... (my role, and what I will be paying attention to) | Questions that I will ask the students to deepen their learning |
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Lesson Plan Template (Modeled)

Name: Put your name here

Length of lesson: How long is it? (50 minutes?)

1. Overview description of your students (how many, age, language level, and purposes for studying English)

Other possibly useful information: is English an obligatory subject for them?
Is it a public or private institute?

2. What aspect(s) of critical thinking does this lesson work on?
Critical thinking aspects I plan to address:

Examples might include examining specific assumptions, distinguishing fact from opinion, ...

3. What aspect(s) of intercultural awareness and culture does this lesson work on?

Some possibilities:

- Ideas and facts concerning cultural products (for ex., clothing) or practices (for example, activities done at school)
- Students examining themselves as cultural beings

Note: Your response should be more specific than these.

4. In this lesson, I anticipate students will be challenged by:

Here are some possibilities:

- Showing emotional empathy
- Viewing a situation from a new perspective

These two examples are conceptual. Other difficulties could be procedural, such as access to materials, or linguistic, such as being unfamiliar with some of the associated vocabulary.

Make sure your answer will make sense to someone who is not familiar with your class.

5. To address these challenges, I plan to (note the specific activities that will address these challenges):

Address each challenge mentioned in #4.

You can use sentences like, "In order to minimize _____, I will..."

You may discuss class atmosphere, conceptual learning, and helping with the logistics of the activity (making steps less difficult to do).

6. This is the way I will assess my students (note specific stages and specific activities that you will use for assessment):

Here we are talking about assessment not necessarily in terms of tests or exams, but answering the question, “How will you know if the lesson is being effective?”

“Note specific stages” means to address assessment for each part of the class: presentation, small group work, class discussion, etc.

Here are some ideas of how to assess students in class:

- The number of sentences/examples/etc. each group is able to generate
- Whether everyone in the class is participating
- How quickly the students work through the activity
- The originality of their ideas
- A self-assessment students do after the class

Objective(s): By the end of the lesson, students will be able to....

What will students accomplish during the lesson? Here are some possibilities:

- Describe a person dressed at different historical epochs, to identify the relationship between fashion, historical time and people’s beliefs
- Recognize stereotypes, express opinions about them and justify it
- Present their opinions and practice communicative skills

State your objectives in terms that are observable and measurable. For example, “By the end of the lesson, students will be able to empathize with another cultures’ reality that is different from their own.” is an excellent goal, but how do we measure “empathize”? We can’t.

Some observable and measurable indicators of this goal could include:

- By the end of the lesson, students will be able to describe core cultural values of another culture.
- By the end of the lesson, students will be able to explain how the behaviors of members from the other culture are expressions of their values.
- By the end of the lesson, students will be able to plan a fun and productive event where youth from two or more cultures get together and share cultural practices.

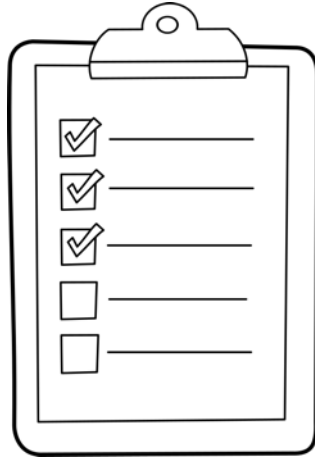
Detailed Lesson / Activity Plan Steps (Modeled)

| Time | Lesson Content / Activity Stages | Students will... (what they will do and how they will interact with each other and the content) | Language focus (what kind of language will the students be using / practicing) | Role of the teacher... (my role, and what I will be paying attention to) | Questions that I will ask the students to deepen their learning |
|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| How much time? For ex., 10 minutes | Some possibilities: -Warm-up -Introduce vocabulary -Reading -Jigsaw activity -Pre-listening activity -Discussion | Describe what the students will be doing during this stage. | Some possibilities: -Vocabulary for clothing -Describing hypothetical situations -Reading for specific information -Giving opinions | Some possibilities: -Introduce the activity -Give directions, model student behavior -Answer students' questions -Lead the discussion -Encourage students to express themselves | Based on what students will be doing, what are some questions you can ask them to get them to think more deeply about what they are doing? Write the actual questions here. |
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Lesson Plan Self-assessment Rubric

| | Sounds great | Needs a bit more clarification | Considerable development still needed |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Objectives | There are well-defined, observable, realistic, and valuable lesson objectives. | There are learning objectives, but they're still a little vague. | I don't have clearly defined learning objectives. This is my first culture lesson plan, and I'm not sure exactly what I want to accomplish with it. |
| Culture | After this activity, students will better understand their own culture, another culture, or both, and they will be able to explain this to others. | This activity will help students to better understand their culture, another culture, or both, but they may not be aware of it or be able to explain it to others. | This activity will expose students to elements associated with a particular culture, but it will not lead them to understand their own or others' cultures in a way that would increase their intercultural competence. |
| Critical thinking | This activity leads students through steps that require critical thinking, gets them to reflect on their thought process through reflection, and is likely to lead to similarly conscientious thought processes in other contexts. | This activity leads students through steps that require critical thinking, but it does not require students to reflect on their thought process. | It would be easy for a student to participate in this activity without exercising critical thinking. |
| Explicit instructions | The cultural and critical thinking elements of the lesson are explained in an explicit fashion using clear terms that the students will understand. These explanations are framed in a way that will facilitate the students applying this learning to new contexts in the future. | Both culture and critical thinking are discussed to some extent in the lesson. | The elements of culture and critical thinking are never explicitly discussed during the lesson. |

Unit 4 Self-assessment



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It's time for your last self-assessment in this MOOC. Like the other self-assessments in this course, there are no right or wrong answers; we just ask that you answer the questions honestly and thoughtfully. You need to complete this survey in order to move on to the next activities, but it is not graded and will not show up in the grade book. There are 10 questions. You can only submit the self-assessment once.

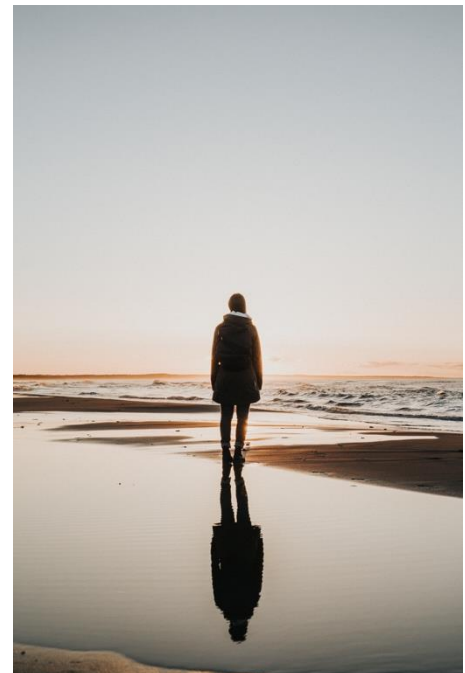
<<This task can only be completed online.>>

Unit 4 Summary

The world will present you with a lot of challenges in life – both in the classroom and out of it. How can you meet those challenges? Critical thinking is one of the most powerful tools that we have to assess situations and develop solutions. This unit included activities on one of the fundamental skills in critical thinking: the ability to distinguish observations from interpretations. Being able to make this distinction helps you to better analyze situations and identify areas where positive action can be taken.

To introduce this idea to your students, you could develop a variation on the picture-based quiz that we did in this MOOC. Guided practice like that is a good intermediate step on the way to in-depth discussions.

Complex problems require creative solutions, and thinking deeply about a problem is one of the best ways to get to new ideas. This is why we spent time learning about and applying the Depth of Reflection rubric. It has research-based markers of depth of reflection. You may have been surprised by some of the characteristics. For example, the first thing we need in order to get beyond the lowest level of reflection, is to root our reflection



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in *observations*. Why is this? Because observations are the proof that support our interpretations, so we need to start with our observations in order to see whether our interpretations are well founded.

You can use the seven levels of depth of reflection to guide you in several areas:

- To evaluate your own reflection
 - This includes written reflections you make about a situation
 - It also includes discussions that you have with others
- To help a colleague deepen his or her thinking about a matter
- To guide students in their written and spoken discussions and reflections

It is through discussion and writing that students can clarify and deepen their understanding of something. You as a teacher need to facilitate this discovery process. By knowing the markers of depth of reflection and techniques for active listening, you can help your students think critically about culture.

In our final unit, we will look at the elements of an excellent lesson plan on culture, including critical thinking. We'll see you online in Unit 5!

<<This is the end of Unit 4.>>