



American English E-Teacher Program
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State



Integrating Critical Thinking Skills into the Exploration of Culture in an EFL Setting Syllabus – Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)

Summer Semester June 1 to August 24, 2020

Course Overview

Description

The exploration of culture in an EFL setting requires helping students engage in authentic situations to develop the ability to navigate across a variety of cultures. This intercultural ability requires language choices and awareness of oneself as a cultural being. It also requires critical thinking skills, which are themselves partially culturally defined. This MOOC presents participants with a working definition of culture and tools for analyzing, understanding, and negotiating differences between cultures. Participants explore what critical thinking is and why it is necessary for the development of intercultural competence. With a view toward preparing teachers to implement culture and critical thinking lessons into their current teaching contexts, participants of this MOOC will explore activities for teaching and evaluating culture and critical thinking.

Learning Objectives and Learner Outcomes

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- Define critical thinking
- Describe themselves as cultural beings in relationship to their own and other cultures
- Develop their own beliefs about the teaching of culture in their context
- Learn and teach intercultural competence by practicing observation, multiple perspective analysis, and self-reflection

Expectations and Grading

Expectations

This course was designed to be taken over a five-week period, with participants working on and off line between 3 and 5 hours every week. To allow flexibility in scheduling, this MOOC is open for 12 weeks, from June 1, 2020 to August 24, 2020. Participants are responsible for their own participation, and you may complete course assignments at any time during these 12 weeks. The only part of this MOOC that is monitored by official facilitators is the [Content Support Discussion Board](#), where you may post questions about the content. You are also welcome, as a MOOC participant, to answer any questions posted there that you are able to answer.

Technical Support

For technical support, please view the [Technical Support](#) content page.

Grading

Participants work through the MOOC in a linear fashion: in order to advance to the next activity, a participant needs to have completed previous ones. You are, however, welcome to return to previous readings and activities, and you are encouraged to return to discussion boards for further discussion. You must earn 70% or higher on each quiz in order to advance to the next activity. You may retake quizzes to try to earn a higher score.



Assessment and Certification

Participants who complete all required activities and earn 70% or higher on the graded quizzes, before August 24, 2020, will receive a certificate and a digital badge.

Netiquette

A MOOC is a very special encounter. Its participants are from diverse cultures from all over the world, and their interaction happens entirely online, without the direct supervision of an instructor. The quality of our online interactions will be much higher if everyone follows certain basic rules of etiquette – or in our case (online), *netiquette*.

- 1. Try to be clear and direct**

Make sure that your content title reflects the content of your post and that your post is succinct and direct.

- 2. Make it easier for colleagues to read your comments**

- Put a blank space at the beginning of a message and between paragraphs.
- Be brief and specific. This is especially important in Massive Open Online Courses which have thousands of participants. When writing a contribution, try to keep it within a 100-word limit.

- 3. Be constructive**

Respond to colleagues' postings or comments in an encouraging and supportive tone. Think before you write or respond. Any criticism should be constructive—if in doubt, think about how you would feel reading a posting.

- 4. Be open to differences in opinion**

Be open to other people's opinions and try not to get emotional if someone disagrees with you. Make your learning experience a constructive and positive one by avoiding 'flaming'. For example, capitals can be interpreted as shouting. Think before you push the 'send' button. Words are powerful and can hurt; avoid anything which could be misinterpreted in any way.

- 5. Accept others**

Accept your peers' differences, e.g., cultural and language differences. You are part of a community which means caring about your own progress and that of your colleagues'.

- 6. Cite other people's work**

If you use a quote or reference in your post; make sure that you cite it or provide a link to it.

- 7. No spamming**

Please don't send advertisements to your peers or use your peers' emails in any way other than how they intend it to be used.



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Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Learning Objectives	Resources*	Activity and Assignments	Time needed to complete
1	Orientation, Culture	Familiarize yourself with the course	*For all videos, transcripts are supplied "Welcome to Integrating Critical Thinking Skills into the Exploration of Culture in an EFL Setting" video prepared by World Learning (video transcript provided).	Watch video* (/read text) Read the syllabus carefully	15 minutes 10 minutes
			Unit overview	Read Unit 1 overview	10 minutes
		Get information on participants' previous knowledge & experience in course topics	Background diagnostic	Take pre-course survey	25 minutes
		Establish a positive learning environment	"Let's Introduce Ourselves" forum	Optional: Introduce yourself to others online Read other people's introductions (responding encouraged)	10 minutes 25 minutes
		Explore what "culture" and "intercultural competence" mean	Video: Intro to culture Culture quiz	Watch "Intro to culture" video* Take post-video quiz	30 minutes 15 minutes
		Learn key concepts in intercultural communication	Video "Intercultural Communication" Follow-on quiz	Watch* "Intercultural Communication" (or read text) Take follow-on quiz	30 minutes 15 minutes
		Explore possible applications of (inter-)cultural concepts to classroom activities	Discussion forum	Discuss ways the newly introduced concepts about culture could be integrated into a lesson with your students	30 minutes
		Evaluate your participation in the MOOC up to now	Self-evaluation survey	Answer self-evaluation survey	15 minutes
		Consolidate learning from Unit 1	Unit 1 summary	Read Unit 1 summary	10 minutes



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2	Critical thinking	Familiarize yourself with Unit 2	Unit overview	Read Unit 2 overview	10 minutes
		Consider the importance of and multiple ways of defining “critical thinking”	Video*: “What Is Critical Thinking?” Quiz on “What Is Critical Thinking?”	Watch/read “What Is Critical Thinking?” Take a short quiz on the reading	30 minutes 15 minutes
		Further explore the concept of “culture” and how everyone lives across multiple cultures	Video: “Micro-cultures” (3 minutes) “Identities Wheel” diagram Follow-on quiz for “Identities Wheel”	Watch* “Micro-cultures” video Fill out the Identities-Wheel diagram Take quiz on “Identities Wheel”	20 minutes 20 minutes 20 minutes
		Learn about the characteristics of active listening	Video: “Active Listening” Quiz on “Active Listening”	Read or watch “Active Listening” Take quiz on “Active Listening”	30 minutes 15 minutes
		Explore what it means to be a “cultural being”	Discussion forum	Optional: Participate in discussion on your participation in multiple micro-cultures	30 minutes
		Evaluate your participation in Unit 2	Self-evaluation survey	Take the self-evaluation survey	15 minutes
		Synthesize learning in MOOC up to this point	Unit 2 summary	Read Unit 2 summary	10 minutes
3	Activities & Assessments	Familiarize yourself with Unit 3	Unit overview	Read Unit 3 overview	10 minutes
		Consolidate concepts about cultural learning within a methodological framework and think how to apply them in an EFL classroom	Article: “Raising Cultural Awareness in the English Language Classroom” (Frank, 2013) Quiz on Frank article	Read Frank (2013) Take quiz on Frank article	75 minutes 15 minutes
		Discuss how to apply ideas from Frank (2013) to your teaching context	Discussion forum	Optional: Participate in discussion about Frank (2013) and teaching culture	30 minutes



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		Explore assessment options through rubrics	Video*/transcript "Rubrics for Assessment" Follow-on quiz Video*/transcript "Tips for Creating Rubrics" Application quiz on "Tips for Creating Rubrics"	Read/watch "Rubrics for Assessment" Take quiz on "Rubrics for Assessment" Read or watch "Tips for Creating Rubrics" Take follow-on quiz	20 minutes 15 minutes 15 minutes 20 minutes
		Consolidate learning in MOOC up to this point	Unit 3 summary	Read Unit 3 summary	15 minutes
		Evaluate your participation and learning in the MOOC up to this point	Self-assessment survey	Take the self-assessment survey	10 minutes
4	Interpretations	Familiarize yourself with Unit 4	Unit 4 overview	Read Unit 4 overview	10 minutes
		Distinguish description from interpretation	Reading "Description vs. Interpretation" "Description vs. Interpretation" quiz	Read "Description vs. Interpretation" Take quiz on "Description vs. Interpretation"	30 minutes 20 minutes
		Consider the importance of depth of reflection in professional development and teaching	Text "Depth of Reflection: A Rubric" "Depth of Reflection" rubric and tutorial video* on how to use the rubric Depth of Reflection quiz	Read "Depth of Reflection: A Rubric" Read/watch video* about the "Depth of Reflection" Take quiz applying the "Depth of Reflection" rubric to writing samples	15 minutes 20 minutes 25 minutes
		Discuss the distinction between description and interpretation and their connection with symbolic meaning	Discussion forum	Optional: Participate in the discussion about description, interpretation, and symbolic meaning	30 minutes
		Explore lesson plan options	Text "Generating Ideas for a Lesson"	Read "Generating Ideas for a Lesson" Outline the contents of a lesson on culture and critical thinking Review the lesson plan template	15 minutes 30 minutes 20 minutes



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		Evaluate your participation and learning in the MOOC	Self-assessment survey	Take the self- assessment survey	20 minutes
		Consolidate learning in MOOC up to this point	Unit 4 summary	Read Unit 4 summary	10 minutes
5	Lesson Planning	Familiarize yourself with Unit 5	Unit 5 overview	Read Unit 5 overview	10 minutes
		Assess your learning of key terms and concepts	Post-test	Take a quiz on the major concepts covered in this course (graded)	20 minutes
		Review what makes a good lesson plan, particularly for teaching culture and critical thinking	Video* “Elements of a Good Lesson Plan”	Read/watch* “Elements of a Good Lesson Plan”	15 minutes
			<i>Comprehension quiz</i>	Take follow-on quiz	15 minutes
			Video* “Elements of a Good Lesson Plan that Targets Culture”	Read/watch* “Elements of a Good Lesson Plan that Targets Culture”	15 minutes
			<i>Comprehension quiz</i>	Take follow-on quiz	15 minutes
			Video* “Elements of a Good Lesson Plan that Targets Critical Thinking”	Read/watch* “Elements of a Good Lesson Plan that Targets Critical Thinking”	15 minutes
			<i>Comprehension quiz</i>	Take follow-on quiz	15 minutes
		Critically review some lesson plans	“Lesson Plan Ideas” – 2 EFL teachers share their culture lessons and how they went. Interactive questions about the lesson plans	Watch the three videos or read the transcripts Answer questions that lead you to think critically about the lesson plan ideas	30 minutes 55 minutes
		Consolidate learning	End-of-course diagnostic	Take end-of-course diagnostic (not graded)	15 minutes
		Formulate the next steps you want to take towards implementing these ideas into your teaching practice	Discussion forum	Optional: Send goodbyes to your fellow participants and discuss next steps	30 minutes