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Abstract

In line with previous studies in English as a Foreign Language/English as a Second Language (EFL/ESL) contexts confirming the positive correlation between critical thinking and reading comprehension, this study was conducted to determine how frequently critical thinking is used in EFL reading comprehension contexts at the tertiary level in one Iranian university. To this end, all question types associated with general and Critical Reading Questions (CRQs), Vocabulary in Context (VIC), Literal Comprehension (LC), and Extended Reasoning (ER) were identified. The principal focus of the study was on ER questions leading to critical thinking. To classify the questions formulated by teachers and students for CRQs, Peterson's model was used. To specify critical thinking question types, a framework proposed by Academic Skills Unit was used as another model. To collect the data, the researchers observed all reading comprehension courses in one of the universities in Isfahan Province. They recorded 30% of the total number of sessions using two mini-size MP4 wireless recorders during the second semester of the 2010–2011 academic year. The findings seem to suggest that teachers' focus on each CRQ type strongly influences students' attention when reading different passages. It was noted that students had serious problems with textually implicit information included in reading passages. Given this finding and the fact that the observations illustrated most teachers devote the bulk of their attention to other CRQs, this study highlights the need for raising teachers' awareness of ER-based reading comprehension questions. Moreover, the findings have implications for researchers and teachers in EFL settings.

Keywords

critical thinking, EFL reading comprehension contexts, Iranian EFL settings, teacher–student interactions

Introduction

Critical thinking has become a notable entity in the realm of education in recent years. Critical thinking skills figure prominently among the goals set by educational policy makers as well as curriculum developers (Beyer, 1985). It is partly thanks to the fact that, in general, the format of lessons and their exercises, particularly in mathematics and natural sciences, bears little, if any, relevance to the way problems are in real life (Potts, 1994).

Problem finding can provide students a good opportunity for sharing what they and their teachers know, not only in mathematics, physics, and other hard sciences but also in the area of foreign language learning. Problem finding has been used largely for first language education in the United States; but today, its role in second and foreign language learning and teaching has increased in prominence (Atkinson, 1997).

A number of different strategies have been proposed for foreign language learning. John Dewey has viewed critical thinking as a "kind of thinking that consists in turning a subject over in the mind and giving it a serious consecutive

consideration" (1993, p. 3). Critical thinking in relation to the skill of reading has been the focus of the present study.

Given that learning a foreign language, specially at intermediate and advanced levels, calls for a good deal of flexibility and the deployment of higher order thinking skills (Liaw, 2007), critical thinking can be seen as a contributory factor to the success of foreign language learners and students in reading comprehension.

Today, making students more aware of and responsible for their own knowledge acquisition and the processes related to it is highly emphasized, and this represents a shift in the paradigm, which is applicable to numerous models such as Piagetian, Vygotskian, and situated learning theories (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001).

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Teaching materials and the roles of EFL-ESL teachers Practice and Theory 2013 - Free ebook download as PDF File (.pdf), Text File (.txt) or read book online for free. rrr. PART TWO Teacher and learner perspectives: Practice. 5 How teachers evaluate coursebooks 6 How teachers adapt and supplement coursebooks 7 Learner perspectives 8 Contextual influences and individual factors. PART THREE Implications. the contexts in which they work mean that the ideas that emerge from universities are often not relevant for those working in schools. These ideas are, however, assumed to be relevant. This is not exactly an attack on academics in ivory towers. For students to develop as critical thinkers, however, they must put that knowledge to work through deliberate practice that specifically focuses on development of critical-thinking skills. That can be accomplished through carefully designed activities and assignments that provide students opportunities to practice applying critical-thinking principles to answer questions and solve problems specific to academic content areas. That is why professors must not just teach students critical-thinking skills and give them opportunities to put them to use, but they must also inspire them to continue practicing those skills on their own across academic subjects and in all areas of life. The aim of critical thinking is to try to maintain an objective position. When you think critically, you weigh up all sides of an argument and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. So, critical thinking entails: actively seeking all sides of an argument, testing the soundness of the claims made, as well as testing the soundness of the evidence used to support the claims. Take a look at all Open University courses. If you are new to university level study, find out more about the types of qualifications we offer, including our entry level Access courses and Certificates. Not ready for University study then browse over 900 free courses on OpenLearn and sign up to our newsletter to hear about new free courses as they are released. An effective way to teach EFL reading. "Improving the reading skill of any student begins with identifying his weaknesses, and then implementing appropriate methods for strengthening these skills." In guided reading students can learn how to read in different ways at different speeds for different purposes. The teacher can also observe how the students actually read and can give them prompt help by correcting reading habits. How to teach some of the skills through guided reading. 1. Word - attack skills. One of the factors that determine reading speed and comprehension is the number of words the eyes can see at one glance. The more words students can see and comprehend at one glance the greater will be their reading speed and the better will be their comprehension.