SECOND EDITION

INTRO

Q: Skills for Success

READING AND WRITING

Teacher's Handbook

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Teaching with *Q: Skills for Success*, Second Edition

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On a journey to think critically

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As teachers, it's not always easy to embrace uncertainty. There is comfort in knowing exactly what a lesson will cover, what questions are going to be asked, and how students are supposed to respond.

However, a paradigm shift often occurs when teachers push students toward thinking critically. By its very nature, critical thinking brings teachers and students to a much more ambiguous place. There is no single correct answer - but many. Teachers are asked to adopt a "pedagogy of questions" instead of a "pedagogy of answers."[1] They might not have all the answers, and answers might themselves be in the form of questions.

In addition to embracing ambiguity, teachers must grapple with what "critical thinking" actually *is*, for there are countless definitions in the literature.[2] Is it making decisions independently? Developing criteria for analyzing one's own thinking? Evaluating different perspectives, forming opinions, and taking action? Making inferences? Challenging assumptions? Withholding judgment?

In fact, critical thinking has become an umbrella term encompassing *all* of these skills. In looking at the literature, it also becomes clear that critical thinking is not a one-off task, but a journey, where students must discover and evaluate what they believe, why they believe it, and how new evidence challenges or supports what they believe. It is a journey, but one that requires several stops along the way. Part of our role as educators is to scaffold this journey of inquiry for our students.

Read the full article at www.oupeltglobalblog.com/tag/q-skills-for-success

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[1]Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: The Seabury Press.

[2]Long, C.J. (2009). Teaching critical thinking in Asian EFL contexts: theoretic and practical applications. *Proceedings of the 8th Conference of Pan-Pacific Associate of Applied Linguistics.*

Q TIPS

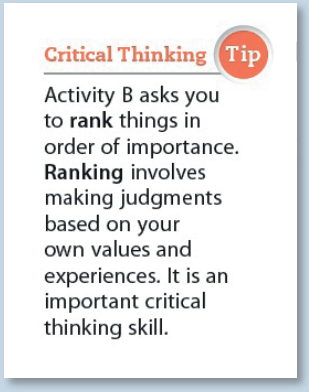
Critical thinking tips for Q Second Edition

1 Foster a welcoming environment for critical thinking

Students are exposed to other students' responses to the theme of a unit in the *Q* Online Classroom. Using this feature at the beginning of a unit will set up an environment that encourages multiple viewpoints in the classroom and pushes students to start their journey to think critically. To scaffold and welcome more discussion, teachers may consider using a pyramid structure. First, students brainstorm an initial response in writing. Second, they discuss their answer with a partner. Finally, they share their ideas in a small group or as a class.

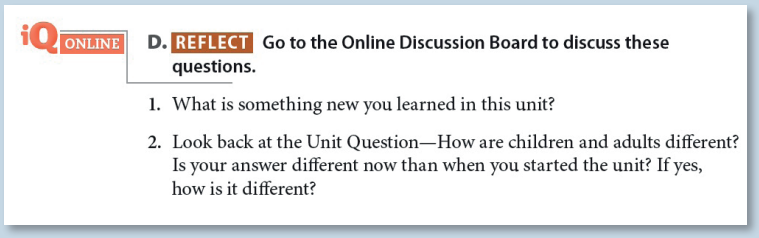
2 Make teaching of critical thinking explicit

Learners are provided with Critical Thinking tips in each unit that help them understand what critical thinking means, why it is a valuable tool in academic settings, and how it applies directly to the activities they do in *Q*. Key terminology is highlighted to help students recognize specific critical thinking strategies. Teachers may choose to point out the tip and offer other situations where one might use the critical thinking skill in real life.



3 Push students to reevaluate their thinking

The critical thinking journey begins with an Essential Question that is woven throughout each unit. New in *Q* Second Edition, students reevaluate the Essential Question again after the final speaking or writing assignment. This allows them to reflect on the entire journey, including what they have discovered for themselves from the assignment. Instructors can use the iQ Online Discussion Board to encourage students to share their reflections with their classmates and comment on each other's posts. They may also decide to use this feature when students are revising their assignment to scaffold greater reflection in the final draft.



Using Q video in the classroom

Alison Rice

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The video clips featured in *Q: Skills for Success* Second Edition are all authentic examples of the English language in use. In fact, they were created for native English speakers. In other words, the language in the videos includes idioms and expressions that are common in everyday conversation, such as see "eye to eye", or "get the ball rolling".

When you present an authentic video clip in your classroom, your students can:

- See and hear multiple speakers.
- Gain context and support for comprehension.
- Observe body language and gestures.
- Develop a variety of listening skills.
- Learn about other cultures.
- Have fun.

Of course, video use in class is very different from watching TV at home. It's important for your students to understand that you'll expect them to be actively involved and thinking, even when the lights are out!

Q TIPS Video tips for Q Second Edition

1 Be prepared

Before you present a video clip to your class, watch it multiple times yourself and think of types of activities that students can do before, during, and after watching the video. Note how the content of the video fits into what you've taught recently. Will students be able to answer yes/no or wh- questions that refer to the content? Even better, will they be able to come up with their own questions about what they see? Are there grammatical structures in the video clip that you'd like students to repeat? Are there idioms or two-word verbs that you'd like to point out?

Here's a test to know whether the excerpt will be easy for your students to understand. Play the clip with the sound off the first time you view it. Ask yourself questions such as the following: *Who are the speakers? Where are they? What is their relationship? What are they probably talking about? Are they happy or angry? Are there any clues about the kind of work that they do?*

Most of the information we gain from a video clip is visual. If you can figure out who the people in the video are, what they are doing, and where they are without sound, your students will be able to as well.

2 Don't dive right in

Spend some time (5–10 minutes) preparing students to watch the video. Pre-viewing activities introduce students to the content or mood of the clip, activating the background knowledge they already have on the topic featured in the video. Students should also be introduced to the key vocabulary of the video. Here are some pre-viewing activities that will take very little time and work for you to prepare:

- **Discuss the title** Write the title of the video clip on the board and ask students to make predictions about the content of the video.
- **What do you want to know about?** Give students a short introduction to the segment they will see. Have students work with a partner to write a question they would like answered in the video. After students watch the video, check to see whose questions were answered.

3 Plan for repeated viewing

Expect to show a video clip at least three times during one class period. Use these three techniques often:

- **Silent Viewing** Write *Who, What, Where, When*, and perhaps, *How* and *Why* on the board. Play some, or all, of the video without the sound. Then point to each question word and see what students can tell you about what they've seen.
- **Stop and Start** After students have seen the video once without the sound, start the clip from the beginning again. Pause the video every ten seconds or so (or after a complete conversational interchange). Ask a *yes/no* question about the content. Have students repeat a comment, word, or statement that they heard on the segment. Give students time to ask or write a question. Use this time to find out what students understand and where they need help.
- **Sound Only** This technique turns the video into a listening track. Cover the screen and then play the video. Ask students to guess what is happening as they listen.

4 Don't try to do too much

Do you want students to focus on the vocabulary and idioms they will hear? Are you most interested in the content of an interview or discussion? Do you want them to concentrate on pronunciation and stress or listening skills? Or, do you want to use the clip as a jumping off point for students to create their own discussion questions and develop spoken fluency? Choose one major goal and then look for creative ways to integrate your goal into the post-viewing work.

5 Wrap up each video presentation with post-viewing work

Here are some post-viewing activities that you can use with your students to encourage speaking, writing, and critical-thinking:

- **What happened?** Ask students to retell what they have just seen.
- **What do you think?** Have students state their opinions. Put them into pairs or small groups. Ask them to discuss what they saw and state if they agree or disagree with the points of view shown in the video.
- **Role-play a scene** Put students into pairs or small groups. Have them recreate a scene from the video clip. Students can act out the scene without any written prompts, or you can ask them to work together to write an original dialogue for their scene before they act it out.

To go online or not to go online

Chantal Hemmi

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With increasing learner access to both authentic materials as well as materials written for language learners online, teachers are faced with a question: Shall I go online in class or not? One way to make this informed choice is for teachers to think critically about the aim of the lesson. Here are some questions we could ask ourselves:

- Will the activity raise interest in the new topic area? Is it more effective to go online to stimulate interest in the subject, or do we want in-class activities that incorporate an interactive, kinesthetic element to encourage students to brainstorm activities interactively?
- Do we want to go online to do a reading or listening exercise, or a vocabulary learning activity for input? Can this be done more effectively online, or are your students in need of more face-to-face scaffolding of content and language before you go online?
- Are we encouraging students to develop their autonomy by going online to do some research on an essay or presentation topic? Do the students have access to a library from which to borrow books or download reliable materials? Which is the better option for them, to go online or to use paper-based publications, such as books?

This links into the aims of our courses. We have to bear in mind the strategy we want to take in order to develop students' knowledge of the content, the language they need to function in the class, and also the opportunity for students to think critically about what they are learning.

I myself learnt through experience that when I am still being controlled by the actual technology, blended learning cannot help to manifest the aims of the course. The beauty of an effective blended learning journey will only be actualized when the teacher gains control over the technical as well as the methodological knowledge and skills to design courses so that in every lesson, the teacher knows why he/she is going online or choosing to stay with face-to-face input.

Read the full article at www.oupeltglobalblog.com/tag/q-skills-for-success

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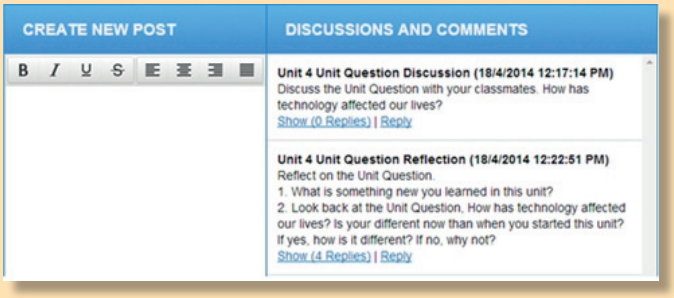
Q TIPS

Blended learning tips for iQ Online

1 Always think what your end product is going to be at the end of a unit

What do your students need to be able to do at the end? What kind of content, language and skills input do they need to be able to reach that goal?

2 To go online or not to go online, that is the question!



At the start of the unit, students have the opportunity to discuss the unit question online. Ask whether it is the right time to take the students to the Online Discussion Board or not. Have the students already got a rapport with each other to work collaboratively face to face? If so, this might be a good time to do some learner training to demonstrate how the Online Discussion Board works.

3 Reading an online article: applying the study skills learnt off-line

Go online to guide students to preview the vocabulary, read the paragraphs and do Quick Write. This is a good way to encourage students to interact with the text online. The reading exercises present examples of sentence structures and vocabulary needed to do the final writing task. This is a nice way to integrate the reading and writing activity.

4 Go online for the video viewing

What can your students gain from watching a video online? Watching a video may be a good way of expanding the students' knowledge of the topic and vocabulary. If your students go online individually, they can watch the video at their own pace. If you prefer to have the class watch it together, you could play the video on a big screen. The online exercises help students understand the grammar and study skills in context with words that are related to the topic of the unit.

5 The end product: the writing assignment

At the final writing stage, a writing model is presented to scaffold the shape of the writing task. This is followed by graphic organizers that show the structure of the paragraph, and grammar exercises online.

Students plan and write the assignment online. After writing, there is a peer review exercise that could be done. If my students need practice in writing offline, in handwriting, I might ask the students to do so without going online.

Measuring progress in academic ESL classes

Lawrence J. Zwier

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Language teachers often discuss the difficulty of measuring how well their students are doing. A typical comment goes something like, "When you're testing in a history class (or biology, or law, etc.) it's easy. They either remember the material or they don't." This oversimplifies the situation in "content classes," where analysis might be just as highly valued as memory, but the frustrated ESL/EFL teacher has a point. Teaching in a language class does not aim to convey a body of knowledge but to develop skills – and skill development is notoriously hard to assess. It's even harder when the skills are meant for use outside the language classroom, but the only venue in which you can measure *is* the language classroom.

However, all is not lost. There are many good, solid principles to apply in measuring how your students are doing. What's more, they don't require the assistance of test-construction experts or the statistical skills of a psychometrician. The average ESL/EFL teacher can do the measurement and interpret the results in ways that will have immediate benefits for their students.

The idea that measurement benefits students can get lost in discussions of measuring progress. So often, we think of measurement as serving the educational institution (which needs to promote people, issue grades, and so on) or the teacher (who needs to know how well a certain objective is being met). But it's an established principle of memory science that frequent measurement or testing is one of the best aids in learning.

Researchers at Kent State University tested the recall of several pairs of English-Lithuanian word pairs – that is, they studied how well subjects remembered not just the Lithuanian or English words but also the pairing of those words across languages. The main variable was how often a given subject was tested on the associations of the pairs. The researchers found a clear correlation between the number of "retrievals" – the number of times a participant was required to recall the pairs on tests – and the long-term memory of the pairs.

Read the full article at www.oupeltglobalblog.com/tag/q-skills-for-success

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