# LESSONS FROM CRITICAL THINKING:
# HOW TO PROMOTE THINKING SKILLS
# IN EFL WRITING CLASSES

**Mojgan Rashtchi**[1i]**,**
**Babak Khoshnevisan**[2]
[1]TEFL Department, Faculty of Foreign Languages,
North Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University,
Iran
[2]University of South Florida,
USA

**Abstract:**
Critical thinking as an issue with on-going importance has an immense influence on modern education. However, it is not a natural disposition but is a potential that needs cultivation. Training individuals to become critical thinkers is not an easy task, but by adopting appropriate strategies and classroom practices, it is attainable. The present article aimed to show how English writing classes in EFL settings could facilitate the practice of critical thinking skills. This paper suggests that critical thinking can be implemented as a classroom practice in writing courses by using several tasks that integrate writing and thinking skills. The article starts with an introduction to the definitions of critical thinking. Then, it underlines the classroom procedures, which can be implemented by teachers. Following this, some sample tasks and writing topics are proposed to help teachers employ critical thinking practices in their classes.

**Keywords:** critical thinking, EFL writing courses, reasoning skills, writing tasks

## 1. Introduction

The origins of critical thinking date back to Socrates, who used dialogic questions with his students to stimulate reflection. His purpose was to cultivate the ability to evaluate ideas, opinions, and assumptions. For Socrates looking for evidence, assessing reasons, analyzing fundamental conceptualizations, and finding the applications of individuals' deeds and words were of vital value. Socrates' views found their way to modern education by Dewey's reflective thinking (1933). According to Dewey, reflective thinking is "*active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief of supposed form of knowledge in the*

---

[i] Correspondence: email mojgan.rashtchi@gmail.com

*light of the grounds that support it… it is a conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of reasons"* (p. 6). What Dewey tries to establish is a sound judgment that does not occur naturally but by voluntary effort.

Traces of Dewey's reflective thinking is visible in many areas related to education. It has influenced scholars' definitions of fruitful thinking, which is critical by nature. To Schafersman (1991), critical thinking is *"reasonable, reflective, responsible, and skillful thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do"* (p. 3). Ennis (1993) also draws on reflectivity and defines critical thinking as *"reasonable reflective thinking"* (p. 180). As Wade (1995) puts forth, eight characteristics can be attributed to critical thinking. Questioning, elaborating on an issue, looking for evidence, evaluating assumptions and biases, relying on logical reasoning, eluding over-simplification, considering others' viewpoints, and tolerating ambiguity comprise the features of critical thinking.

Dewey's views on reflective thinking led Lipman to focus on the integration of reflection and education, which he thoroughly describes in his seminal work *"Thinking in Education"* (2003). Lipman differentiates between critical, creative, and caring types of thinking. For him, critical thinking is *"applied thinking,"* which seeks to *"develop a product."* It involves using knowledge to bring about reasonable change. The product of critical thinking at its minimum level may be judgment, and at its maximum level is *"putting that judgment into practice"* (p. 211). This type of thinking relies on explicit criteria of what makes for high-quality judgment. Creative thinking, as Lipman argues, is *"exemplified by the thinking that goes into the making of art, by the idiosyncratic encoding through which each work withholds itself from us"* (p. 248). Creative thinking, then, is the element of *"idiosyncratic judgment in every artist's work"* (p. 249). The overriding criterion in creative thinking is meaningfulness, invention, and discovery. Besides, a creative thinker can go beyond previous achievements, to stimulate others' creativity, to bring out the thought and expression of others, to create problems and require others to think and solve them independently. Caring thinking is emotive thinking, which causes *"thinking in values"* (p. 130). For Lipman, critical and creative thinking are complex forms of thought, called higher-order thinking.

Lipman's (2003) position on thinking and education directs him to propose that thinking skills should be taught per se. He rejects the idea that *"all thinking is discipline-specific…and that critical thinking can be taught only in the context of each particular discipline"* (p. 70). He goes further to propose the idea of restructuring education. He concludes that during schooling, children should learn to *"investigate problems and engage in inquiry for themselves"* (p. 20). Lipman's innovation in educating children to become critical thinkers known as Philosophy for Children (P4C) is a way to foster children's ability to think and reason through discussion and self-questioning (Rashtchi, 2007). He utilizes Socratic dialog and other forms of debate to sharpen conceptual definitions and analyses. Education within the framework drawn by Lipman must help students think because thinking is a skill that is capable of being perfected (Lipman et al., 1980).

Paul (1995), another scholar whose views on different aspects of critical thinking are of great value, differentiates between aimless thinking and purposeful thinking.

Aimless thinking merely wanders into an endless stream of unanalyzed associations from one's unanalyzed past. In contrast, purposeful thinking involves figuring things out, solving problems, reasoning, and decision-making to the creation of thoughts. Purposeful thinking needs development to create intellectual products. Paul believes automatic, unreflective processes cannot lead to learning anything valuable. Asking appropriate questions, reasoning, and coming to reliable and trustworthy conclusions, as signs of intellectual standards, are the result of purposeful thinking which critical thinkers try to impose upon their thinking structures (Paul, 1993). Interpreting data and resolving issues are the results of thinking ability, which needs cultivation. That is to say, critical thinking is not an inevitable disposition of the human mind. It is a vital goal and value that deserves constant attention. Scholars drenched with their concerns for educational issues should always consider the prominence of thinking skills. Their constructive perceptions and persistent references to critical thinking can persuade teachers to be committed to the integration of such practices into their classes.

However, although many scholars have emphasized the usefulness of teaching thinking skills, the transferability of such skills remains a matter of debate. Lipman (2003) and Cam (1995), for example, view the practice of thinking skills independent of other subject areas. For them, the classroom is a "*community of inquiry*," which allows children to practice reasoning skills through reading stories mainly written for P4C classes (Lipman, 2003, p. 3). Their practices focus on training children, and except for some general recommendations, they do not suggest practical guidelines for training adults' thinking skills. However, for some scholars like Resnick (1987) and Glaser (1984), thinking and reasoning should be embedded in particular subject matters. Glaser (1984) theorizes that there are no general thinking and reasoning skills beyond individual subject areas.

Nevertheless, each side has provided conflicting arguments and opinions. Above and beyond, researchers assert that concentrating on thinking skills, developing, and using them over time tends to produce more effective thinking than an unplanned emphasis on thinking skills. Priority should be given to reasoning, reading, writing, and listening in all curriculum areas (Glaser, 1984; Keating, 1988; Paul, 1993). In line with these scholars, the authors of the current article intend to show how EFL teachers, who are committed to critical thinking paradigm, can integrate thinking-centered activities and tasks into writing classes.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Thinking and Reasoning Skills
Some educators like Beyer (1988), De Bono (1985), and Marzano (1992) devised programs for the instruction of general thinking and reasoning skills that are relevant to all content domains. Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) in Colorado embraced a group of researchers led by John Kendall. Their purpose was to signify the thinking skills students should possess in different content areas (Kendal & Marzano,

2000). The task undertaken by McREL researchers was to identify the general thinking and reasoning skills that cut across subject areas. Their analysis of twelve subject areas ("*science, mathematics, social studies, geography, history, civics, physical education, health, the arts, foreign language, English language arts, and the world of work*" p.30) indicated six general thinking and reasoning skills applicable to most content areas. Marzano and Pollock (2001) refer to these skills as "*identifying similarities and differences*", "*problem-solving and troubleshooting*", "*decision-making*", "*hypothesis testing and scientific inquiry*" and "*use of logic and reasoning*" (p. 33). Teachers' responsibility, then, is to design appropriate authentic tasks to cover the mentioned thinking skills. Cam's (1995) activities for teaching thinking skills to children can be a source of inspiration for teachers to design activities for different subject matters and learners at varying ages.

## 2.2 Using Writing Skills for Teaching Thinking
One possibility to teach thinking skills is through the transferrable skill of writing (Topping, 2001). In one's mental framework, thinking and writing have mutual relationships, as one fosters the other (Kellog, 1994). In other words, excellence in writing requires excellence in thinking (Paul, 1993) since both need "*clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, significance, and fairness*" (Paul & Elder, 2003, p. 4). Writing promotes new ways of thinking and teaches learners to value new ideas. It enables individuals to transmit their thoughts to others in an organized manner. Excellent writing, then, is the result of the skills one has developed in both thinking and writing. As Lipman et al. (1980) assert, "*if the thinking that goes on in a conversation is densely structured and textured, that which goes in the act of writing can be even more so*" (p. 14). Therefore, one of the contexts in foreign/second language teaching that can have a decisive role in cultivating thinking skills is writing classes. Embedding such skills in different writing activities equip language educators with an opportunity to encourage learners to think systematically and purposefully. Educators should teach student-writers to follow a clear purpose, focus, and logic in their compositions.

One significant issue worthy of attention derives from process versus product approaches to writing (Rashtchi et al., 2019; Sheykhi Behdani & Rashtchi, 2019). Teaching thinking skills are possible only in the stream of process writing; that is, outlining, drafting, and revising. Moreover, the classes should begin with simple tasks for practicing thinking skills and move toward more complex ones. For such courses, teachers should pursue carefully-prepared lesson plans derived from a well-defined syllabus. The first few sessions can begin with a series of varying tasks to stimulate learners' mindset and enable them to realize the classroom as a setting for inquiry. However, learners' age range, needs, preferences, level and field of education, and background play a central role in designing tasks. Examples of tasks prepared by the authors of the current article are available in the Appendix.

## 2.3 Classroom Activities

### 2.3.1 Questioning

Questioning is an essential feature of critical thinking classes. Raths et al. (1967), in their early work, offer an elaborated typology of questioning, which teachers could use in any subject to promote students' thinking styles. They argue that instead of memorization, drills, and homework, education should focus on inquiry, reflection, and consideration of alternatives. Questions must be challenging and should stimulate discussion since they are drawn from multi-dimensional issues that do not have a definite answer. The purpose of such matters is to engage learners in reflection, problem-solving, and decision-making. In this sense, they are different from conventional, information-oriented questions. Dewey (1933) and Hullfish and Smith (1978) believe that real problems are excellent sources for queries since depending on individuals' beliefs and perspectives, their answers might change. Questions formulated by students are excellent sources for strengthening scientific thinking and reasoning. Learners should be encouraged to take positions and express their opinions regarding the issues; they should participate in a dialogical process with their classmates, listen carefully, and state their agreement or disagreement. Developing critical thinking is related to the active involvement of learners in questioning, substantiated by careful listening, and speaking mediated by deep cognitive processes, which, in turn, are necessary for producing excellent writing.

Furthermore, questioning is an act through which reading and writing skills intersect. Reading is a good source for framing issues and contributes to generating ideas when learners start writing compositions. Teachers should find sources that stimulate learners' reflection. The conventional reading of passages followed by comprehension questions should give way to a more productive approach. One suggestion is reading literature (Rashtchi, 2019). Selecting short stories appropriate to the language proficiency level of the participants could stimulate thinking and bring about classroom discussions. For example, *"The bear that wasn't"* (Frank Tashlin, 1946), or *"Alice's adventures in wonderland"* (Lewis Carroll, 1865), though are children's stories possess sound lines of philosophy and are excellent sources for question formation. Also, reading short poems like *"The road not taken"* (Robert Frost, 1916), *"The unknown citizen"* (W. H. Auden, 1939), and *"To see the world in a grain of sand"* (William Blake 1863), are other examples for proposing problem-based questions. Such readings can be followed by writing summaries, reports of classroom discussions, or compositions on the topics addressed in the classroom. Another source to promote inquiry could emerge from extensive reading (Rashtchi & Pourmand, 2014). Reading novels outside of the class, followed by classroom discussions and the teacher's dialogic questions, can enhance critical thinking. Controlled extensive reading in which teachers supervise students' development can engage learners in active reading as an endeavor, which provokes background knowledge and reasoning skills to deeply reflect on the text (Rashtchi & Aghajanzadeh, 2008).

Suggestions for reading activities leading to critical thinking necessitates reference to the critical reading concept, which embraces a dynamic, reflective, and analytic kind of reading. The approach encourages learners to challenge the writer's perspectives by

reading reflectively, locating and discussing the principle ideas, and making distinctions between facts and opinions. Wallace (2003) assumes that critical readers are capable of making connections between the context provided by the writer and their knowledge via words. Therefore, the readers' interpretations give different meanings to the texts. Teachers' role is to boost dialogical processes rather than presenting learners with preplanned conclusions (Rashtchi & Aghajanzadeh, 2008).

### 2.3.2 Cooperative Learning

A classroom practice that stimulates thinking is cooperative learning that has its roots in Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural perspectives. Working in cooperation facilitates performing at higher intellectual levels. The diversity of knowledge and experience among learners constitutes an appropriate source to engage learners in the learning process. Bruner (1985) maintains that cooperative learning methods facilitate problem-solving since, during negotiation and interaction, students confront a variety of perspectives proposed by the members of the group that urge them to consider issues from different aspects. Learning content knowledge and critical thinking skills, which are achieved by group interactions and support, promote thinking. Cooperative learning, therefore, creates a community in which students practice how to listen carefully, ask relevant questions, clarify issues, and re-state viewpoints. It also allows the teacher to observe and assess students' thinking processes. Many students may feel inhibited when addressing an entire class directed by a teacher. Working in small groups is an opportunity for such students to overcome distracting emotions and gain psychological strength to participate in discussions. When working and thinking together, learners become assertive and gain competence in critical thinking (Rashtchi & Sadraeimanesh, 2011). Active classroom participation, instead of perceiving the class as a place for the transmission of information, allows students to develop valuable problem-solving skills by formulating ideas, discussing and defending positions, and responding to the queries of classmates.

Likewise, interaction among students in group discussions supervised by teachers plays a significant role in practicing critical thinking. Testing hypotheses, asking inspiring questions, evaluating different viewpoints, and justifying them are excellent achievements of working in groups. Silverman and Smith (2003) argue that competence in critical thinking bestows learners with the ability to look for justifications in each other's reasoning.

### 2.3.3 Employing Organizational Skills

Information organizing skills are necessary for both thinking and writing. That is to say, learners should practice how to organize data into suggestive categories to form a network of meanings and relationships. Thus, learners should practice "*organizational processes*" that help them classify information and convey them coherently. Narrative and descriptive writing help learners consider "*the whole of an experience and break it down into its constituents, whether viewed sequentially or simultaneously*" (Lipman, 2003, p. 180). What

---

can be inferred then is engaging learners in narrative writing and activating their imagination while writing. Lipman (1978) suggests interesting topics for triggering students' creativity and enhancing their motivation to get involved in thinking and writing. Subjects such as *"The experience of being a pair of shoes," "Imagine you are a tree," "Being a rock," "Being a submarine"* requires learners to engage in an on-going dialogue with themselves. These kinds of topics provide opportunities to think about things and events always taken for granted. Putting oneself in other peoples' positions and looking at the world from an object's perspective are unusual activities that challenge an individual's cognitive processes.

A classroom task that can help learners think chronologically is requiring them to write dialogue journals. Like narrative writing, the activity stimulates thinking about events in sequential order. Dialogue journals enhance learners' focus on thinking and learning by drawing their attention to both content and form (Garmon, 2001; Murphy & Hastings, 2006; Rashtchi & Khoshnevisan, 2008; Rashtchi et al. 2012).

### 2.3.4 Expanding Vocabulary Repertoire

Concepts formed by words carry thoughts. One essential activity to consider in writing classes is expanding learners' vocabulary knowledge. Particular focus on the cluster of synonymous terms contribute to thinking and generating ideas. One suggestion is to require learners to classify words or create word clusters (Lipman, 2003). Another way to expand vocabulary knowledge is the use of cloze tasks with missing content words to improve writing and thinking skills (Rashtchi & Mohammadi, 2017). The type of the cloze task and the text could be tailored to the level of the participants. (see Task 6 in the Appendix). Additionally, using graphic organizers for classifying words, ideas, and events in the initial stages of practicing thinking skills are suggested (Cam, 1995).

### 2.3.5 Selecting Topics for Writing

The gradual development of writing and thinking skills is indispensable in a writing class centered around thinking skills. Before learners get involved in essay writing, doing different thinking-writing tasks is essential. Learners' engagement in such activities for some sessions functions as a preparatory course before getting started. Selecting appropriate topics that center around the six thinking skills mentioned by Marzano and Pollock (2001) contributes to critical thinking and writing. Before selecting issues, teachers should identify which thinking component they intend to cultivate. Table 1 provides some suggestions. In selecting topics, learners' interests, preferences, and level of proficiency deserve attention. However, it is worth mentioning that the thinking areas have some overlap, which is inevitable as they belong to the same trait, that is, cognitive structure.

**Table 1:** Suggested topics and related thinking skills

| | |
|---|---|
| Similarities and differences | Traditional lifestyle or modern lifestyle? |
| | Reality and truth |
| | Child adoption, good or bad? |
| Problem-solving | How can I manage to work and study simultaneously? |
| | How can you have a better relationship with your parents? |
| | How can we deal with misunderstandings? |
| Decision-making | Do you prefer to live the way ordinary people usually live, or do you like to step in a way less chosen by people? |
| | Should we tell the truth when it can put people into trouble? |
| | Mother or child, who should be saved first by a doctor? |
| Hypothesis testing | What are some of the assumptions for the COVID-19 outbreak? |
| | Why are some people better language learners? |
| | Why are some people satisfied with who they are? |
| Reasoning | Should we see having children a natural right? |
| | Is honesty always the best policy? |
| | Why is forgetting necessary? |
| Argumentation | Why should education be free for everyone? |
| | Never judge a book by its cover. |
| | Why is the internet necessary? |

## 3. Conclusion

Critical thinking, as this review article implies, is not a new concept. Multiple researchers have scrutinized its prominence and have attempted to enrich its theoretical foundations. Today, there is a scholarly accord regarding the necessity of critical thinking for the betterment of societies. The question that has involved many researchers is how and in what ways to infuse it into education. Some scholars, as mentioned in the article, have suggested using classes specifically designed for teaching critical thinking (e.g., Cam, 1995; Lipman, 2003). However, children are usually the target of such courses. Teaching thinking skills to adults requires considering their essential differences with children. Factors such as age, cognitive abilities, and world knowledge are only some of the distinctions to mention. Besides, adults may feel reluctant to participate in classes for empowering reasoning skills partly because of time constraints and partly due to lack of feeling its necessity. Therefore, practicing thinking skills in English language courses, which adults usually participate willingly for educational purposes, can be of high relevance. Such integration is beneficial since the improvement of problem-solving, decision-making, and logical reasoning can lead to positive changes in learners' lifestyles. The present article denotes that critical thinking is not a natural disposition; its development does not occur merely by environmental triggers. Thus, practical suggestions for infusing critical thinking skills into classes need attention. The authors addressed the significance of some classroom procedures applicable to writing classes. They referred to possible ways to convert such courses to settings for the active involvement of learners in reasoning skills. They also suggested different types of tasks to encourage EFL teachers to focus on teaching critical thinking. Teachers who feel the

need for the improvement of societies do not overlook the opportunities they have to familiarize learners with the lines of critical thinking, which inevitably leads to fairness, accurate judgment, and caring for ethical considerations. The obligation to train students to become responsible citizens is the foremost goal of all those who, in one way or another, are involved in educating individuals.

## About the Authors

**Mojgan Rashtchi** is an associate professor of Applied Linguistics in the faculty of Foreign Languages of Islamic Azad University, North Tehran Branch. She has taught a variety of subjects related to English language teaching to students at different levels. She has published several articles and books and has participated in several local and international conferences. Her primary areas of interest include English language teaching methodology, theories of first and second language acquisition, teaching language skills, P4C, and research in education.

**Babak Khoshnevisan** has a PhD in the Technology in Education and Second Language Acquisition (TESLA) Program from the University of South Florida (USF). He is a teacher educator of ESOL courses at USF. His research interests include teacher education, idiomaticity, augmented reality (AR), virtual reality, and computer-assisted language learning.

## References

Auden, W. H. (1939). The unknown citizen. Retrieved from https://poets.org/poem/unknown-citizen.

Beyer, B. K. (1988). *Developing a thinking skills program*. Allyn and Bacon.

Blake, W. (1963). To see the world in a grain of sand. Retrieved from https://www.poetryloverspage.com/poets/blake/to_see_world.html

Bruner, J. (1985). *Vygotsky: An historical and conceptual perspective. Culture, communication, and cognition: Vygotskian perspectives.* Cambridge University Press.

Cam, P. (1995). *Thinking together: Philosophical inquiry for the classroom*. Hale & Ironmonger.

De Bono, E. (1985). *The CoRT thinking program*. In J. W. Segal, S. F. Chipman, & R. Glaser (Eds.), *Thinking and learning skills: Relating instruction to research* (Vol. 1, pp. 363-388). Lawrence Erlbaum.

Dewey, J. (1993). *How we think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process*. Houghton Mifflin.

Ennis, R. H. (1993). Critical thinking assessment. *Theory into Practice, 32* (3), 179-186. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849309543594

Frost, R. (1916). The road not taken. Retrieved from https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44272/the-road-not-taken

Garmon, M. A. (2001). The benefits of dialogue journals: What prospective teachers say. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 28(4)*, 37-50. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org

Glaser, R. (1984). *Education and thinking*: *The role of knowledge*. *American Psychologist, 39*(2), 93–104. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.39.2.93

Hullfish, H. G., & Smith, P. G (1978). *Reflective thinking: The method of education.* Greenwood Press.

Keating, D. P. (1988). *Adolescents' ability to engage in critical thinking*. National Center on Effective Secondary Schools. University of Wisconsin-Madison. Retrieved from https://www.semanticscholar.org

Kellog, R. T. (1994). *The psychology of writing*. Oxford University Press.

Kendall, J. S., & Marzano, R. J. (2000). *Content knowledge: A compendium of standards and benchmarks for K-12 education (3ʳᵈ Ed.).* Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; Aurora, Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.

Lipman, M. (1978). *Suki*. Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children.

Lipman, M. (2003). *Thinking in education (2ⁿᵈ Ed.).* Cambridge University Press.

Lipman, M., Sharp, A. M., & Oscanyan, F. S. (1980). *Philosophy in the classroom (2ⁿᵈ Ed.).* Temple University Press.

Marzano, R. J. (1992). *A different kind of classroom. Teaching with dimensions of learning.* Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Marzano, R. J., & Pollock, J. E. (2001). Standards-based thinking and reasoning skills. In A. L. Costa (Ed.). *Developing minds, a resource book for teaching thinking* (pp.29-35). Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Murphy, B., & Hastings, A. (2006). The utter hopelessness of explicit grammar teaching. *The International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching, 2* (2). 9-11. Retrieved from www.citeseerx.ist.psu.edu

Paul, R. W. (1993). *What every person needs to survive a rapidly changing world*. The Foundation for Critical Thinking.

Paul, R. W. (1995). *The logic of creative and critical thinking.* The Foundation for Critical Thinking.

Paul, R. W., & Elder, L. (2003). *The thinker's guide to how to write a paragraph*. The Foundation for Critical Thinking.

Rashtchi, M. (2007). A pathway toward critical thinking through cooperative writing in an English college course in Iran. *The Near and Middle Eastern Journal of Research in Education*, *2(1),* (1-11). https://doi.org/10.5339/nmejre.2007.2.1

Rashtchi, M. (2019). Scaffolding argumentative essay writing via reader-response approach: A case study. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education, 4*(12), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-019-0078-2

Rashtchi, M., & Aghajanzadeh, M. (2008). Comparative critical reading strategy and writing achievement of Iranian EFL learners. *Journal of English Language Pedagogy and Practice*, *1*(2*),* 117-130. http://jal.iaut.ac.ir

Rashtchi, M., & Khoshnevisan, B. (2009). Audiotaped dialogue journal: A technique to improve speaking skill of Iranian EFL learners. *Journal of English Language Pedagogy and Practice*, *1*(3), 164-176. http://jal.iaut.ac.ir

Rashtchi, M., & Sadraeimanesh, F. (2011). Is debate a useful strategy in enhancing the reading comprehension and critical thinking of Iranian EFL learners? *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 1*(4), 361-369. https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.1.4.361-369

Rashtchi, M., Nourozi Khiabani, M., & Roumiani, N. (2012). The effect of listening to audiotaped journals on Iranian EFL learners' grammar knowledge. *Advances in Asian Social Sciences, 4* (1), 764-768. www.worldsciencepublisher.org

Rashtchi, M., & Pourmand, S. (2014). Controlled extensive reading and vocabulary knowledge: Let's move towards autonomous learning in EFL contexts. *International Journal of English and Education, 3*(2), 132-146. http://ijee.org/

Rashtchi, M., & Mohammadi, M. A. (2017). Teaching lexical bundles to improve academic writing via tasks: Does the type of input matter? *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching, 14*(2), 201-219. https://e-flt.nus.edu.sg/

Rashtchi, M., Porkar, R., & Ghazi Mir Saeed, F. (2019). Product-based, process-based, and genre-based instructions in expository writing: Focusing on EFL learners' performance and strategy use. *European Journal of Education Studies, 6*(6), 115-136. http://dx.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3427842

Resnick, L. B. (1987). *Education and learning to think*. National Academy Press.

Raths, L. B., Jonas, A., Rothstein, A., & Wassermann, S. (1967). *Teaching for thinking, theory, and application.* Charles E. Merrill.

Schafersman, S. D. (1991). An introduction to critical thinking. Retrieved from http://www.freeinquiry.com/critical-thinking.html

Sheikhy Behdani, R., & Rashtchi, M. (2019). Process writing and enhancement of critical thinking ability: Is writing a vehicle or an ingredient of critical thinking? *Iranian Journal of Applied Language Studies, 11*(1), 181-200. http://dx.doi.org/10.22111/ijals.2019.4937

Silverman, J. & Smith, S. (2003). Critical thinking source: Answers to frequently asked questions about critical thinking. Retrieved from http://www.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/critical1.html

Tashlin, F. (1946). *The bear that wasn't.* E.P. Dutton.

Topping, K. (2001). *Thinking reading writing*. Continuum.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.

Wade, C. (1995). Using writing to develop and assess critical thinking. *Teaching of Psychology, 22,* 24–28. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15328023top2201_8

Wallace, C. (2003). *Critical reading in language education*. Palgrave Macmillan.

## Appendix

**Suggestions for Classroom Tasks**

**Task 1:** Teachers can use scrambled paragraphs and expect learners to arrange them in the order of occurrence; this activity may help learners to practice thinking and writing in related sequences. The internet is a good source for finding authentic materials. The following passage is retrieved from https://www.wikihow.com/Bake-a-Cake

**Example**:
Arrange the steps in the following scrambled paragraph by putting a number beside each sentence:

> *"Pound cake is one of the simplest cakes to bake. For best results, add the eggs one at a time and beat the mixture in between. Bake the cake for 1 hour 15 minutes. Rotate the pan 180 degrees halfway through the cooking time to ensure it bakes evenly. Preheat the oven to 325 °F (163 °C) and grease and flour a cake pan. Use butter or shortening to grease the pan. Then, sprinkle a light layer of flour into the pan, rotate the pan until it's evenly coated, then tap out the excess flour. Pound cakes are best baked in deep pans. Cream the butter and sugar. Place the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl and beat them together until the mixture is light, fluffy, and creamy. Add the eggs and vanilla. Keep beating the mixture until the eggs are completely incorporated. Stir in the cake flour. Keep the electric mixer on low or use a wooden spoon to stir the flour in a bit at a time until it's just incorporated. Be careful not to overmix it. Pour the batter into the pan. Use a spatula to scrape down the sides of the bowl. The cake is finished when a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Enjoy your delicious homemade cake!"*

**Task 2:** This task will persuade learners to think about outcomes. Example:
Select one of the words in parentheses and complete the sentence using your personal views.
1. We (should/ should not) pay attention to recycling because ………….. .
2. I (like/ don't like) to write about ………………….. because……………………….
3. People (should/ should not) obey the rules in society because………………..
4. Driving fast (should/ should not) be avoided because …………… .
5. I agree/disagree with donations because ………………………….. .
6. People (should/ should not) not act violently because……………… .

**Task 3:** Writing endings for unfinished paragraphs will enhance the ability to make predictions about the events and can help to generate ideas.
Write an ending for the following paragraph:

> *"That night Mary was unusually tired, so she went to bed to get good sleep. But she forgot to lock the main door of her apartment. At about midnight, Mary heard some sounds in the*

*living room. Someone was trying to open the door and enter inside when she decided to
………… ."*

**Task 4:** Establishing connections will help learners to learn relevance. Also, it will help find relations between words and develop ideas.
Try to write a paragraph for each one of the following groups of words. You can use them as many times as you want. The paragraph should be more than three sentences.
1. happiness, life, work
2. employment, society, welfare
3. permanence, change, life
4. Fairness, judgment, reasonable

**Task 5:** Using the following structure (if something happens ………) can be a good starting point for classroom discussions and a good source of brainstorming for learners to get started in writing essays.
1. What will happen if people lose the ability to talk?
2. What will happen if no one acts violently?
3. What will happen if no wars occur in the world?

**Task 6:** By using cloze tasks, teachers can expand their vocabulary knowledge of the learners. It can help to avoid repeating the same words when writing and have access to an extensive collection of words. Teachers can use several sources for classroom practices accessible at different websites. The following passage is adapted from https://www.khanacademy.org.
Fill in the blanks with the words which best suits the blanks. Then find as many synonyms as you can for the terms and write them down below the passage. You can use a dictionary.

> extra, ignitable, remains decay, stored, compressed, released, pressure, incredible

*Everything changed during the Industrial Revolution, which began around 1750. People found a/an ……1……..source of energy with an ……2…capacity for work. That source was fossil fuels — coal, oil, and natural gas, though coal led the way — formed underground from the …3…..of plants and animals from much earlier geologic times. When these fuels were burned, they …4…..energy, originally from the Sun, that had been …5……for hundreds of millions of years. Coal was formed when huge trees from the Carboniferous period (345– 280 million years ago) fell and were covered with water so that oxygen and bacteria could not …6…..them. Instead, the …7..of the weight of materials above them …8…..them into dark, carbonic,…9….. rock.*