Remodelling in Other Subjects

Introduction

This chapter contains a host of remodelled lessons from a variety of subjects demonstrating, among other things, that critical teaching strategies can be applied in all teaching situations. As always, we present these remodels not as perfect, but as plausible examples of how teachers can begin to reshape their instruction to encourage and cultivate critical thinking. As you read through them, you might consider how you might have critiqued and remodelled the original lessons. There are always a wide variety of ways in which we can exercise our independent thinking and decision-making while teaching for critical thinking. As critical thinkers we think for ourselves, thus our teaching reflects our uniqueness as persons. Our instruction is a creative as well as critical activity. Indeed we critique to create. We find fault only to improve. Critical thinking does not threaten; it excites us to think of new possibilities, new ways of encouraging our students to think for themselves, to become more responsible persons, and to put their own brain power into operation so that they can take control of their own learning. It is encouraging to see teachers in a variety of subjects remodelling and redesigning their own instruction. Within the next couple of years, exemplary remodels should be available for every subject and grade level.
Compound Interest

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- be able to distinguish compounded interest, simple interest, and interest compounded continuously
- compare various institutions’ investment programs by clarifying their claims, and refining generalizations
- custom tailor a financial plan for their own futures, distinguishing relevant from irrelevant factors

Standard Approach

Students will learn formulas for compound interest. They should be able to solve these equations with exponents and logarithms.

Critique

This lesson does not explain the difference in the various formulas nor when, why, or how to apply them. Using information pamphlets and ads from banks will also help students practice distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information. When students are setting up and working out equations, students should understand reasons for doing each step.

Strategies used to remodel

S-17 questioning deeply: raising and pursuing root or significant questions
S-13 clarifying issues, conclusions, or beliefs
S-10 refining generalizations and avoiding oversimplifications
S-31 distinguishing relevant from irrelevant facts

Remodelled Lesson Plan

After the formulas for interest compounded continuously, daily, monthly, and simple interest are introduced, the students will be given examples that will not show a significant difference once the interests are calculated. They will then be asked why this worked in this manner. Have students explain in detail why the equations are set up as they are. When would one type of interest be more desirable than another? When would this kind of account be best? That? First have students guess, then do the calculations. S-17
Prior to the introduction of these formulas, the students will have been asked to gather information from five different banks/savings & loans. Discussion will then be stimulated by these questions which clarify the policies:

How do these institutions describe their method of calculation of interest? Are all these institutions offering similar plans? How are the plans different? Why are their plans different? What kinds of terms do they use? What do they mean? Are there special restrictions on these accounts? S-13

How could these various kinds of accounts apply to different personal situations? To what kind of individual would it apply and how? Are there factors that may change a particular situation? S-10

Next, on their own, the students would write a personal scenario of their lives ten years from now, briefly describing their lifestyles and incomes. They would explain what criteria they would use in selecting a bank. They would explain what factors in their lives are critical in their personal situation. S-31

To develop the next part of their papers, students must answer the following question. “In what ways would your association with this institution be advantageous to you?” For the last part of this paper students need to write a one page description of their future financial plan and on a second piece of paper, they must back up their predictions with answers that have been derived from appropriate formulas. And finally, they should consider other options of investment. Would there be better ways to invest in their situations?

Lesson plan remodelling as a strategy for staff and curriculum development is not a simple one-shot approach. It requires patience and commitment. But it genuinely develops the critical thinking of teachers and puts them in a position to understand and help transform the curriculum into effective teaching and learning.
Using Percentages

by Susan Dembitz, Miranda, CA

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- fulfill the objectives of the original plan
- distinguish relevant from irrelevant facts in word problems
- refine generalizations in the process of creating, analyzing, solving, and critiquing percentage problems

Standard Approach

Texts divide the work into small skills, and teach each one through examples and practice. It is easily adapted to the seven step lesson plan by using a few exercises for quiz material. Word problems are used in each lesson and in "applications" and "careers" lessons. The objectives are:
- to change percents to decimals
- to change decimals and fractions to percents
- to solve problems using percents
- to find a percent of a number
- to find the percent one number is of another
- to find a number given the percent of the number
- to find commissions
- to find total wages based on commission plus salary
- to find the cost of an item if a discount is given

Critique

A major problem with this style of teaching is that students learn to use each algorithm, but still have difficulty understanding which one is appropriate in a given situation and what the answers mean. In addition, they don't learn to sort out relevant from irrelevant data because all the data given is relevant. They rarely examine their assumptions or understand that they are testing generalizations.

editor's note: Those who understand these mathematical relationships can always reconstruct and use them properly. Those who merely memorize and mindlessly apply formulas will more likely use the wrong formula, misuse it, or misinterpret the answer.

Strategies used to remodel
S-17 questioning deeply: raising and pursuing root or significant questions
S-31 distinguishing relevant from irrelevant facts
S-24 practicing Socratic discussion: clarifying and questioning beliefs, theories, or perspectives
Remodelled Lesson Plan S-17

The students will practice using: x percent of a equals b; commission equals rate times amount of sale; cost equals regular price minus discount; total price equals sum of individual prices plus tax; in many possible forms and combinations, by creating their own problems from newspaper and catalogue ads brought into the classroom. For data on commissions, the students will use data obtained if possible from a salesperson who visits the classroom and describes the use of percentage in their work.

The teacher will model the creation of problems, then students will choose materials, construct problems, solve them, and exchange with other students. As part of the process, the teacher will model Socratic questioning designed to clarify the problems, (especially having students explain the problems in words, for example, "For every dollar of the original price, they subtract ten cents") examine the assumptions, distinguish between relevant and irrelevant facts, and finally refine generalizations in the process of creating useful algorithms. "What question are you asking? What do you need to figure out? What information do you need? What information given here can you ignore? S-31 How should you set up the equation? Why? What will this tell you? Does this answer make sense? Explain it in words. (Elicit complete explanations.) Would this equation work for any situation? Why or why not?" S-24

Students will be divided into groups to critique each others' formulations in the same fashion, while the teacher circulates through the classroom monitoring this activity.

Finally, the class will share generalizations gleaned from this process and each group will demonstrate its favorite problem to the whole class.

In order to think critically about issues we must first be able to state the issue clearly. The more completely, clearly, and accurately the issue is formulated, the easier and more helpful the discussion of its settlement.
What is Spanish?

by Julia Epstein Kluger, Sinaloa Middle School, Novato, CA

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- clarify ideas concerning that which is and is not Spanish
- develop a concept of the term ‘Hispanic’

Standard Approach
The teacher asks the class to define the word ‘Spanish’. Students generate a list of those meanings of Spanish. After the list is developed, each student is then asked to create a poster that illustrates some of the ideas from the list.

Critique
The concept of ‘Spanish’ has been greatly oversimplified to include anyone who speaks the language. Students need to be made aware of the distinction between that which is Spanish and comes from the country of Spain, and that which is Hispanic, or that which comes from a country in which Spanish is spoken. For example, many students confuse Spanish food with Mexican food. Similarly, a Spanish person, in their opinion, can be anyone who speaks the language, clearly limiting their awareness of the diversity in the Hispanic world.

Strategies used to remodel
S-14 clarifying and analyzing the meanings of words or phrases
S-29 noting significant similarities and differences
S-7 developing intellectual good faith or integrity

Remodelled Lesson Plan S-14
As an introduction, say to the class, “If I were to tell you that in Spain, a tortilla is made from eggs and potatoes, what would you think?” Through probing questions, explore with the class their ideas about what they think the word ‘Spanish’ means. Use maps, pictures, and other familiar images to help them clarify their ideas of what Spanish really means and how the term can be used in ways which are misleading, oversimplifying, or incorrect. If necessary, introduce the term ‘Hispanic.’ S-29
After the discussion, the teacher might ask, "How is what we have just discussed important to you now when you hear the word 'English'?" The connection here is irresistible. Ask, "Would you then call someone who speaks English and who lives in South Africa, 'English'? What would you think of someone who referred to you as 'English'? How would you feel? Why?" The point should be well taken.

Finally, have the students write their own essay, "What is Spanish?"

In teaching for critical thinking in the strong sense, we are committed to teaching in such a way that children learn as soon and as completely as possible how to become responsible for their own thinking.
Queridos Amigos

by Julia Epstein Kluger, Sinaloa Middle School, Novato, CA

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- practice critical reading by posing questions as they read the introduction to their Spanish texts and analyzing words and phrases in it
- raise root questions regarding learning another language
- understand the difference between facts and ideals

Standard Approach

Have students read the author's introduction to the text. Discuss the reasons for and advantages to studying Spanish. Ask the students if they agree and if they can think of any others. Assign students to write a paragraph explaining their reasons for studying Spanish.

Critique

Although the introduction does name many good reasons why students should study the language and even lists worthwhile objectives to pursue once we know the language, the basic assumption is that the students will, in fact, learn the language without any reference as to how they will learn it or what it really means to know the language. Furthermore, the authors use concepts like 'second language' and 'foreign language' without defining them. I believe that students need to be able to understand what they can expect from learning a language: What kind of commitment is involved? What are realistic goals? How will they use the language? Can you know a language and not be able to speak it?

Finally, the inspirational message that the authors are communicating to us seems to lack the necessary references to what the learner's responsibilities are. After reading the letter one might come away thinking that the book speaks Spanish as well!

Strategies used to remodel
S-21 reading critically: clarifying or critiquing texts
S-14 clarifying and analyzing the meanings of words or phrases
S-17 questioning deeply: raising and pursuing root or significant questions
Remodelled Lesson Plan s-21

Begin by having students read the introduction to themselves taking down any vocabulary or terms they may be unfamiliar with. Ask students to think as they read, posing questions based upon statements the authors make. Students can share their questions and discuss possible answers.

Clarify issues and identify unfamiliar words, terms, etc. Then ask the class to explain what they think the authors mean by a second language as opposed to a foreign language. “What do you think they mean? Would you use these expressions the way the authors do? Could you apply both of them in the same situation? Would the authors? Why do the authors use these expressions as they do? What point are they making? Is this a good way to make that point? Is it a worthwhile point to make?” s-14

Continue the discussion, and then ask questions regarding the methods used to learn a language. Students could examine the instructional methods of their texts. “What does it mean to know a language? What does it mean to know a culture? How did you learn your language? How long did it take? Was it easy or hard? Why? Will this experience be similar? Why or why not?” In addition to clarifying and raising root questions, the teacher might discuss the number of Americans who speak Spanish and the number of Hispanics who must learn English. Many exciting discussions can be developed from here that would require offering opinions, evaluating arguments, and discussing reasons for learning other languages. s-17

As a closing assignment, I would have students write their own introduction to the book based on the discussions in class.

Do not to spend too much time on the general formulations of what critical thinking is before moving to the level of particular strategies, since people tend to have trouble assimilating general concepts unless they are made accessible by concrete examples.
The Children of Sanchez

by John Lawrence Carolan  Faculty
Ursuline High School, Santa Rosa, CA

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
• practice listening critically by discussing a movie
• evaluate possible turning points in the story
• examine their assumptions about Mexicans
• discuss the place of women in Hispanic society as developed in the movie and compare it to our culture

Standard Approach

First, the teacher points out the classic yet exaggerated nature of the movie (and book). Then he points out the fact that it is based on a true story. Then the students discuss the following aspects of the movie: The confusing story line and how that confusion was used to establish the tone of helplessness of Mexican urban poor; the tendency of Mexican society to be double-standard in nature, and the license this gives to the male head of the family; the matriarchal character of Mexican life, and how it falls apart without a mother in the family; therefore, the impossibility of (or incredible difficulty for) the Mexican woman to be liberated and independent; the characteristics of violence and discrimination that are similar between Mexican and American societies.

Homework of the lesson: That all students write a paragraph in Spanish talking about how winning the lottery changed the family's life. Students use this assignment to practice the newly learned past perfect tense.

Critique

There are two main problems with this lesson plan: 1) It runs the risk of people generalizing and oversimplifying from what they see in the movie, as well as taking what they see at face value without examining the deeper implications and consequences of the events that took place. 2) The lesson as planned does not force the students beyond an academic analysis of the movie itself, except finally to comparing cultures. There is no attempt to have the students examine their own personal, similar experiences.
Strategies used to remodel

S-22 listening critically: the art of silent dialogue
S-10 refining generalizations and avoiding oversimplifications
S-29 noting significant similarities and differences
S-34 recognizing contradictions
S-18 analyzing or evaluating arguments, interpretations, beliefs, or theories
S-5 developing intellectual humility and suspending judgment
S-30 examining or evaluating assumptions
S-17 questioning deeply: raising and pursuing root or significant questions
S-7 developing intellectual good faith or integrity
S-12 developing one's perspective: creating or exploring beliefs, arguments, or theories

Remodelled Lesson Plan S-22

First, discuss the movie itself and get beyond the literal events by asking the following questions: Was the movie difficult to follow? Why? Was the confusion resulting just from the point of view of the viewer, or was it perhaps a reflection of the confusion in the lives of the characters? **S-10**

What was the real source of confusion for the characters in the movie, especially for Consuelo? What virtue did the author depict in Consuelo that was stronger than in the other characters? **S-29** Why did her love for her father and his for her create a great contradiction? What would be the clearest statement of this contradiction? What beliefs and attitudes underlie or produce it? **S-34**

What was the apparent turning point for the movie? How many think this really was the turning point? What differences did winning the lottery make in their lives? Examining how everyone's life finally turned out at the end, what was the real turning point that changed the family's life? Why do you think so? What results did it have? Why was it more significant than this? That? Etc.? **S-18**

Second, discuss the assumptions and generalizations that we bring to the movie, that could keep us from seeing the gentleness and love that is the real theme and turning point.

What assumptions about Mexicans did we bring to the movie? What's your image of the typical poor Mexican family? (Discuss at length, making a list — laziness, macho, criminal, etc.) How did the movie re-enforce these assumptions? What specific events had you convinced you were right? Which of these assumptions were too simple? **S-5** What events did you see that were the result of different causes than you assumed? (For example, poverty was the real cause of lack of privacy which was in turn the cause of family violence and unrest.) **S-10** How could our assumptions be more accurate? **S-30**

What can we say about violence and poverty in general in the movie that is true in any society? How are the two related? Which begets which? Give some examples from the movie. Why is it hard to break this cycle? **S-17**

Third, students can compare our culture with Mexican culture.

We've just crossed the line into another culture. Let's talk about ours. When have you encountered contradictions similar to those depicted in the movie? **S-29**
When or how have you seen similar family violence? Poverty? Lack of privacy? Cultural entrapment? Is this all therefore proper just to minorities? S-17

Finally, what about the role of male and female? In the movie and Mexican culture? How about in ours? Are there similar problems? Are we more advanced here? Are we out of the woods yet? S-7

Homework: Write a paragraph in Spanish about the real turning point of the movie and its results. At the end, mention what you learned about life from the movie. S-12

*The reader should keep in mind the connection between the principles and applications, on the one hand, and the character traits of a fairminded critical thinker, on the other. Our aim, once again, is not a set of disjointed skills, but an integrated, committed, thinking person.*
Setting up and Typing a Table

by Barbara Johannes, Ursuline High School, Santa Rosa, CA

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- center a three-column table on an 8 1/2” x 11” sheet of paper
- develop confidence in their ability to reason their way through a difficult typing problem
- discuss which known facts are relevant to this task
- generate, test, and assess their own solutions to this problem

Standard Approach

1) Tell students that there are 66 vertical lines on an 8 1/2” x 11” sheet of paper.
2) Tell students that there are 85 horizontal spaces across that sheet of paper.
3) Teach the students how to count up the lines and spaces in the table and how to plug those numbers into the following formulas:
   To find vertical starting line: (lines on paper) - (lines in problem) = (blank lines remaining); (blank lines) ÷ 2 = (vertical starting line).
   To find left margin and tab settings: (spaces required) ÷ 2 = X; (horizontal center) - X = (left margin); (left margin) + (spaces for column 1) + (space between columns) = (first tab setting); (first tab) + (spaces for column 2) + (space between columns) = (second tab setting).

Critique

The lesson has an inherent problem since teachers lose 80% of their students at some point during the presentation. These students do not understand how the formulas work. Therefore, they do not remember the formulas, and each time they are faced with the job of typing a table, they do not remember how to do it. The students have not had the opportunity to think through the problem for themselves. They have not had the opportunity to go through given and previously learned facts, and use their own thinking process to solve the problem. As a result, many never do learn how to set up a table. They also do not learn that by working with information which they already know, they can figure out how to solve this table set up (and other) typing problems.
Strategies used to remodel
S-9 developing confidence in reason
S-11 comparing analogous situations: transferring insights to new contexts
S-31 distinguishing relevant from irrelevant facts
S-1 thinking independently
S-19 generating or assessing solutions
S-8 developing intellectual perseverance

Remodelled Lesson Plan S-9

When presenting the new typing problem of setting up a table, it would be important to brainstorm situations in which tables might be used, so that students could see the importance of learning how to do this task. Then it would be necessary to emphasize to students that there is more than one method which could be used to solve this problem of producing a vertically and horizontally centered table. Different typing books teach different methods, and they will come up with a variety of methods. Then write on the board all of the typing facts and information which they already know (lines and spaces on sheet of paper, center space, center line, how to center titles, how to set margins, etc.). They would then start to think of these facts in relation to the problem at hand. S-11 Students would now start thinking about which of these facts might be relevant. "Which known facts are relevant to the solution of this problem and which are not? Why? How does that fact help?" S-31 After this brainstorming and clarification process, students would team up into groups of two or three and use the information which has been generated to find a solution for the problem of setting up this table. S-1

The teams would test their solutions and then present them to the other teams. The students would discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the various solutions, point out problems to each other, stress good ideas, and so forth. They would then determine as a group, the best or most effective and efficient method or methods of solving this problem. "Which of these seems best? Why? Which is easiest to understand or remember?" S-19

The teacher would emphasize the key steps which students have followed and the fact that they have solved, on their own, the most difficult of typing problems. If they can set up a table correctly, they can set up any problem which they might encounter at the typewriter. This is a major accomplishment! S-9

*Editor's note:* Students' initial solutions might not work. They should be allowed to try again after examining their mistakes and correcting for them. The class can then discuss the processes they used and problems they had, sharing the modes of reasoning with which they approached the problem. S-8
Composition at the Keyboard

by Cynthia Chauner-Niendorf, Ursuline High School, Santa Rosa, CA

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- discuss the consequences of using and failing to use standard business letter formats
- compose business letters for specific purposes at the keyboard
- evaluate each others’ letters
- edit the rough draft and print out final copies in an appropriate business letter style

Standard Approach—

Review the modified block and block business letter styles.
Discuss how productivity is improved by being able to compose and revise at the keyboard by:
- speeding up correction of errors;
- eliminating manual retyping;
- minimizing reduction in typing speed caused by “fear of making an error;”
- permitting “high speed” printing of final letter in “perfect copy.”

Tell the students they may select any topic for their letter and that when they finish their first draft they are to revise it and then prepare the final copy.

Critique

This lesson does not involve the students in the preliminary process of getting from the idea for composition to the finished product. Typing students often do not relate their in-class production work to anything outside the classroom. This lesson fails to get the students thinking, but rather gives them somewhat of a rote exercise. Although the assignment is intended to give some creativity from its composition experience, it would be more effective if there were clearer and more specific guidelines for composition.

editor’s note: By having students (first in groups, then the class as a whole) assess and correct the drafts, each student gains more insight into good business writing and editing of letters.

Strategies used to remodel
S-35  exploring implications and consequences
S-1   thinking independently
S-10  refining generalizations and avoiding oversimplifications
S-21  reading critically: clarifying or critiquing texts
S-8   developing intellectual perseverance
Remodelled Lesson Plan

When reviewing the letter styles, begin by asking the students to present the letter styles and formats by writing the basic features of block and modified block on the board. Then ask, "Why do you think we have letter formats? Why not just type letters any way we want? How would people receiving them react? What do people do with business letters? How do standardized formats help them file and refer to them?" S-35

By question instead of presentation by the teacher, ask, "Does the word processor improve productivity? How? Please give specific examples of how it speeds up error correction. What makes the word processor better than the typewriter? S-1 Think of some jobs which could be better performed on a typewriter." S-10

Next, divide the students into four groups. Explain the assignment: We'd like to go on a class trip to Disneyland and we have some letters to write in planning that trip. Each group will brainstorm ideas, facts, pertinent questions to be asked, to whom will the letter be sent, for their particular aspect of the trip. S-35 Brochures will be available for reference.

Group A — Transportation (bus/train)
Group B — Overnight Accommodations
Group C — Disneyland — Group Rates
Group D — Letter to parents of class members asking for parent chaperones

Each student takes notes of its group's ideas. One member of each group reports to the class the necessary components for a letter on their particular topic. The teacher can use this opportunity to question and bring out other points.

Then students would go back to their own machines and each compose a letter for their particular topic (saving their final version). This guarantees that all students must do some of their own work. S-1

When these letters are completed, the groups now get together and critique the letters of their group — re-editing and coming up with an improved version from the group. This is presented to the entire class for critique and final editing. Is this clear? Precise? To the point? Grammatically correct? Would it give the recipient a good impression of you? S-21

Students now update their versions to match the group's final version. Students would have specific addresses to use so that, in the case of transportation and hotels, the same letter would be written, with only the address information changing. In this manner, students have had the opportunity for small group work with some structure but lots of room for creativity and thinking. Students have 'hands-on experience' in the improved productivity using the word processor. The subject of a class trip to Disneyland would be academically less taxing while still getting the students to think objectively in the preliminary stages. Also the students are now transferring a typing lesson into the real world.

editor's note: Students could compare their first drafts with the final versions, noting specific improvements. S-8
Handling Stress Through Stretching

by Libby Stillman, Ursuline High School, Santa Rosa, CA

Objectives of the remodelled plan

The students will:
- explore thoughts and feelings which underlie experiences of stress
- learn the “Morning Stretch” as a means of relieving stress
- think independently by creating their own exercises

Standard Approach

The teacher will present a brief lecture emphasizing that “stretching” can help relieve the daily stresses we all experience. Examples of stress include: Alarm fails ... Car won’t start ... Late to school ... Unprepared for class ... Low grade on test ... Term paper due ... Boyfriend doesn’t call ... Mom and Dad have loud argument ... and so on. How does stress make you feel? What are the side effects of stress? Can stress make you physically sick? How does exercise relieve stress?” The teacher then demonstrates and teaches the “Morning Stretch,” a simple series of yoga postures designed to massage the spine and relieve tension. Students will then try the stretch several times. Follow-up includes having students express how they feel after the series of postures and repeated daily participation for one or two weeks.

Critique

This lesson does not give the students an opportunity to discuss the meaning of the term “stress” nor to express their feelings on the subject as it relates to them personally. They are required to listen to a teacher explanation with teacher examples followed by some questions to stimulate some controlled thought. The demonstration by the teacher of the “Morning Stretch” is essential, though, since the students need to see what they will be doing.

Strategies used to remodel

S-4 exploring thoughts underling feelings and feelings underlying thoughts
S-23 making interdisciplinary connections
S-1 thinking independently
Remodelled Lesson Plan

The class could begin by discussing the meaning of the word ‘stress’ with the teacher writing the definition on the chalkboard. The class could then be divided into small groups to discuss the stresses experienced personally by the students, and reasons for them. “Why do these things make you feel this way? How does your perception of a situation affect your feelings? How do feelings of stress affect your behavior? Your thinking? Why?” S-4 The teacher should emphasize the questions in the original lesson plan by writing them on the chalkboard. Each group will contribute three stresses for the whole class to hear when the groups come together. The class will be asked to answer the questions above to emphasize the importance of exercise as a means of relieving daily stresses. “What does this tell us about the relationship between our bodies and how we think and feel? Do you know of any similar connections between mind and body?” S-23

After the demonstration of the “Morning Stretch” and student participation, the teacher can go a step further and ask each small group of students to design their own “stress relieving” series of stretches to be presented to the class during the two week unit. S-1

Though everyone is both egocentric and critical (or fairminded) to some extent, the purpose of education in critical thinking is to help students move away from egocentricity, toward increasing-ly critical thought.
Soccer Tactics

by Joan M. West, Victorian Ministry of Education, Australia

Objectives of the remodeled plan

The students will:

- participate in a previously planned fitness program specific to the requirements of soccer
- develop attacking and defensive strategies in soccer, thus thinking independently
- assess their solutions and actions
- develop and participate in modified games which will apply the devised strategies
- devise and participate in soccer ball skills practices

Standard Approach

Students analyze two specific aspects of the game of soccer — distance and player size — which affect the game outcome and hence influence strategy. In response to teacher-posed problems, small groups of students devise their own solutions within the limitations of their skill, fitness, rules of the game, and problem solving abilities.

Critique

This lesson is used to illustrate the “divergent” teaching style which is the least teacher-directed model discussed in one of the “classic” physical education instructional strategies texts. In the opening section of the lesson, pairs of students explore the implications of situations set up by the teacher. The students lose the chance to imagine their own situations, explain the problems which could occur, and devise possible strategies. By presenting the students with the two variables to be explored, this lesson misses a key step — that which provides the opportunity for students to discover the factors that they consider are important in the game outcome. From this point, small groups could design and try out strategies to either overcome or maximize these factors.

Strategies used to remodel

S-1 thinking independently
S-31 distinguishing relevant from irrelevant facts
S-19 generating or assessing solutions
S-20 analyzing or evaluating actions or policies
Remodelled Lesson Plan S.1

The lesson starts with a soccer-specific warm-up activity, devised in previous lessons by the students, which includes practice of dribbling, tackling, and passing in small groups. Students also pair up and then practice against other pairs. Discussion then follows in those small groups when students themselves identify and justify key factors which influence win-lose situations. S-31

Students devise and participate in practice situations for strategies which either overcome or maximize those variables. How, exactly, does this factor influence the game? Why? What problems can this cause? How? How could this problem be solved? What effect would that have? Which solution is best for which situation? S-19

This practice is followed by discussion in which the students assess the strategies' effectiveness. How did each proposed solution work? Which helped solve the problem? Did any create additional problems? Why? Which solution is best for which situations? S-20

When rule violations occur, in particular dangerous play, the teacher could direct the discussion to students' assessing the consequences of such behavior. Why did this happen? Why do players do this? What effect does this have? How can we all help prevent this from happening in the future? S-20

In closing the lesson, students and teacher could return to the original questions: Which factors influence the game outcome? What strategies can you use to maximize or minimize them? Students have the opportunity to explain the specific situations in which they identified key variables.

---

It should not be assumed that there is a universal standard for how fast teachers should proceed with the task of remodelling their lesson plans. A slow but steady evolutionary process is much more desirable than a rush job across the board.
I Didn’t Want to Bother You

Martha De Leon, Clear Lake High School, Lakeport, CA

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- analyze and evaluate responses to the problem of fearing to ask for necessary explanations
- use analytical terms such as fairmindedness, reciprocity, and assumption
- develop an understanding about employer/employee work relationships
- probe the thoughts and feelings involved in fear of appearing stupid
- generate and assess strategies for overcoming this fear, thus developing intellectual courage

Standard Approach
This lesson focuses on the negative consequences of not asking questions when you don’t know how to do a part of your job. Students read about Gary who didn’t know how to refill his stapler. To solve his problem, he keeps taking staplers of co-workers while they are on their breaks. One co-worker, Henry, threatens to hit him.

Students write and discuss their answers to the following questions: What do you think the supervisor would say? What should Gary have done instead of taking staplers from co-workers? What have you done in situations like this?

Critique
The original lesson relates to one of the most basic premises of critical thinking — if there is a question or problem, one should critically analyze the possible solutions. The lesson as presented deals with not asking questions superficially and is too simplistic for high school students. It is boring, not capitalizing on the significance of critical thinking.

The three questions that were asked do encourage some critical thinking but not in depth. They require only a few words to answer. Students are also limited in their answers by the lines provided for them to write on.

editor's note: This lesson is typical in stressing the shoulds and shouldn’ts and completely neglecting reasons for improper behavior, and how to combat the powerful fear of embarrassment. Thus, this approach does not realistically address the root of the problem.
Strategies used to remodel

S-20 analyzing or evaluating actions or policies
S-17 questioning deeply: raising and pursuing root or significant questions
S-3 exercising fairmindedness
S-28 thinking precisely about thinking: using critical vocabulary
S-30 examining or evaluating assumptions
S-11 comparing analogous situations: transferring insights to new contexts
S-4 exploring thoughts underlying feelings and feelings underlying thoughts
S-6 developing intellectual courage
S-2 developing insight into egocentricity or sociocentricity
S-19 generating or assessing solutions

Remodelled Lesson Plan S-20

The teacher will give a brief statement about asking questions. The teacher will ask: Is it stupid to ask questions? What is being stupid? What is being smart? Can you be smart and stupid? S-17

At the end of this discussion, the teacher will have the students read the lesson “I Didn’t Want to Bother You” excluding the questions at the end. The class will discuss the following questions: What else could Gary have done to solve his problem? Why did Henry react to Gary the way he did? Was Henry judging Gary in a negative way? How do you think Gary would feel if someone had taken his equipment? S-3 Do you think he was being fairminded or demonstrating reciprocity? The supervisor assumed Gary knew how to fill the stapler. Was that a correct assumption? What is an assumption? S-28 Why do you think he assumed Gary could complete that task? S-30 How do you think other workers will treat Gary after they have learned of the way he dealt with the stapler problem? Do you think Gary’s actions were smart? S-20 Why or why not? Was Gary stealing? What reasons do you have for saying “Yes” or “No”? What does this tell us about the relationship between employer and employee? What do you think employers expect from their employees in the area of understanding the work expected of them? Have you ever experienced a situation that was similar to Gary’s? S-11

editor's note: Students could also explore Gary’s state of mind and the dynamics of fear of speaking up. “Why didn’t Gary ask someone how to fill the stapler? How did he feel? Why? What was probably going on in his mind? Why? S-4 Why is it so hard to do something you feel makes you look stupid? S-6 How do people react to someone who doesn’t know something they all know? Why? What other attitudes are like this? Why is this such a strong factor?” S-2 Have students brainstorm and then evaluate ways to overcome such fears. “How can this problem be overcome? What should you do when you know you should ask or say something, but are afraid to look dumb? Would this suggestion work? For whom? For whom wouldn’t this work? Why not? What might work for that person? Etc.” S-19
Job Interview Questions

Martha De Leon, Clear Lake High School, Lakeport, CA

Objectives of the remodelling plan
The students will:
- think independently by developing a list of common job interview questions
- answer common interview questions and assess the answers through Socratic discussion and critical listening
- practice interviewing for jobs

Standard Approach
Students write answers to ten common job-interview questions. After reading further passages in their books, they then revise their answers.

Critique
The questions presented require some thought on the students’ part, but the technique is boring. Students would get more out of the lesson by exploring and evaluating the questions and answers at length.

Strategies used to remodel
S-1 thinking independently
S-24 practicing Socratic discussion: clarifying and questioning beliefs, theories, or perspectives
S-22 listening critically: the art of silent dialogue
S-15 developing criteria for evaluation: clarifying values and standards
S-4 exploring thoughts underlying feelings and feelings underlying thoughts
S-29 noting significant similarities and differences

Remodelled Lesson Plan
The teacher will give a brief introduction on the objectives of the lesson. The students will discuss job interview questions that they have experienced in a job interview or what questions they think are appropriate for a job interview. S-1 The teacher will list these questions on the board and ask the students what their answers would be to the questions on the board and develop a Socratic discussion in relation to the students’ answers. What was your main
point? Why did you say that? Did anyone answer this another way? What is an alternative answer? Why is this question important? Why was this question asked? What would a prospective employer think of that answer? Why? \textbf{S-24}

As this discussion continues, the teacher can ask the students to evaluate the different answers. \textbf{S-22}

The students will break up into groups of two and practice interviewing and being interviewed. The last part of this lesson the teacher will video-tape students being interviewed for a job by a fellow classmate. The students will then evaluate the exercise. \textbf{S-22} The teacher can ask the following questions: Is this the best answer? What would be a better answer? Why is one answer better than another? \textbf{S-15} How did you feel as the person being interviewed? How did you feel as the interviewer? \textbf{S-4} What changes do you think you would make at your next job interview?

\textit{editor's note:} The class could consider appropriate changes to the answers for different kinds of jobs (say, working with the public, versus working alone or with other employees.) What qualities would each kind of job require? Which of your own qualities, characteristics, and experiences would be important to emphasize for this job? For that one? Why? \textbf{S-29}

\textbf{Despite the detail with which we have delineated the strategies, they should not be translated into mechanistic, step-by-step procedures. Keep the goal of the well-educated, fairminded critical thinker continually in mind.}
Five Minutes Late — So What?

Martha De Leon, Clear Lake High School, Lakeport, CA

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will
- understand what production loss and overhead cost means
- develop an understanding of why being on time is important to employers
- explore other areas of life that require punctuality
- practice mathematically calculating production loss

Standard Approach——
The text explains how to calculate the loss to the company if one employee is five minutes late every day for one year. Students then examine a chart showing loss caused when one, five, ten, twenty-five, fifty, one-hundred, and five-hundred employees (at different hourly wages) are five minutes late. Students answer questions like the following: Ruth makes $3.35/hour. How much does she cost her employer if she is five minutes late 255 days? How much would 10 employees who make $5/hour cost their employer? If you and four others, at $4.65/hour are late, do you think you will get a Christmas bonus? Why?

Critique
Calculation of wages lost should be related to individual students and personalized for more impact. The material jumps from one person to fifty and one-hundred people. The lesson becomes complicated for students who have difficulty with math skills and loses focus in the task of math rather than the understanding of the concept of being on time.

Strategies used to remodel
S-20 analyzing or evaluating actions or policies
S-3 exercising fairmindedness
S-28 thinking precisely about thinking: using critical vocabulary
S-2 developing insight into egocentricity or sociocentricity
S-26 reasoning dialectically: evaluating perspectives, interpretations, or theories
Remodelled Lesson Plan s-20

The students will read a revised version of “Five Minutes Late — So What?” ending with the sentence “Using the above formula ....” The teacher will direct the students to the sentence “Don’t hassle me about five minutes — it’s no big deal!” The class will discuss being on time. The teacher can ask why being on time is important, or if it is. Are there any other experiences in your life that have consequences for not being on time? If it’s important to be on time to work, what about other areas of life? Is it important to be on time only for work? Ask the students to relate other situations requiring punctuality.

Discuss with the students the terms ‘production loss’ and ‘overhead cost.’ After reviewing the formula presented, give the students different numbers and have them calculate the loss in production. Discuss with the students their position as an employer who has an employee that is consistently late. S-3

editor’s note: Have students explore the logic of an employer thinking regarding retention, promotion, and development of employees. “How do employers feel about consistently late workers? Why? How do they feel about consistently punctual workers? Why? How do employers interpret chronic lateness? S-28 What are you telling the boss when you are consistently late?

- What qualities do employers look for in employees? Why? What do these qualities have in common? S-3
  - Students could also discuss reasons people are late, and rationalizations they use, and examine those rationalizations at length. S-2
  - Students could conduct dialectical discussions between an employer and late employee. S-26
  - The lesson could end by having students brainstorm and then evaluate ways to ensure punctuality.

Follow up brainstorming sessions with discussion of the items listed — categorizing, evaluating, analyzing, comparing, ordering, etc.
Vincent van Gogh’s *The Starry Night*

*by Beverly Kjeldsen Ursuline High School, Santa Rosa, CA*

**Objectives of the remodeled plan**

The students will:

- explore artistic aspects of *The Starry Night*, through Socratic discussion
- identify and understand the underlying structure of the painting
- explore the thoughts and feelings of the painter and the viewers

**Standard Approach**

The lesson begins with an explanation of what is going on in the painting. The instructor tells the students the different elements of design and principles of design that the artist uses (balance and counterbalance, etc.). The use of brush stroke is pointed out. Expressionism as a “style” is explained to the students through this painting, i.e., use of exaggeration of color and shape.

**Critique**

The original lesson plan is teacher directed. I would revise the entire plan using the Socratic method to explore the painting, the artist, and the style.

**Strategies used to remodel**

*S-24* practicing Socratic discussion: clarifying and questioning beliefs, theories, or perspectives  
*S-4* exploring thoughts underlying feelings and feelings underlying thoughts  
*S-32* making plausible inferences, predictions, or interpretations

**Remodelled Lesson Plan S-24**

What colors are in the painting? How do these colors in this painting make you feel? Why? What parts or features of the painting give you those feelings? *S-4* Notice how these colors are applied to the canvas. (Heavy and short) What does this tell you about the artist? (Emotional) Would you call these colors intense? Why?  
Notice the brush strokes. Which direction are they going? Why?
What is the lightest light? Why is it there? (The moon) What is the darkest
dark? Why is it there? (The cypress tree)

Notice how small the village is compared to the night. Why?

Is this a religious painting? Why or why not? How do you think the artist
felt as he painted this? Why? **S-32**

What is a complementary color? (Opposite ends of the color wheel.) Can you
name them? (Red/green, blue/orange, yellow/purple) Where has van Gogh
used them? (next to each other) Why? (for intensity)

How do you feel when you look at this painting? Why?

Words that can be introduced in context: *Helix*: a spiral which resembles a
bed spring, as if wound around a cylinder. *Impasto*: Thick layers of pigment
or paint, from the Italian word, impaste — to make into a paste. Paint
applied with thick heavy brush strokes or palette knife. *Spiral*: a plane or
curved line which moves outward encircling itself from a fixed center, either
of a two- or three-dimensional nature. *Swirl*: to rotate, spin or whirl in a
dizzying motion, as in a whirlpool.

*What is remodelled today can be remodelled
again. Treat no lesson plan as though it were
beyond critique and improvement.*
What Is an American?

by Janet L. Williamson, Greensboro City Schools, Randleman, NC

Objectives of the remodelled plan

The students will:

- read critically by identifying and clarifying the central and supporting ideas
- evaluate arguments
- evaluate an analogy by examining significant similarities and differences
- evaluate the author’s credibility

Standard Approach

An excerpt from “Letter from an American Farmer” is a standard section in both American social studies and literature textbooks. The typical textbook includes study questions such as “How does de Crevecoeur define an American? Compose a literary letter that describes a modern American.”

The piece offers a generally glowing description of Americans (except those in the newest settlements who are more barbaric). He mentions that they are unlike Europeans because they are ethnically mixed, and live in a new place under a new government, free from having to pay tribute or tax to “either a despotic prince, a rich abbot, or a mighty lord.” It describes differences among Americans inhabiting different regions.

Critique

These activities do not take full advantage of the possibilities of the lesson, which include dialogue about how credible the reader finds de Crevecoeur’s ideas, how to analyze and evaluate his arguments, and identify and examine stated and unstated assumptions.

Strategies used to remodel

S-21 reading critically: clarifying or critiquing texts
S-18 analyzing or evaluating arguments, interpretations, beliefs, or theories
S-29 noting significant similarities and differences
S-16 evaluating the credibility of sources of information
S-2 developing insight into egocentricity or sociocentricity
Remodelled Lesson Plan S-21

You may introduce the unit by assigning a biographical report on de Crevecoeur, making sure the students understand that de Crevecoeur, who was born a Frenchman, was writing his essay about Americans from first-hand experience, but that experience had occurred many years before the essay was written.

After students have read the essay, you can guide them in a discussion to distinguish the main idea, recognize a possible contradiction in the text, and evaluate arguments. Sample questions include: What characteristics of Americans does the author delineate in the first paragraph? Does the author imply that these characteristics apply to all Americans? What, according to the author, causes diversity among Americans? What other factors might contribute to the diversity? (With these questions, make sure that students understand that de Crevecoeur mentions climate, government, religion, and types of employment as factors that lead to diversity. Other factors may include free will or determination of the individual.) In the last paragraph, the author brings together two disparate ideas, that Americans are similar in characteristics and that they are diverse. How does he reconcile these two ideas? Is his argument convincing? Why or why not? S-18

Next, ask students to locate the conclusion drawn in the first paragraph, “The American ought therefore to love this country much better than that wherein either he or his forefathers were born.” Ask them to discuss what reasons he gives for his conclusions and if he is justified in reaching his conclusions.

Take de Crevecoeur’s statement, “Men are like plants; the goodness and flavour of the fruit proceeds from the peculiar soil and exposition in which they grow,” and use the following questions to analyze the analogy:

Consider the ways the items are similar and dissimilar. Decide if the similarities are significant and relevant to the purpose of the analogy. Why or why not? To what extent and in what ways does this seem true or false to you? S-29

(While these are open and dialogical questions, help the students to understand that the reasoning is based on the stated assumption that men are determined by external factors in the same way that a plant is determined by its environment. Students may examine ways in which the analogy (or the assumption) is not appropriate.)

de Crevecoeur based his generalizations about the men of the different geographical locations of the colonies on first hand experience. What factors can lead an observer to misrepresent, skew reality, or stereotype? S-16 (Prejudice, selective attention or poor observation, writing from memory, applying causal reasoning inappropriately.)

In their discussion, students should consider the possible sociocentricity of de Crevecoeur’s remarks. S-2
Risk/Benefit Assessment

by Lisa C. Quinn, Ursuline High School, Santa Rosa, CA

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- be introduced to the concept of risk/benefit assessment by making and assessing a risk oriented decision
- recognize that personal decisions are usually based on a combination of evidence and values
- evaluate evidence
- clarify values underlying their decisions
- compare other risk/benefit decisions that they may need to make, thus transferring insights to other contexts

Standard Approach

The students read a story about a mysterious disease that has been killing and disfiguring the members of a nearby community. The story presents the facts as they are “presently known,” and “current” statistics. Some of the local doctors have been experimenting with a possible cure — injection of the disease. Following an outbreak of the disease in their neighborhood, the students are asked to independently decide whether or not they want to receive this injection. When everyone has made a decision, the teacher is to tally the “yes” and “no” answers, and lead a discussion of the possible reasons for the decisions which were made.

Critique

This lesson is a wonderful introduction to a decision making process or tool. It is a technique used by many industries today, but is seldom included in a high school text. Part of this lesson’s effectiveness is due to the “real life” situation that it presents. Unfortunately, in an attempt to simplify the choices, generalizations are made and a wealth of material and approaches are eliminated. Students are limited to a choice between dying from the disease and dying from the injection, while any other options or results have been omitted. The students are asked to independently decide on a course of action, but in many cases the decisions are made without evaluating the validity, accuracy, and relevance of the data presented. In addition, the students have not considered the possible impact of feelings and other external factors (such as logistics, economics, politics, morality, or ethics). In many cases, this oversimplified version of historical information makes it difficult for students to relate to it, and they cannot extend these ideas to new contexts and situations.
Strategies used to remodel
S-33 evaluating evidence and alleged facts
S-19 generating or assessing solutions
S-31 distinguishing relevant from irrelevant facts
S-4 exploring thoughts underlying feelings and feelings underlying thoughts
S-15 developing criteria for evaluation: clarifying values and standards
S-11 comparing analogous situations: transferring insights to new contexts
S-29 noting significant similarities and differences
S-35 exploring implications and consequences

Remodelled Lesson Plan

The students can read the story, and then address specific questions. “What information was provided? Where did it come from? Can we accept it? Why or why not? S-33 What are your options? What is your decision? Why?” S-19 Once students have clarified their own perspectives, the class can begin a discussion. “What choices did you make? Why? What information is relevant? What is irrelevant? Are there other facts or factors that might affect your decision, which were not addressed in this story? S-31 Is there a right or wrong choice? Why or why not? How do you feel about those who would choose differently? Why? What would you think of that? S-4 What are the benefits of the options? (Responses can be probed for clarification and further development: Why is that important to you? What are you giving up? Why is what you choose more important to you that what you are giving up? Etc.) What are the risks? What values resulted in this choice? That one? Why do you hold these values? Do you reject the other values, or have you chosen the lesser of two evils?” S-15

When the specific topic has been completed, ask the students to identify decisions that they may have to make, which are also related to subject matter. Ask them to bring in current events or examples of issues that require similar decision making skills. S-11

editor’s note: In what ways is this like the other decision? Unlike it? How do those similarities and differences effect making a decision in this new case? Why? S-29

- Encourage students to change the original story, and explore the implications of those changes: If this were the case, would that change your decision? Why? S-35

- Did the discussion lead you to change your mind? (If so, why?)

- If your spouse disagreed with your decision, would you change you mind? Why or why not?
The Catholic Bishop’s Peace Pastoral

by Phyllis Bazzano, Cardinal Newman High School, Santa Rosa, CA

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- consider the topics of war, peace and nuclear weapons
- assess various forms of protest to solve the problem of nuclear weapons

Standard Approach
This lesson presents the American Catholic Bishop’s Peace Pastoral of 1983 with its recommendations to the American government and the American people. The Bishops ask the question: Is a just war still possible in the face of nuclear threat?

The lesson presents two filmstrips, the first a parable on deterrence, the second on steps students their age can take to protest or make their viewpoints known.

The presentation of the filmstrips would be followed by a discussion of the material presented. The students would be expected to know the general contents of the peace pastoral from an historical perspective, as well as an understanding of the concepts of deterrence, first strike and the just war theory.

Critique
This lesson should start by allowing the students to voice their opinions and viewpoints on the subject of war and peace in the present time. It fails to use the opportunity to develop fairmindedness before any material is presented.

Strategies used to remodel
S-1 thinking independently
S-3 exercising fairmindedness
S-35 exploring implications and consequences
S-19 generating or assessing solutions
S-34 recognizing contradictions
Remodelled Lesson Plan

Day 1

Open discussion of war and peace, politics, and our country’s policies, letting students voice their opinions. **S-1** To start discussion, I put three words and their definitions on the board: Deterrence, First Strike, Just War Theory.

The students are told to **suspend judgment** while listening carefully to one another’s opinions of the issues. The discussion will help students to see their own narrowmindedness and foster an openness to see the others’ viewpoints. Students can restate views to which they are opposed. **S-3**

Day 2

Filmstrip #1 is presented which shows a parable of a modern local neighborhood in which two families start feuding. They then begin to stockpile weapons to threaten the other family. Soon more and more of their budget goes into weapons and there is less money for food and other essentials. The discussion of the filmstrip would involve exploring implications and consequences of the two major world families stockpiling and practicing worldwide deterrence. What results does this policy have? How does it affect their “economies”? How does it affect them psychologically? (Probe and pursue responses. “And what is the result of that?”) **S-35**

Day 3

Filmstrip #2 is presented showing some methods that young people might use to get their positions across. The discussion that follows would certainly include expressing their feelings regarding lawful and unlawful protests. “What do you think of this form of action? How effective is it? Why or why not? Is it right? Why or why not? (Could this type of behavior ever be justified? When? Why not? What should these people be doing instead?) What alternatives are there? Evaluate each for effectiveness and justifiability. **S-19**

Day 4

Their assignment is to write to their congressman, senator, or to the President of the United States. They are encouraged to express their honest opinions that, one hopes, have been altered or developed in some way after the three days of input and critical thinking. With luck, they will receive a response to their letters and will realize a sense of empowerment — that they do have a say in this democracy of ours.

**editor’s note:** Pairs of students who disagree with each other could be given assignments to find points of agreement, and to pinpoint and clarify points of disagreement. “Find as many statements as you can about which you agree. What assumptions do you share, what facts do you both accept, what values do you have in common? What, exactly, do you disagree about? Put these points in the form of questions. What sort of question is each? Is it a question that turns on values or priorities, evidence, interpretation of the evidence?” **S-34**
Fallacies

by Michael Gonzalez, Teacher — Oral Communications, St. Vincent High School, Petaluma, CA

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- gain insight into argument evaluation
- practice critical thinking by reading, evaluating, and rewriting arguments
- develop their critical thinking through question and answer exchanges, oral and written
- evaluate assumptions
- assess evidence, and sources of information

Standard Approach
The lesson was originally called "Fallacies in logic." It briefly describes six common fallacies. The lesson is taught with the assumption that if the students are able to name the root of the problem in the opponent's arguments, they are better equipped to counter it. The student is not always required to learn the Latin terms. The student is encouraged to have a mental shorthand for identifying logical fallacies. The six logical fallacies presented in the first lesson are: Appeal to authority (popularity, traditional wisdom), Provincialism, Non sequitur, Ambiguity, Slippery slope, and Ad hominem. Students are given a handout which contains passages with one or more fallacies of the type presented in class. The students are to name the fallacy in each example, and tell why they think their answer is correct.

Critique
The original lesson does not go far enough in making certain that the student is actually practicing critical thinking. The simple labeling of an argument as logical or fallacious does not in itself indicate critical, evaluative thinking. It does not develop the student's ability to re-construct and improve the argument. The lesson does not explain how merely being aware of the failures of logic makes students think more critically. The recognition of fallacies in arguments, whether one uses the proper Latin terms, English terms, or one's shorthand, does not indicate evaluation of the author as an authority or the reason for the non-sequitur, etc.

The recognition of fallacies is incomplete. How would the student write a logical argument on the same topic? How would the argument be written without the fallacy?

editor's note: This sort of approach has several negative results. 1) Students don't distinguish justified from unjustified arguments of the same form. Thus, students tend to call all appeals to
authority fallacious, etc., (especially when they disagree with the conclusion). 2) Students find everyone else’s fallacies, but not their own. 3) Students tend to reject the whole argument, even when it has some strengths. 4) Students often jump to the conclusion that, since the argument is fallacious, the conclusion must be false. All a judgment of fallacy tells you is that that particular argument doesn’t make a strong case for the conclusion. This doesn’t mean that no strong case can be made. As the author of this remodel points out, the standard approach to teaching fallacies neglects the crucial idea that every charge of fallacy can be countered, or the argument improved to avoid the error.

Strategies used to remodel
S-18 analyzing or evaluating arguments, interpretations, beliefs, or theories
S-30 examining or evaluating assumptions
S-16 evaluating the credibility of sources of information
S-33 evaluating evidence and alleged facts
S-28 thinking precisely about thinking: using critical vocabulary
S-12 developing one’s perspective: creating or exploring beliefs, arguments, or theories

Remodelled Lesson Plan S-18

The teacher can present the six fallacies in logic as in the original lesson plan. The students could then give their own examples of fallacies. Since the teacher is not requiring the exact Latin terms, the translation of the definitions into examples can help students understand the fallacy in their own terms. In class discussion, students should be asked not only why the argument is fallacious, but also questions such as: What assumption is made? Is there a reason to accept it? Why or why not? When would it be safe to make assumptions like this? S-30 What makes a source a good source? A questionable source? What kinds of reasons are there for questioning someone’s evidence? (What if they weren’t there? What if they have something to gain by lying, and those with nothing to gain or lose all disagree? How can we evaluate someone’s track record?) S-16 What makes an authority a good authority versus a poor authority? Is this evidence sufficient? Do we know if it’s complete? Is it something that can be double-checked? How? S-33 Can the claim be both true and false? Students should give more than one reason for their evaluation of the argument. Through this method, the teacher can introduce the practice of precise and critical thought. S-28

The re-construction of arguments can be introduced by the teacher through a series of questions such as: How could this person respond? How could this argument be improved? What evidence could be mentioned? Could the conclusion be rephrased to make this argument more reasonable? S-12

In order to take the recognition of fallacies one step further, the teacher will give the following assignment: The student will select an editorial from any newspaper or magazine and identify, evaluate, and reconstruct any example of the six fallacies studied.
Previewing Textbooks

by Susan G. Allen, Fort Osage High School, Independence, MO

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- engage in discussion about the importance of and advantages to previewing textbooks
- develop criteria for evaluating texts
- practice previewing and evaluating textbooks

Standard Approach

Students are given a description, taken from the Encyclopedia Britannica, of an unnamed animal and asked to draw a picture of the animal. From the confusion and frustration students experience, the teacher elicits that it would have been easier had they known what animal they were drawing. The teacher then asks if they preview before reading and transfers the lesson to previewing a textbook. A handout is used to elicit information about the class text and an assignment given to preview another text using the same form.

Critique

The basic idea of the original lesson is good and using the description to draw a picture is fun and effective. The point is ultimately lost, however. Students do not make the transfer to previewing a text, because critical thinking discussion is lacking. Students need to spend more time exploring the consequences of reading without previewing. The lesson is adequate on how to preview, but not why. Therefore, the students view previewing as a waste of time. The lesson does not help students develop criteria for evaluating textbooks or help them evaluate source credibility. The book survey worksheet, used to preview texts, is complete and effective.

editor's note: The reason for lack of transfer between the drawing activity and previewing textbooks is due more to the crucial dissimilarities between them. (Drawing is visual; reading, conceptual. Finding out what animal is meant is one simple, straightforward, discrete fact; previewing a textbook is a complex series of interrelated tasks, requires a deeper sort of understanding, cannot be proceduralized, and is more conceptual than factual.) Although the drawing activity addresses the importance of knowing something about "the whole" before digging into the parts, these two forms of this principle share little else.

Strategies used to remodel
S-11 comparing analogous situations: transferring insights to new contexts
S-16 evaluating the credibility of sources of information
Remodelled Lesson Plan

After the animal description exercise, an extension is needed. The teacher could make two lists on the board of students’ responses to advantages and disadvantages of knowing the animal before drawing. This discussion can lead to times when knowing some fact or having background would have led the person to make a different decision. (Why do you want to know where you’re going when you get into a car with someone you don’t know well? Is it helpful to know what type of problem you’re working in math? Do you need to know if your theme is to be descriptive or expository in English?) S-11

Once the need to know is clearly established, questioning can be used to develop criteria for evaluating texts. When you choose a free-reading book, what do you look at? If you were choosing a textbook for ninth grade history (a class each of my students has had), what elements would you consider necessary? Important? What qualifications would you expect from the authors? Where do they get their information? Have they had other books published? In what subject areas? What reason do they give for writing this text? S-16 What do they claim is unique about the text? Are those things important? Why or why not? What else would you look for? Why? What would that tell you? What distinguishes a good from a poor text? Why? How can you tell whether or not a text is a good one? How could you tell if the text lived up to the authors’ claims about it? S-15

The class text should be previewed together in class so that students become accustomed to asking the questions as they preview. This gives the teacher an opportunity to clarify areas of confusion as well as check for understanding of the process. “Does the text favor one perspective? How can you tell? Why do you suppose this perspective was chosen? What does the author assume you know? Want to know? Is the author’s writing style clear and direct or obtuse? Is the organization clear? Logical? How old is this information? Do the chapters build and depend on previously studied material, or can each be used in isolation? What are the major divisions of the book? What reference sections are there? What are they for? When would you need them? How will you use them?” S-21

The assignment to preview another text of their choice can then be made, followed by a class discussion the next day. “How has this process affected how you would use texts? Why?”

editor’s note: “How does this text characterize the subject? Is this characterization accurate? What reasons does it give for studying the subject? Do those reasons make sense to you? Does the text cover the material in such a way as to help you achieve those goals?”
Stereotyping

Objectives of the remodelled plan

The students will:

- develop critical insight into the sociocentric phenomenon of stereotyping
- discuss the evidence for or against various stereotypes
- explore why stereotyping is so difficult a problem, due to its unconscious nature
- examine American media to determine the stereotyping common in the U.S.
- find out some of the stereotyping typical of their peer groups

Standard Approach

Many texts include discouraging stereotyping as part of their objectives. According to texts, stereotypes are negative and harmful beliefs about people usually based on false ideas about the ethnic groups to which they belong, or their gender. Texts mention common stereotypes and discourage students from using them.

Critique

One of the biggest obstacles to understanding people, and learning history, politics, sociology and psychology is oversimplification in the form of stereotyping. Texts address stereotypes in a category by themselves, rather than as one sort of poor reasoning. Stereotypes, like any beliefs, can be evaluated by examining evidence.

The standard approach is didactic in that students are informed that stereotyping is wrong, and so are unlikely to see themselves as engaging in it. Thus students do not discover their stereotypes, evaluate them, or evaluate their effects. Students should decide what, exactly, is wrong with stereotyping, by considering the evidence for and against conclusions of that nature. There is no hint that people might not be aware of stereotyping, that it may be unconscious, that people might not be able to admit that they do this. Students are not encouraged to explore how having a preconceived notion can affect perceptions.

Furthermore, texts unnecessarily restrict the concept, leaving out many common stereotyped notions — both positive and negative — of such people as: computer nerds, doctors, criminals, government officials, musicians and movie stars, blue collar workers, political radicals, yuppies, welfare recipients, etc.

By developing students’ insight into sociocentricity and having them examine generalizations, this lesson helps students develop intellectual good faith.
Strategies used to remodel
S-7 developing intellectual good faith or integrity
S-2 developing insight into egocentricity or sociocentricity
S-10 refining generalizations and avoiding oversimplifications
S-9 developing confidence in reason
S-13 clarifying issues, conclusions, or beliefs
S-35 exploring implications and consequences
S-12 developing ones' perspective: creating or exploring beliefs, arguments, or theories
S-33 evaluating evidence and alleged facts

Remodelled Lesson Plan S-7

Consideration of this topic might begin with cliques and stereotypes students have of other students: How do you group or categorize the people you see around? Describe people in each group. How do you know so much about these people? On what evidence do you base your ideas? How do categories help us think about people? How can they mislead us? S-10 How do you feel about the idea that others may have you classified? Why? S-2

To have students discuss the quality of evidence for and against their beliefs about those groups, ask: "What can and can't you say about groups of people? What evidence is needed to support this conclusion? That conclusion? What could account for that evidence? What evidence counts against it? S-13 How can all of the evidence be accounted for?" S-10

Look at newspapers, news magazines, and popular culture for examples of stereotyping. Keep records of your findings. What do your findings say about our American perceptions? How might these perceptions affect the kinds of personal decisions we make? Decisions as a country? S-35

Students could discuss stereotypes presented on TV and in movies, and reasons for those portrayals. Have students name shows and movies. Ask, "What are the characters like? What types do they represent? Is anyone really like that? In what ways? In what ways are real people different?" S-10

Why do people generalize this way? Where do they get these ideas? Why do they keep them? Why is it hard to give up stereotyped notions? How could we combat this in ourselves? How do we know if our perceptions of others are accurate? S-12

Students could design a study or a poll to discover stereotypes held by their fellow students. What do we need to know? How can we get the information? What should we do first? Why? Then what? How can we be sure our information is accurate? How will we know when a person is being honest? How will we know if they are being honest with themselves? How could a person not be honest with himself? How would this complicate our study? How should we organize the information so that it is meaningful? S-33

Before studying a country or group of people, students could list ideas and images they associate with them. Later, students could critique those impressions in light of what they have learned. S-2
Human Treatment of Whales

by Noreen Miller, School District #12, Denver, CO & Lanai Wallin, Skyview Elementary, Denver, CO

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- raise and pursue significant questions regarding our relationships with animals
- evaluate actions
- examine their assumptions through Socratic discussion

Standard Approach

This is a seatwork lesson on a newspaper article about four whales at Sea World who attacked their trainers — the trainers are suing. It is usually taught with emphasis on coding. That is, the students mark their copies of the article with an A for agree, D for disagree and I for interesting.

Critique

Although the usual manner of reading a newspaper article for an opinion is fast and efficient, it is a superficial approach to understanding belief systems. The lesson as stated would not establish why the students agree or disagree or the nature of the reasons for their thinking. The issues being raised need to be clarified, as do the assumptions underlying the students’ beliefs. A seminar and dialogue using critical thinking would be more useful, as it would help students clarify their reasoning processes.

In the particular Socratic dialogue with fifteen students who had been trained in seminar techniques, some of the students also raised additional points such as: the people at Sea World are not well trained; these people should have studied the whales first; more research is needed; research under controlled conditions is different than field research; Sea World is run for profit.

Strategies used to remodel

S-17 questioning deeply: raising and pursuing root or significant questions
S-21 reading critically: clarifying or critiquing texts
S-20 analyzing or evaluating actions or policies
S-24 practicing Socratic discussion: clarifying and questioning beliefs, theories, or perspectives
S-18 analyzing or evaluating arguments, interpretations, beliefs, or theories
Remodelled Lesson Plan S-17

Have the students read a newspaper article such as the one about four homicidal whales and their trainers. Ask them to think about the conflicts that are posed, both the obvious one and the more subtle ones, if they see any. Have them share the conflicts that they found. Then ask them to state in complete sentences the conflicts they discovered. Have them give their initial responses and reasons. S-21

Raise key questions, such as: “Who was responsible for what happened? Why? What should happen now?”

Discussion could move in the direction of more general and basic questions. “How do human beings relate to animals? What different relationships are there? What responsibilities, if any, do we have toward animals?” (Have students consider pets, stray animals, animals in zoos, in the wild, and animals that we eat.) Another question might be, “Is it necessary to conduct research on animals? If so, under what conditions can we accept such research? If not, what can we do instead of using animals for research?” S-20

Probe for further issues by asking questions such as, “Is it fair to put animals into captivity?” A possible student response could be, “No, because it makes them unhappy.” The teacher could probe this answer in the following manner: “Are all animals in captivity unhappy? How can we as human beings know whether an animal is happy or unhappy? Do the needs of human beings ever take precedence over the happiness of animals?” S-24

After some discussion, ask the students to state some of the important issues that they have discovered. Write them on the board.

Begin to Socratically question the class as a whole about their responses to the issues raised. Probe them for the assumptions that underlie their belief systems by asking such questions as: “Do animals have rights? What is the status of a human being in comparison to an animal? Is it acceptable to confine animals just because it has been common practice to do so? Can humans kill and control animals without any negative consequences?” S-24 By questioning students about the basis for their agreement or disagreement with a belief, they will gain practice in seeing their thought processes at work. They will better understand the reasons for their beliefs and the assumptions that underlie them. During the discussion, note related issues that are raised and come back to them later in the lesson or at another time.

When students disagree, encourage them to argue back and forth, trying to convince each other. Have students evaluate the arguments given. For example, you could ask, “Of all of the reasons given for (conclusion), which are the strongest? Weakest?” S-18
“Will There Always Be an England?”

Susan Allen, Fort Osage High School, Independence, MO

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- exercise independent thought by identifying and clarifying the ideas and attitudes expressed in the video
- practice assessing solutions stated in the video
- practice making predictions
- clarify questions, points of view, and conclusions through Socratic discussion
- develop insight into socio-centricity by assessing their impressions of England

Standard Approach

Students watch a documentary discussing the postwar economic problems in Great Britain. They learn that the South holds all of the country's wealth and tradition with 90% of its people receiving a university education and 80% then able to find acceptable jobs. Conversely, the North has a population in which 45% are unemployed. Thus, two Englands, one rich and one poor, are developing.

Students are asked to list what they think of when they hear “England,” “Great Britain,” or “the British.” The video is then shown, followed by a teacher-led discussion of the problems in Britain, the attitudes of the people, and possible solutions. The students then compare our country's problems to Britain's. This written assignment is then given: Agree or disagree with the following statement and support your answer. “To see the future of the United States, one has only to look at England.”

Critique

I chose this lesson for its thought-provoking content and because it sets the tone for the entire semester of analyzing, evaluating, and comparing selections from British literature. It forces the students to analyze their present ideas about England and evaluate which are facts as opposed to stereotypes or vague generalities. By clarifying England's basic economic problems and comparing them to America's problems, students will suspend quick judgments and develop fuller and more accurate ideas.
Insufficient discussion and synthesis

The final writing assignment fosters some insight, but creative problem-solving is hampered by the lack of discussion in small groups. Students do not look at opposing points of view thoroughly and their insights are not synthesized before the writing assignment is given. Therefore, the writing assignment tends to produce opinions not based on analysis and evaluation.

Oversimplification

The students do not see this topic as relevant to their own lives. England is far away and we do not have those problems, so who cares? Their response is simply that England's government needs "to do something," and that the people need to take more initiative. There are no specific questions that force students to explore the underlying feelings and issues in order to evaluate the resulting problems.

Opportunity for fostering critical thought

The video is very factual about the problems and shows the sociocentricity of the Wickhamists. A more extended and detailed discussion could help students identify and grapple with the problems England faces. The lack of creativity in the British mind-set is shown when the man from Greece is able to establish a highly successful cake factory. Students can gain useful insight into sociocentricity by comparing his attitudes to that of the Wickhamists.

Strategies used to remodel

S-22 listening critically: the art of silent dialogue
S-5 developing intellectual humility and suspending judgment
S-1 thinking independently
S-15 developing criteria for evaluation: clarifying values and standards
S-25 reasoning dialogically: comparing perspectives, interpretations, or theories
S-2 developing insight into egocentricity or sociocentricity
S-11 comparing analogous situations: transferring insights to new contexts
S-19 generating or assessing solutions
S-24 practicing Socratic discussion: clarifying and questioning beliefs, theories, or perspectives

Remodelled Lesson Plan S-22

I have divided the remodelled lesson plan into four sections: 1) Pre-discussion, 2) Introduction of the video, 3) Mid-discussion, and 4) Conclusion of the video, discussion, and final assignment.

1. Pre-Discussion

Before viewing the video, students group themselves into units of four. They are asked the original question, "What do you think of when you hear the words 'England,' 'Britain,' or 'the British'?" After their lists are generated, ideas will be written on the board and discussed by the entire group. "How did you come to believe this? Do you know it or merely think that it's so? Why?" S-5

2. Introducing the Video S-1

have been done to prevent the fall of these nations? Choose one nation and write a paragraph for tomorrow explaining the criteria used to evaluate the nation's fall.* Full group discussion the following day can identify the criteria necessary to evaluate the severity of national problems. S-15

3. Mid-discussion S-25

After showing approximately the first half of the video, which identifies the problem in England, explains the division between North and South, and interviews people from each area, students will again group for discussion. What assumptions about the North are made by the Wickhamists? Why do they make these assumptions? When have you made assumptions then changed your ideas after learning more information? What is your attitude toward the Wickhamists? Why? What response would they likely make? What is your attitude toward the teenage pregnancies in the North? How does the attitude of the Northerners toward teenage pregnancy compare to attitudes toward teenage pregnancy in the U.S.? Are the girls in the U.S. looking for the same things? What problems shown here were you unaware of? What has surprised you most so far? Why? What had you been assuming? Where did you get that idea? S-2 What predictions can you make about where the video is going? Has the U.S. ever had a similar North/South division? What problems caused it? Are England's based on the same types of problems? Could the same problem occur in the U.S. today? S-11

4. Conclusion S-19

The rest of the video is then shown, and the students again group for discussion. "Which of your predictions were inaccurate? Why? S-3 What solutions did the video offer?" An overnight assignment will then be made. Each student is to list a minimum of five solutions to England's problems.

The following day, a full group discussion will be used to synthesize ideas regarding the problems faced in England. "What are England's major problems? Why? Can you summarize the reasons for these problems? What must be done to reverse the process? Are outsiders, such as the Greek industrialist, necessary to reverse the process? What attitudes of the English hamper that reversal? How else could the Northerners help themselves? Are there other ways the Southerners can view industrialism? Must they? What parallels do you see between the U.S. and England? Can you give examples? What effects would (each solution) have on each country? What solutions do you see to England's problems? What effect would these solutions have? Would that necessarily or only probably happen? What are we assuming if that solution is used? From whose point-of-view would that solution be acceptable/unacceptable? Why? What would be necessary to convince them that solution is practical, necessary, etc.?" S-24

After the full discussion, the comparison/contrast paper from the original lesson plan will be assigned.
Speeches: Clarifying ‘Equality’

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:

• clarify the abstract concept: equality
• engage in a Socratic discussion of the concept
• discuss questions raised, and organize, compose, and give speeches
• practice listening critically by evaluating and discussing the speeches
• compare the perspectives expressed in the speeches

Standard Approach

In teaching speech, the emphasis is generally on mechanics and the attitudes necessary for successful delivery. As an introduction, students discuss the fears associated with giving a speech. The teacher asks questions like, “What don’t you like about speaking in front of a group? What do you like? Do you look forward to speaking in front of groups? Can you give some suggestions for overcoming your fears?” Various formats of speech are taught such as interviews, storytelling, oral reports, debate, parliamentary procedure, panel discussion and persuasive arguments.

To introduce the persuasive speech the students are asked to generate interesting topics. Prompts are given in the text for ideas. “_____ is a book everyone should read.” “Each traveler should visit ____.” “Nobody should miss the ____ concert.” Students are asked to choose speech topics that would be of interest to particular groups: a meeting of a local sports club or a meeting of a citizen’s group organized to fight pollution. They are told to begin with clear statements of what they want the listeners to do or think, including two or more reasons why they should think that way. They are then to prepare an outline for the topic they selected which they will share with the class. To prepare for actual delivery of the speech, the students brainstorm for the typical mistakes students make while giving a speech, such as, reading from a paper or forgetting to ask for questions. For practice, the students are asked to say their speeches aloud many times, pretending to speak to an audience or actually speaking to a friend.

Critique

Standard approaches to speech-making tend to overemphasize the mechanics of giving speeches at the expense of attention to content. This lesson unites speech-making and critical thinking by careful selection of topic. We present a speech lesson in which students clarify and analyze an abstract concept: equality. By first engaging in Socratic discussion of the concept, giving and hearing speeches on it, and discussing and comparing the speeches, students can begin to learn how to usefully analyze and clarify it.
People commonly experience great difficulty when attempting to use abstract concepts clearly, distinguishing different senses of the term — for example, numerical equality and economic equality — sorting out their relationships to related concepts, evaluating their use, applying them, exploring their implications, etc. They often incorrectly assume (or assert) that “everyone has his or her own definition” and request the speaker’s definition. Definitions tend to be equally abstract and rarely useful in clarifying the concept or sense in which it is used in a particular context. We therefore suggest that the teacher help students begin to sort out the complexities of such concepts through guided discussions.

The following remodel can help students develop confidence in their ability to clarify an abstract concept.

**Strategies used to remodel**
- S-14 clarifying and analyzing the meanings of words or phrases
- S-27 comparing and contrasting ideals with actual practice
- S-24 practicing Socratic discussion: clarifying and questioning beliefs, theories, or perspectives
- S-22 listening critically: the art of silent dialogue
- S-25 reasoning dialogically: comparing perspectives, interpretations, or theories
- S-9 developing confidence in reason
- S-8 developing intellectual perseverance

**Remodelled Lesson Plan S-14**

Before introducing the actual exercise to take place, the teacher could ask students to compare the characteristics of the prepared speech to other kinds of verbal communication. Write students’ comments on the board. Among other things, students might notice that a speech is limited to a specific topic, is more formal, and has a beginning, middle, and end. Now ask what qualities an excellent speaker has. By this time, the students have begun to think about the mechanics of speech-making.

Lead students in an opening Socratic discussion which will elicit and separate aspects of and issues regarding the key concept. (The teacher should periodically relate to the concept specific points mentioned, indicating or eliciting the particular sense of ‘equality’ used or alluded to. The teacher can also periodically recap or have students recap the main points made in and directions taken by the discussion.) What does ‘equality’ mean? (Probe their responses with further questions.)

What different senses does this word have? In what ways are all people equal? Not equal? In what ways does equality an American ideal? Why? What issues and problems does our country face that relate to some sense of equality? (List these on the board.) What, exactly, does that issue have to do with equality? Why? What sense of equality? Is one side of the dispute against equality, or does the dispute rest on how to achieve it? What does ‘equality under the law’ mean? What would be an example of inequality under the law? What would we have to do to determine the extent to which American citizens are given equal treatment?
under the law? **S-27** What does 'equal opportunity' mean? Equal opportunity to do what? What interferes with equality of opportunity? In what ways does our society try to ensure that every citizen has equal opportunities? (During the course of an extended discussion, bring in other topics, issues, related concepts, beliefs, and values, such as the following: inequality, equal rights, "We are all equally human," one man one vote, autonomy, fairness, favoritism, elitism, racism, sexism, disadvantaged, affirmative action.) **S-24**

Explain to the students that they will be working in cooperative groups of four. You may want to have them divide responsibilities and choose a student to give the speech, a student to act as recorder or note-taker, a student to keep the group on task and keep track of time, and a student to report the group’s progress to the instructor.

The group will have to decide how to narrow the topic by choosing an issue, a distinction, or a specific point. Once students have narrowed the topic, they will have to develop the speech: outlining the main points, offering and organizing their views, choosing clarifying examples, etc.

Students without this instruction would probably go on to produce a vague, rhetorical speech about equality that would be weak in construction. But because students narrow the topic, they can clarify it within their chosen context and give a more focused speech. The teacher should explain that the material in the speech should reflect the thought of everyone in the group, not just one person. It is important that students consider other people's opinions and that they work together cooperatively.

Before the speeches are given, tell students that they will discuss and evaluate them. Let the students decide the standards of evaluation, which should include things such as presence, clarity of voice, clarity of thought and its expression, strength of arguments, insightfulness, etc.

After each speech, the teacher may want to have students recap the main points (allowing the speaker or group to clarify any points inadequately understood). **S-22**

After the speeches are given and evaluated, the teacher should lead a discussion about the concept of equality as expressed in the speeches. In how many different ways was the concept presented? Was it used in the same sense in each speech? Did some opinions differ? How did the different points made in the speeches relate to each other? (Irrelevant to, supported or elaborated on, contradicted or conflicted with, compatible with, etc.) What were the strengths and weaknesses of the ideas? **S-25** Is it easy or difficult for us to talk about things like equality? Why? **S-9**

Students could later have dialogical or dialectical discussions (especially if a point of controversy among students arose in the speeches), synthesize points from different speeches, or write essays responding to points made in the speeches or discussions.
If you would like to repeat this lesson, then choose another abstract concept such as patriotism, love, friendship, security, success, progress, freedom, human being, etc. Whatever the topic, you can be sure that the results will never be the same and that students will have the opportunity to express their opinions in a critical way.

Socratic questioning should be available to the teacher at all times. Questions, not answers, stimulate the mind.
Analyzing Arguments: Beauty Pageants

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- extract premises and conclusions from selected text
- formulate arguments
- argue both sides of an issue
- examine and evaluate those arguments

Standard Approach

The student is introduced to a pro/con, debate, or issue-oriented format. Often the teacher would like the student to learn research techniques, and controversial topics are a likely vehicle. Among the most common topics are: abortion, gun control, capital punishment, euthanasia, nuclear energy, and animal rights. Presumably these are chosen because they are inflammatory, and because there is a wealth of information readily available. Even if a teacher suggests that students may do a paper on another topic, most will probably stay with the old standbys.

The procedure for the research project may consist of the teacher spending a great deal of time discussing the requirements of the paper — thesis, length, required number of sources, footnotes, bibliography, warnings against direct quotations without proper accreditation, etc.

Critique

Clearly, such assignments as these, properly structured, are ideal for practice and synthesis of most aspects of critical thought, from examining assumptions to exercising fairmindedness.

Probably the most fatal flaw of standard lessons is that little or no time is spent on discussing the argument itself, how one formulates an issue, what constitutes relevant evidence, the value of the counter argument or the importance of justifying a conclusion. The student goes off to the library with an opinion — pro-gun control or anti-gun control, for example — collects the requisite information, thinly disguises the plagiarism, and types up a badly connected string of other people’s work. The teacher takes home great piles of these papers and reads information seen countless times before. What has the student learned? Perhaps that research papers are dull or that footnotes and bibliographies are tedious. More than likely, students have learned nothing about formulating and examining an argument. They each began with a certain position on the issue and sought only to defend it, without testing its validity.
The debate format is worse, as it usually includes only the most sensational presentation of a case, replete with graphic horrors of animals being tortured in laboratories, for example. Usually no instruction is offered in argument analysis in this instance either. When argument analysis is addressed, discussion is often uselessly vague ("Be relevant!") or confused. (See the section "Text Treatment of Critical Thinking and Argumentation," in chapter 8.) Instead, students should be taught the skills of formulating and carefully evaluating a wide range of issues.

This is presented here as a speech lesson, though a written assignment could be given at the end. This lesson outlines a method of introducing students to argument and provides a model. A ten-step plan is suggested, but if you need to alter the procedure to thirteen steps or reduce it to eight, then do so without hesitation. The lesson is offered as a “formula” only because the task of introducing argument to students at this level seems difficult at first. Many things such as identifying assumptions, and testing the credibility of sources were omitted to keep the lesson simple. For another lesson on argument analysis, see “Writing an Argumentative Essay.”

**Strategies used to remodel**

*S-21* critical reading: clarifying and critiquing text  
*S-4* exploring thoughts underlying feelings and feelings underlying thoughts  
*S-31* distinguishing relevant from irrelevant facts  
*S-25* reasoning dialogically: comparing perspectives, interpretations, or theories  
*S-33* evaluating evidence and alleged facts  
*S-13* clarifying issues, conclusions, or beliefs  
*S-22* listening critically: the art of silent dialogue  
*S-3* exercising fairmindedness  
*S-9* developing confidence in reason

**Remodelled Lesson Plan s-18**

This plan consists of choosing an article from the newspaper and then extracting and examining an argument. It provides an extended example of reading critically.

1. **Teacher finds a suitable newspaper article.**

   Ideally, the article should concern a current issue of interest to students. It should be long enough to contain the major points and have quotations from the parties concerned.

   The selected article concerns a woman who disrupted a beauty pageant as a form of protest. She claimed that they are demeaning to women, encouraging them to starve and otherwise unnaturally change their appearances. Interviewees affiliated with the pageant countered her arguments and claimed that she hurt contestants and organizers. In this case, two issues were addressed: Do pageants hurt all women? Was Michelle Anderson justified in disrupting the pageant? Either issue can be chosen for discussion.

   The article was chosen because it is timely, interesting to adolescents, clearly controversial, and easy to formulate. At the same time, the issue allows exploration of other issues such as the right to protest, gender equity, societal values,
and commercialism. It is almost a page long, an ideal length. The story was followed for several days by the media, allowing the teacher to present new material if so desired.

2. **Teacher prepares an introductory exercise.**

Before introducing the lesson or the article, the teacher might devise an exercise as an anticipatory set. In this case, a class discussion on beauty pageants in general is suggested. How do you feel about beauty pageants? Why? **S-4** Does anyone know someone who was in a beauty pageant? If so, what did the experience involve? Does anyone want to be in one? Why? Do you ever watch them on T.V.? At the end of the discussion you could write “Beauty Pageants” on the board with plus and minus columns. Ask students to contribute positive and negative aspects.

3. **Students and teacher read the text.**

Students read the text, either aloud or silently. Ask, “What is the article about? What views were expressed?” (“Should Beauty Pageants be stopped? Was Anderson’s action a justifiable form of protest?”) **S-21**

4. **Students, with the teacher facilitating, formulate a conclusion in such a way that pro/con positions are possible.**

Begin by giving a definition of “conclusion” — the statement to be proven by means of the reasons the arguer is giving. Ask students (in groups or as individuals) to try to state Michelle Anderson’s conclusion. “Pageants hurt all women,” or “Disrupting the contest was justified.” Avoid conclusions that state a position with a negative such as, “Beauty pageants are not worthwhile.” If the conclusion is stated negatively, the pro and con sides become confusing. Keep students from inserting premises into the conclusion, e.g., “Beauty pageants are wrong because they demean women.”

5. **Students extract reasons or premises from the text.**

Next define “premise” — a reason given for believing a conclusion. Students can work in groups to find the reasons, since it saves time and encourages a cooperative atmosphere. At first, reasons should be taken from the text with as little paraphrasing as possible.

6. **Students formulate the counter argument.**

A counter argument, the con side of the conclusion, may be formulated by examining the pro premises and by reading the text for supporting information.

Students should reread the article, listing details relevant to the conclusions. Have the class discuss these lists and distinguish what all agree is relevant from what is of disputed relevance. To use those points of disputed relevance, relevance itself must be argued. **S-31**
Encourage students to isolate key words and phrases (e.g., demeaning, indignities, cheating the contestants, right to protest, right to compete in the pageant). Examine the issue further, having students present reasons left out of the article, and discuss why the concepts do or don't apply.

7. Students prepare to argue both sides.

Students prepare to argue in groups or pairs. It is important that you impress upon students that they are expected to argue the case — not just repeat the premises — by supporting the premise. S-25

Perhaps they will argue that eating disorders are rampant in the United States and that, while the contestants themselves may or may not be starving, they serve as negative or unhealthy role models for the rest of American women. They may argue that it is rare for a non-white woman to win the contest. Or they may mention that women have to spend money to be in the contests and that only one woman wins the scholarship — the others lose. They should argue, for example, why bleaching hair is demeaning. Whatever points are made should be better developed than the premises.

On the con side, they may point out that everyone is judged in life in all sorts of different situations. The beauty pageant judges also score contestants on verbal ability and talent. They may even take issue with the wording of the conclusion itself, questioning a statement that pertains to all women; even if a few women object to beauty pageants, that doesn't mean all women are harmed.

Students will find the notion of supporting the premises difficult at first, because usually they are expected merely to repeat information, not think about it. After the first few times, students become quite good at argument skills and look forward to exploring the issue.

8. With a two-minute warning, students present either the pro or con side.

Give time for students to present their cases. The class should take notes on the strong and weak points in preparation for the evaluation. S-22

9. The class evaluates the presentation.

The evaluation may take any form the teacher wishes — written or oral. Remember that it is the presentation that is to be evaluated. The task is not to decide who won, pro or con. How well did the groups defend the premises? Did they argue irrelevant points? Did they bring in convincing information to supplement the premises? Did they address opposing arguments? S-18

You will notice that we have avoided having the students "choose" sides. Critical thinking requires students to enter into both points of view and understand what is strong and weak on both sides.
10. The class explores the underlying or tangent issues.

After this is done, the teacher may discuss the issue with the students and come to conclusions on which side is stronger. Have students discuss their own positions and evaluations of the points raised. Students could also discuss ways their thinking changed over the course of the assignment. S-9

This lesson can be structured in several different ways. For example, you may want the students to practice picking out the conclusions and premises of several articles before you try the ten-step approach. You may want to model much of the whole process yourself first. Using a video camera is always a good tool in lessons such as this, because it is possible to go back and replay sections of the presentations. Later, the element of library research may be added to more advanced lessons.

One cannot develop one's fairmindedness, for example, without actually thinking fairmindedly. One cannot develop one's intellectual independence without actually thinking independently. This is true of all the essential critical thinking traits, values, or dispositions. They are developmentally embedded in thinking itself.
News

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- practice reading the news critically
- explore the consequences of working with and using different news media
- discuss root questions about the importance of following the news
- exercise independence of thought when evaluating the importance of, and emphasis on, news items
- analyze news stories by clarifying issues, claims, and criteria for evaluation, and by evaluating evidence

Standard Approach

Straight news is fact — who, what, when, where, and why. Often, however, news articles also interpret, analyze, or evaluate events, or describe an eyewitness’ feelings. Texts emphasize the importance of the who, what, where, when, and why questions in news articles. Other purposes of the article are to show why an event was special, or how it was sad, funny, inspiring or unusual, and, in doing so, they make the story interesting. Texts point out that reporters sometimes tell more than the facts — they may tell how they themselves feel or how the eyewitness feels. Models of news writing are reprinted from actual articles written for different papers. The students are asked to analyze the models looking for vivid verbs, or imagining how the story would change if it were written by an eyewitness instead of the reporter.

Students are asked to bring in articles about new discoveries or to tell of a story they heard on the TV or the radio. Noting the pyramid structure of news stories, they are then to write their own stories based on one of the stories they found. They are to include the who, what, when, where and why questions as well as facts, quotes, and a catchy headline. Subsequent assignments are to write different kinds of news articles including lead paragraphs, complete news stories, and editorials. They are warned not to guess at the facts.

Some texts choose to focus on the mechanics of reading a newspaper. They emphasize the use of the index and the different sections of the paper as well as the format of the stories and the kinds of information presented. They assign such activities as finding particular services in the classified section or finding out about desirable vacation spots.

Critique

Critical thinking enables one to improve one’s basic beliefs, and this requires having as complete information as possible. We chose this unit because of the important role that the news media have in shaping our view of the world. The earlier a person can learn to use news sources critically, the better. The critical thinker follows news, at least in part, for well-defined purposes. The critical spirit shapes one’s use of news media.
When thinking about news, the critical thinker considers such questions as, "Why follow the news? What does 'news' mean? What situations and events are most important for me to know about? What can I believe? What should I doubt? What shapes the form and content of news I receive? What are the purposes of those who bring me news? How should I evaluate news sources?" Furthermore, the critical thinker realizes that the use of such terms as, 'news,' 'fact,' 'important,' and 'worth knowing,' all reflect one's perspective. The independent thinker makes these distinctions free of another's authority rather than blindly accepting reporters' and editors' evaluations. The critical thinker actively uses news media to develop an individual perspective, rather than passively accepting the perspective presented.

**Independent thought**

An enormous number of events occur everyday. No more than a small fraction can be printed or broadcast. Inclusion and placement of stories and order of details are editors' and reporters' decisions, and reflect their perspectives. Reporters and editors decide what to print and what to ignore, what to put on the front page and what inside. Yet texts repeatedly claim that the main or most important stories are on the front page; the most important details are in the first few paragraphs. By ignoring the effect of journalists' perspectives, texts inadvertently encourage students to unquestioningly accept others' judgments rather than making their own.

Another factor which determines the size and placement of an article is its popularity. A popular, though unimportant, issue may receive prominent and extended coverage. Gossip, celebrity news, fads, and other trivial events often receive more prominent coverage than serious issues and events. For example, a soft drink company that changed its recipe received time and space completely out of proportion to its importance. Emphasizing that the most important news receives the most extensive and prominent coverage discourages students from examining and evaluating the importance others place on news.

Texts tend to tell students such things as why people should be well-informed, and what functions or purposes news items serve. Students should be asked to develop their own views regarding the importance and purposes of news; and define their own categories of news stories.

**Fact/opinion**

Texts generally use or assume the "fact/opinion distinction" throughout their treatment of news. The sections on slanted news and news vs. editorials emphasize the distinction. The use of this distinction, as usual, is highly misleading. Activities on slanted news generally have students merely distinguish factual from evaluative claims. Texts encourage students to accept claims containing precise sounding language and doubt other kinds of claims. What sounds like a fact may be more doubtful than an inference or evaluation. Students should not be led to believe that they can judge the truth of claims merely by looking at their form. Instead, they should note the sources of claims and discuss the criteria for their evaluation. Here, texts provide little guidance.

Texts promote the commonly-held misconception that the news is fact (and therefore true) and opinion (usually understood as "mere opinion") is reserved for the editorial pages. This belief ignores the following points: 1) Much of the news is quoted. Although it may well be true that this person did say that, what the person said may be false or misleading. Readers should remember whether "something they read in the paper" was quoted and from whom and in what context. 2) Reporters make mistakes. They can get the facts wrong. 3) Facts can be reported out of context.
Facts crucial to a fair understanding of an event can be left out, trivialized, or unfairly discredited. 4) When a newspaper goes on a crusade, investigating and reporting a story to champion a cause, most of that work appears in the news sections. 5) Editorial columns or letters to the editor may well contain facts (sometimes crucial facts not found elsewhere in the paper). 6) A well-reasoned, clearly presented “opinion” column or letter to the editor may be as well worth reading, as new, insightful, and informative, as useful for understanding an issue, as is “straight news.” 7) Favored interpretations or explanations of events can be assumed or promoted, reasonable alternatives ignored. Students should learn to judge what they read on its own merit and in relation to evidence, not on the basis of the section in which it appears. (See the section on fact/opinion, in “Thinking Critically About Teaching: From Didactic to Critical Teaching.”)

Superficial explanations

Texts explain that news reports serve to inform and entertain. As they stand, such explanations offer little help toward understanding purposes and functions of various stories. The functions, rather than being clarified, are left vague. What is the purpose of the distinction between entertaining and informing? How should this distinction affect how each kind of story should be read, understood, or used? Such lessons leave students with a superficial, brief answer to root questions about the function of a wide variety of news stories.

The concept of slanted news is trivialized by the text treatment. According to most texts, news is slanted by use of misleading headlines or sentences (understood in light of the fact/opinion distinction). Even when texts do not limit the definition of ‘slanting’ to “emotive words used in headlines,” student exercises and activities generally do. Texts ignore the subtler and much more common forms, such as placement, emphasis, introduction and use of details and quotes, lack of coverage, and the time at which stories are used or ignored. A neutrally phrased headline above seemingly factual statements may be slanted. The presence of evaluative language does not necessarily reflect bias. Though word choice often biases readers, the bias most frequently occurs in a larger context than in a single sentence. Writers may have double standards regarding the use of evaluative words or phrases, or such terms may simply be asserted without support. Texts generally ignore these factors in favor of applying the fact/opinion distinction to headlines and claims and having students “find emotive words.”

Trivial activities

Too much time is spent having students write headlines, leads, and stories. Introducing reflective critical use of news media is more important than training reporters. Other forms of writing practice could be substituted (paraphrasing, summarizing, and writing argumentative essays).

The remodel which follows gives students the opportunity to assess and use news sources critically and reflectively. This unit promotes students’ confidence in reason and in their abilities to think for themselves.

Strategies used to remodel

S-21 reading critically; clarifying or critiquing texts
S-9 developing confidence in reason
S-29 noting significant similarities and differences
S-8 developing intellectual perseverance
S-24 practicing Socratic discussion: clarifying and questioning beliefs, theories, or perspectives
S-1 thinking independently
Remodelled Lesson Plan S-21

Teachers' introduction

We recommend that the teacher spend as much time as possible on this unit. News media themselves should be the main source of material, rather than textbooks. Students may also critique parts of the text after their study of news.

Although both the original and remodelled lessons focus on newspapers, we recommend that other sources of news also be used, discussed, and compared. "What are the differences between TV, radio, magazines, and newspapers? How do these differences affect presentation of the news? What are the consequences of the differences? In what ways is reading what people have said better or worse than hearing and/or watching them? How should these differences affect use of each medium?" S-29

Students could compare the perspectives reflected in different news magazines, newscasts, and newspapers. Videotapes of news reports could be used to introduce students to important stories.

Our remodelled unit is divided into the following sections: 1) Preliminary work; 2) Story placement; 3) Individual items; 4) Influence of media; 5) Purposes of news; and 6) Using news in other subjects.

1) Preliminary work

The class could spend the first week or so examining the news. The teacher may want to set up heterogeneous reading groups wherein stronger readers can help weaker readers. Groups may be formed to follow ongoing stories for the duration of the unit (and beyond). Such groups can make periodic reports to the rest of the class, and the subjects can be discussed. S-8

Work within such groups could be divided, with interested students doing background research, and others collecting, paraphrasing and analyzing articles, and looking up unfamiliar terms in dictionaries and encyclopedias. Students not interested in following an issue may cut and categorize stories (perhaps by subject, importance, or perspective of the source). Some students could keep running tallies on such things as use of wire services, journalists' sources, reports of opinion polls, what proportion of the news is quotes, or who is quoted most often.
The class could have an exploratory Socratic discussion of what 'news' means and why it is important. The teacher could ask questions like the following: “What is news? What are newscasts and newspapers for? What do they do? S-1 (Follow up student responses with further questions or counter examples.) What kinds of stories or events make up the news? What kinds of stories do not make the news? S-17 Why do people listen to, watch, and read news? What do people want to know about? What do people need to know about? (Encourage multiple responses, and encourage students to draw this distinction between want and need.) What kinds of things are important for people to know? Why?” S-24

When students have had sufficient time to familiarize themselves with newspapers and have shared their discoveries and impressions, the teacher can begin a series of more in-depth discussions about the significance of what students have found and about news media.

2) Story placement S-1

Students could apply insights gained through perusal of the news and preliminary discussions by discussing placement and emphasis of news. The teacher could use questions like the following: If you were an editor, and had a stack of stories, how would you decide which to print and which not to print? Why? Which to put on the front page and which inside the paper? Why? Which gets the biggest headline? If you were writing headlines, how would you figure out what to say? If you were a reporter, which details would you put first? Next? Last? Why? Would everyone make the same decisions? Have students discuss what kinds of stories everyone would agree are most important, least important, and which are of disputed importance. They can begin to generate criteria for judging the relative importance of news items. S-17

Students could compare front page stories with stories inside the paper, compare their ideas about what's most important to those of the editors, and generalize about their criteria. Ask questions like the following: “Why do you think these stories are on the front page? What, according to the editors of this paper, are the most important stories of the past week? Why, do you think, did they make these decisions? What other decisions could they have made instead? Are there stories or articles the editors thought were important, that you think are unimportant? Which stories inside of the paper do you think belong on the front page? Why? S-12 What were the editors assuming? What could they have assumed instead? Which assumptions are better? S-30 Why? (Similarly, students could compare different sources' coverage of specific stories.) Do any of the criteria conflict? If so, why might they conflict? Can they be reconciled? If so, how? What values underlie these criteria?” S-15

3) Individual items S-13

To develop students' sense of the requirements of fair coverage, the teacher could take a lead paragraph or headline, tell students the basic idea of the story, and ask questions like the following: “To research this story fairly, what would you have to do? Where could you get the information you need? Who would you
have to talk to? What questions should you ask?" (The answers could be compared to the actual story, or stories from different sources — other papers, magazines, or TV.) If the story is one of conflict, the teacher might ask: "How are the sides portrayed in the story? Are they given equal space? Is each side portrayed neutrally? Why do you say so? Are the evaluations justified? Why or why not? How could we find out? How do the terms used influence the reader? Are the terms justified?" \textit{S-9}

Students could discuss how the alleged facts in a story can be evaluated, rather than applying the fact/opinion distinction to statements. The teacher or students could select a story, and discuss questions like the following: What facts are mentioned in this story? (The teacher may want to record these.) What is the main point? Are all of the facts relevant, or are some irrelevant? Why do you say so? \textit{S-31} Do the facts seem complete? Are there important questions left unanswered? What? Why? Are both sides represented? How does each side represent the issue? Do they agree about how to word the issue? Give an unbiased formulation of the issue. Is the report complete/does it tell you everything you need to know to be able to judge the situation? Why? What sources are used? Are these people in a position to know what they claim to know? Why or why not? Does anyone connected with the story have a vested interest in what people believe about it? \textit{S-16} What evidence is presented to support or undermine the truth of the claims made? What conclusions, if any, can we reach about this story? \textit{S-33}

For work on headlines, students could take actual newspaper articles, summarize or paraphrase them, and then assess the accuracy of the headlines. \textit{S-21} Students could suggest better headlines, and compare different headlines for the same story. \textit{S-1}

Examination of editorials, columns, and letters to the editor provide fruitful practice in argument analysis and critique. The class could discuss questions like the following: What is the writer's main point? How does he support it? What are the key terms or ideas? Are they used properly? Why or why not? Does anything said contradict something you know? \textit{S-34} How can we find out which is true? Does the writer cite evidence/facts? What? Where does he get them? Are they clearly true, clearly false, or questionable? Why? Are the facts relevant? Why or why not? Are some relevant facts left out? \textit{S-33} How would someone with an opposing view answer? (Students could practice dialogical or dialectical thinking here, if they are familiar enough with the subject of the passage.) What are the strengths of this argument? The weaknesses? Does the writer make a good case? Why or why not? \textit{S-18}

4) \textbf{Influence of media S-35}

To explore some of the effects media have on reported news, the teacher could lead a discussion about "News as a business." Point out that most money comes from advertising and that news media with larger audiences get more money from advertisers. So news emphasizes stories that sell papers and attract viewers. And
to maximize profits by spending less, news media tend to use cheaper sources such as press conferences and press releases, rather than investigation. The teacher may want to explain how AP and UPI are news-gathering services to which media subscribe. These services provide most of the news used by reporters.

Since two common sources of news are the press conference and press release, the teacher may want to explain what these are. Perhaps students could watch a videotape of a press conference. Students could look for and count mentions of press releases and press conferences, discuss why people give them, who gives them, who doesn't give them, and why they are relied on heavily.

"How does profit motive affect the news we receive?" S-35

5) Purposes of news S-17

At or toward the end of the unit, the class could discuss, in greater depth than in the preliminary discussion, purposes of following the news. The class can discuss the news covered during the unit. Ask questions like the following: "What were the major stories? What other stories did you see? How important are the stories we've seen? Why?" For individual stories, ask, "Is this something people should be aware of? Why or why not? Why would people find this interesting or important? How important is this? What effect did it have? On whom? Which stories do you think are the most important for people to know about? Why? What does 'news' mean?" (Discuss at length.)

During the course of this discussion, the teacher may have students review the concept of 'democracy.' If necessary, explain the phrase 'informed decision.' The class can then discuss the kinds of news citizens of a democracy need to know — background for important decisions; actions of elected and appointed government officials. (Discuss at length.)

6) Using News in Other Subjects S-23

Social Studies

Students could write news reports of historical events under study. Different students or groups of students could write the reports from different points of view, for example, the Revolutionary War from the points of view of the English, Indians, and Revolutionaries. Students could compare and evaluate the results. S-25

Stories followed by students could be researched using back issues and other resources for background into the history of the country, conflict, or people involved. S-8 Study of both the news and geography could be enhanced by having students read and discuss news about areas under study in geography, or by using their geography texts and other sources to research areas mentioned in important news stories.

Politics is an especially fruitful area for using news. Students can discuss different offices and to which branch of government each belongs, distinguish aspects of government mentioned in the Constitution from those not, and discuss any Constitutional issues which arise during the unit. Students can also
learn about other governments, how they work and their similarities with and
differences from ours, as well as our relationships to them.

Students could also relate discussion of political action groups and public
opinion to government and history. Ask, “What is this group trying to accom-
plish? Why? Why hasn’t it been done? How are they trying to accomplish their
purpose? Do you think their goals are important? Why or why not? How would
you evaluate their methods?”

The subjects anthropology, sociology, psychology are also covered in the news
and could be introduced or discussed.

Science

Public opinion polls could be compared with scientific studies. Students could
use news reports when studying weather and climate. Such subjects as energy,
the environment, health and nutrition, astronomy, and physics are covered in
the news. Students can use, discuss, and evaluate various charts, graphs, and
diagrams presented in news reports.

---

When the powerful tools of critical thinking are
used merely at the service of egocentrism, socio-
centrism, or ethnocentrism, then genuine commu-
nication and discussion end, and people relate to
one another in fundamentally manipulative, even
if intellectual, ways.