

# Creating a space for critical thinking in the EAP / ESP classroom

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Spain

# Critical thinking

In the university systems of English-speaking countries:

- A “key graduate attribute” in the educational missions of many institutions (Barrie & Prosser 2004).

In English for Academic Purposes:

- An “essential component of EAP programs” (Dooey 2010).

# Critical thinking?

... four distinct areas related to learning and teaching in higher education, namely credits and learning outcomes, modes and forms of study, learning in digital environments and teaching. Each of these areas is closely linked to the concept of student-centred learning, defined as 'both a mindset and a culture [...] characterised by innovative methods of teaching which aim to promote learning in communication with teachers and other learners and which take students seriously as active participants in their own learning, fostering **transferable skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking and reflective thinking**' (ESU 2015) (The EHEA in 2018. Bologna Process Implementation Report, p. 49, citing ESU (European Students' Union) 2015. Overview.)

[illegible]

# Contents

- What is critical thinking?
- Ordering different approaches
- A small study on CT
- Applications in EAP
- Applications in ESP
- Conclusions

# What is critical thinking?

Moore (2016) identifies three approaches that can be found in EAP theory and materials:

- The “skills approach”
- The “ethics approach”
- The “language of evaluation approach”

# What is critical thinking?

Moore (2016) identifies three approaches that can be found in EAP theory and materials: (my reordering)

- The “skills approach”
- The “language of evaluation approach”
- The “ethics approach”

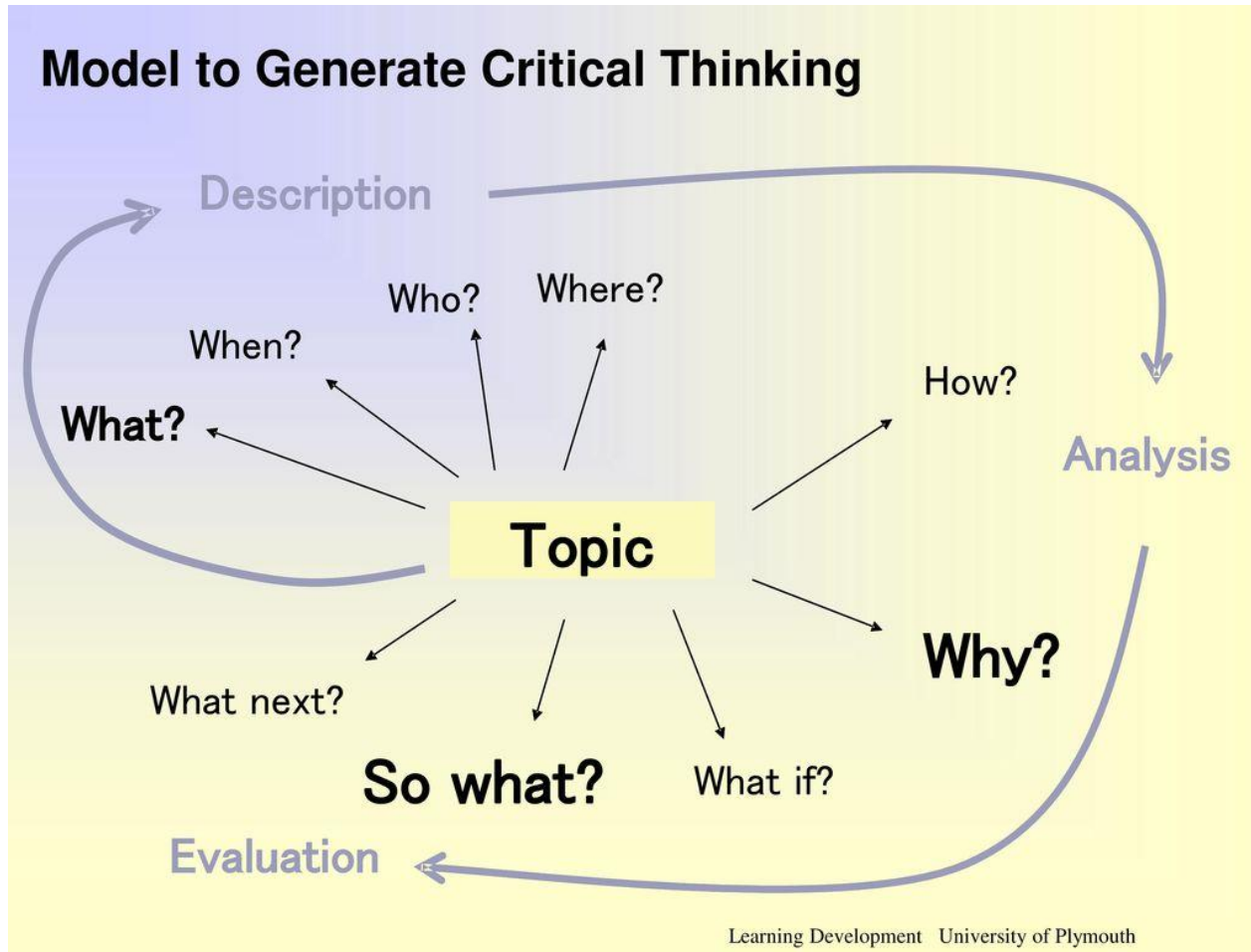
# What is critical thinking?

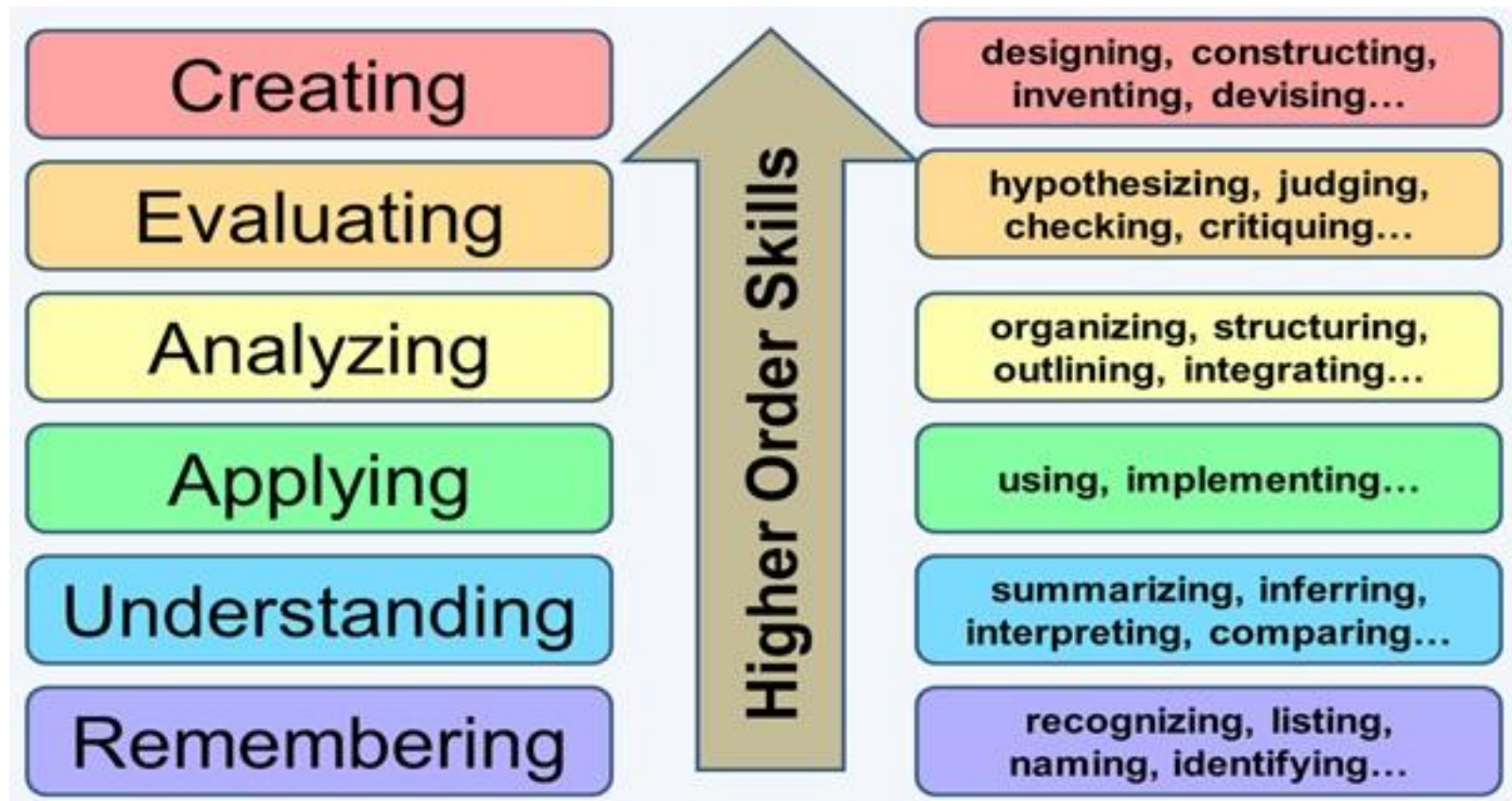
## **The skills approach:**

- Emerged from philosophy of education and the notion of the taxonomy of skills.
- Critical thinking is “a finite set of cognitive operations”, one of the “skills” that are applicable across many academic domains and disciplines (cf. Ennis 1987: “constituent thinking skills”). An essentially pragmatic approach, envisioned as an introduction to academic thinking, discourses and practices.
- Generated a “critical thinking skills industry” (Barnett 2000) and influencing many EAP textbooks.



# What is critical thinking?





Bloom's taxonomy

Readers should do **what** with knowledge gained in the chapter?

### **Factual**

Basic terminology, facts, or major ideas and thinkers in the field.

Grasp foundations so they can build to next level.

### **Conceptual**

Interrelated concepts, principles & theories.

Comprehend, analyze, abstract ideas.

### **Procedural**

How-to steps.

Follow protocols or apply ideas in practical ways.

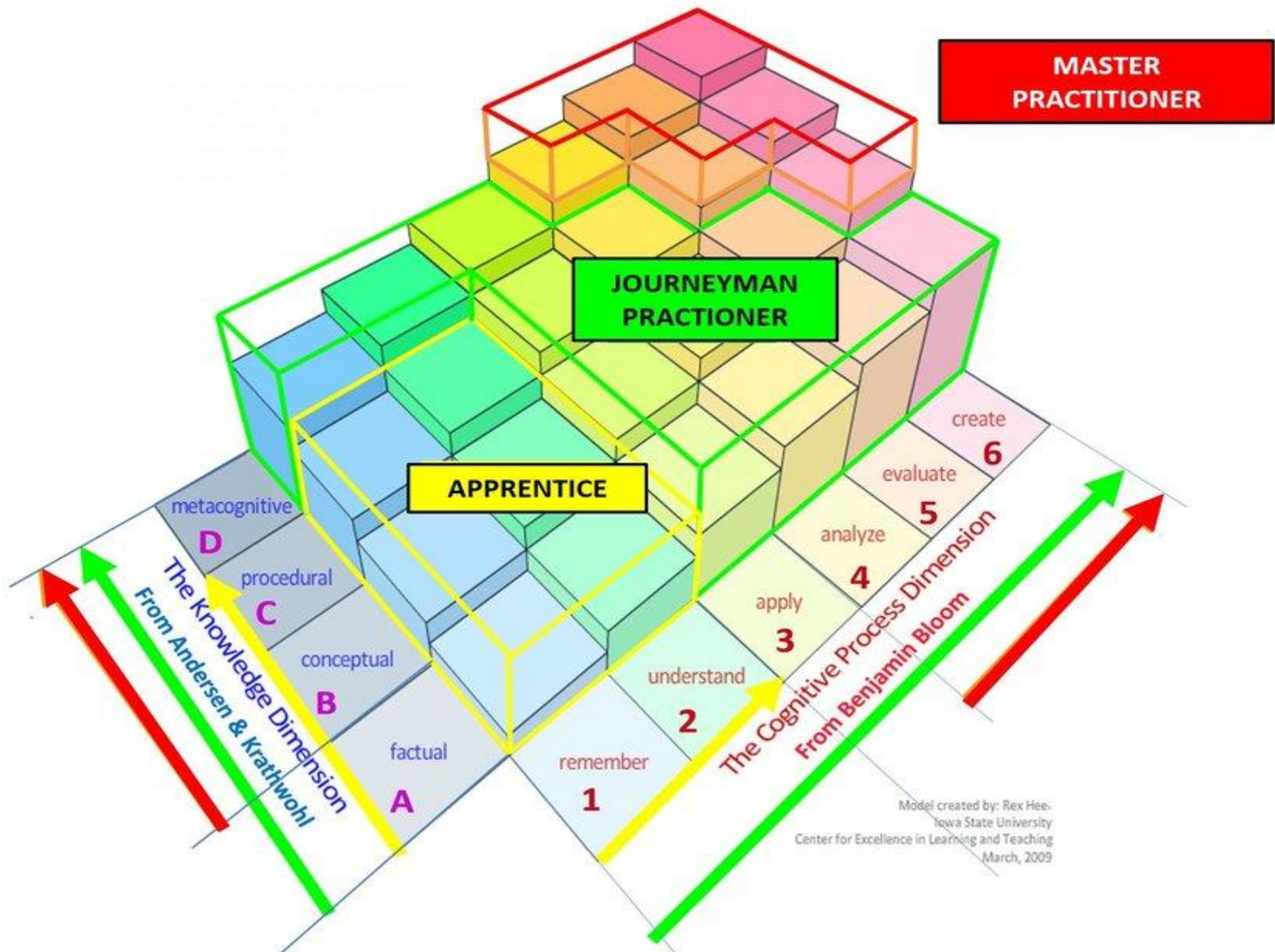
### **Metacognitive**

Strategic & self-knowledge.

Situate ideas within larger frameworks, locate own roles or positions.

(Adapted from Anderson, Bloom, Krathwohl, & Airasian, 2000)





Model created by: Rex Hee-  
Iowa State University  
Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching  
March, 2009

A statement of a **learning objective** contains a **verb** (an action) and an **object** (usually a noun).

- The **verb** generally refers to [actions associated with] the intended **cognitive process**.
- The **object** generally describes the **knowledge** students are expected to acquire or construct. (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001, pp. 4-5)

In this model, each of the colored blocks shows an example of a learning objective that generally corresponds with each of the various combinations of the cognitive process and knowledge dimensions.

**Remember:** these are **learning objectives**—not learning activities. It may be useful to think of preceding each objective with something like: “Students will be able to . . .”

\*Anderson, L.W. (Ed.), Krathwohl, D.R. (Ed.), Airasian, P.W., Cruikshank, K.A., Mayer, R.E., Pintrich, P.R., Raths, J., & Wittrock, M.C. (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (Complete edition). New York: Longman.



Model created by: Rex Heer  
Iowa State University  
Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching  
Updated January, 2012  
Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License.  
For additional resources, see:  
[www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/RevisedBlooms1.html](http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/RevisedBlooms1.html)

# What is critical thinking?

## **The language of evaluation approach:**

- Emerged from linguistic focus on ESP/EAP.
- Critical thinking is something expressed using particular linguistic forms and formulae.
- Essential linguistic devices (i.e. hedging, boosting), phrases and expressions can be taught in the EAP classroom.
- By gaining familiarity with genres in which critical thinking is used, students will be socialised into critical thinking practices and language in their own discipline.



# What is critical thinking?

## Useful words and phrases for each writing style

These phrases and words may be helpful. Also, refer to the [Sentence Starters, Transitional and Other Useful Words](#) guide.

| Descriptive Language            | Analytical Language                        | Critical/Evaluative Language                          | Reflective Language                         |
|---------------------------------|--|---|---|
| The context is ...              | Comparison ...and ...reveals ...           | In order to identify ... it would be necessary to ... | This raised for me ...                      |
| Components of the model are ... | Application of this model to ... indicates | Given ... it can be concluded ...                     | For me, the most significant aspect was ... |
| This occurred at ...            | The strengths are ...                      | The point ... is valuable ...                         | I felt/noticed/discovered/realised that ... |
| Key characteristics are ...     | This occurred as ...                       | If this were applied to ...                           | The questions this raises for me are ...    |
| The methodology chosen was ...  | This was completed because ...             | The significance/implications of ...                  | In future practice, I ...                   |
|                                 | In contrast to ...                         | If ... could be applied to ... then ...               | I found this relevant as ...                |
|                                 | Likewise/Similarly ...                     | The argument is convincing as ...                     |   |
|                                 | However/In contrast ...                    | This could be transferable/applicable to ...          |   |
|                                 | The alternative to this is ...             |   |   |
|                                 | If ... were altered/removed/added then ... |   |   |

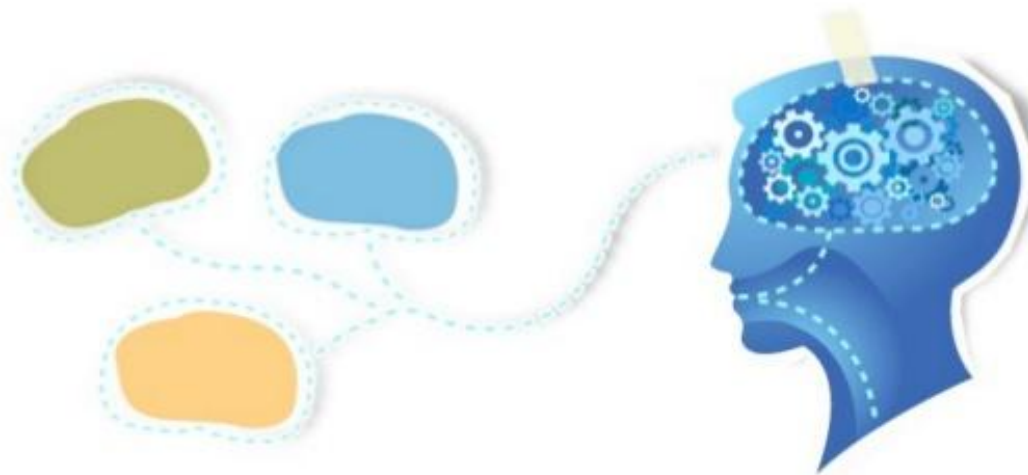
(Adapted from "Reflective Writing," n.d.; "Critical Thinking," 2010)

# What is critical thinking?

## **The ethics approach:**

- Emerged from critical theory and critical pedagogy (cf. Marxist concept of critical consciousness, Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed).
- Critical thinking is about the critical scrutiny of social structures and practices, particularly those leading to social injustice.
- EAP should do more than just prepare students to participate in academic practices: it should “encourage students to question, and in some sense, to transform those practices” (Benesch 2001). Influencing on some EAP textbooks.





Critical consciousness in organizations is examining and critiquing shared assumptions in such a way to that we understand certain social problems no longer as misfortune, but as an *injustice*.

(Turner, 1969; Freire, 1972; Gramsci, 1971)

# But ....

## Problems:

- Skills - cognitive operation – making logical/rational judgements.
- Language of evaluation – about the “how” judgements should be framed in discourse, but not about how they can/should be made.
- Ethics – judgements of a “more normative, deontic kind”, i.e “what should be”.
- Critical thinking is curiously elusive, and **seems likely to be discipline dependent** (Moore 2016): related to other concepts such as logics, knowledge structures, etc.

# Different disciplines, different CT

Moore (2016): Interview based study with colleagues from different disciplines.

- History: construct of critical thinking seemed to be related to interpretation of human actions (motivations, etc.) and to evaluation of outcomes (e.g. Success).
- Philosophy and cultural studies: qualities relating to texts (persuasiveness, genericness).
- These two types of analysis can be thought of in Hallidayan terms as phenomenal (dealing with real world entities) and metaphenomenal (dealing with ideas, theories, etc.). The latter presents greater difficulty (Morton & Moore 2005).

# A small study....

- 6 lecturers in 3 countries
- Define critical thinking
- Identify difficulties with critical thinking

# Defining CT on the ground

**Academic level:** Different understanding at different levels: undergraduate essays (if the text is logically structured, if the ideas are supported, if there is reasoning to support opinions), postgraduate research (comparing sources, critical attitude to different sources).

**Nature of discipline:** Some things are not a matter of opinion (e.g. science). “It is important not to neglect the role of declarative knowledge while promoting the competence of ‘CT’.” / “In biology, for example, you are not supposed to have your own opinion”.

# Defining CT on the ground

**Fact-based or text-based discipline:** Different approach to criticality.

**Background culture:** Students are afraid to give their own opinions.

# Student difficulties with CT

## SOME EXPERIENCES

- “Students are not trained to use critical thinking and they are used to just copying ideas from different sources, without evaluating or interpreting these ideas.”
- “I have the impression that in Secondary Education they are not prepared to question what they read.”
- “Students don’t respond to feedback on content, or critical thinking, only to feedback on formal corrections or language.”
- “Evaluative practices (at school) are still more focused on the assessment of memorized information and application of rules.”

# Student difficulties with CT

## SOME EXPERIENCES

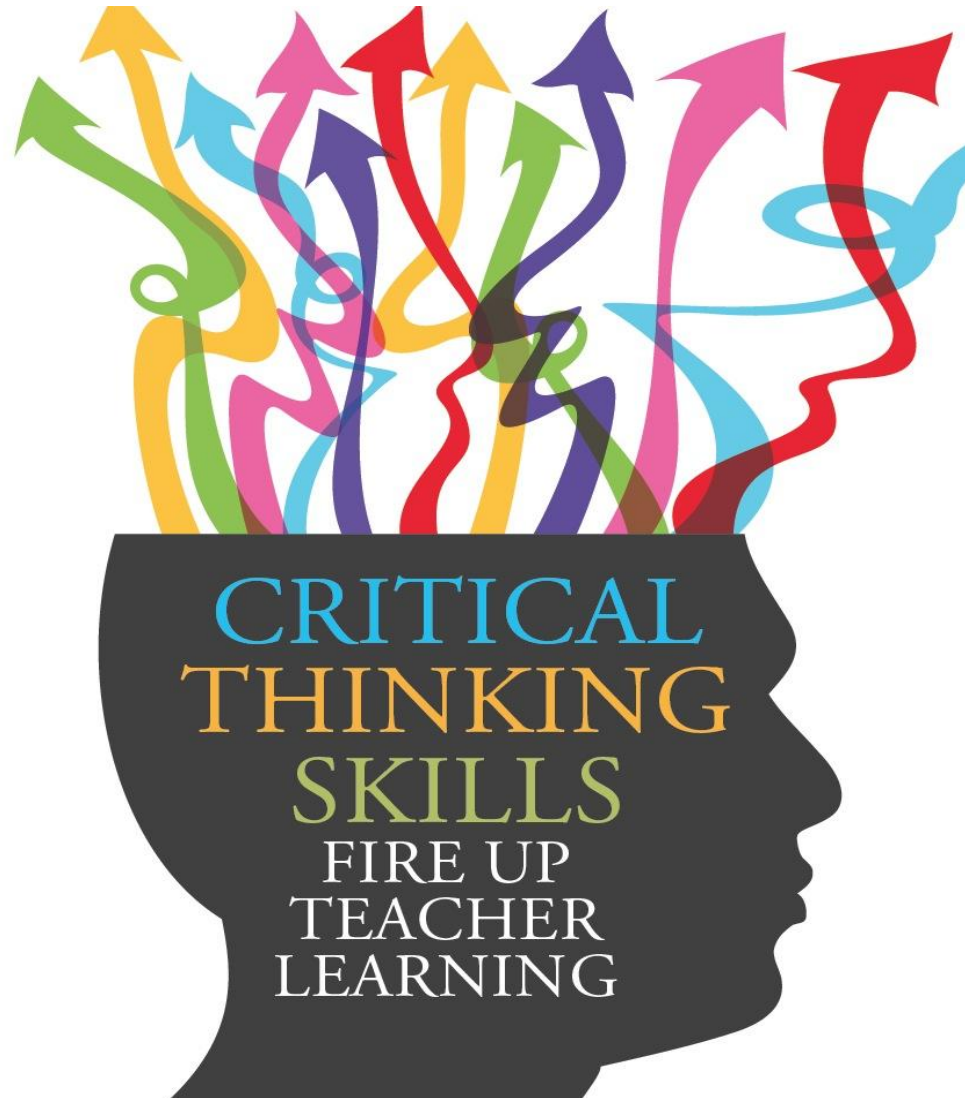
- “I’ve tried to give the students two or three articles to read and ask them to formulate their own opinion and, then, we would have a discussion. In class it turns out that they have not read the articles. Well, they say that they do not know what to think about them.”
- “As an experiment, sometimes I propose them a case study, and, when they get the right answer, I pretend that they were wrong and I say this categorically. Nobody replies and they simply accept what I say.”



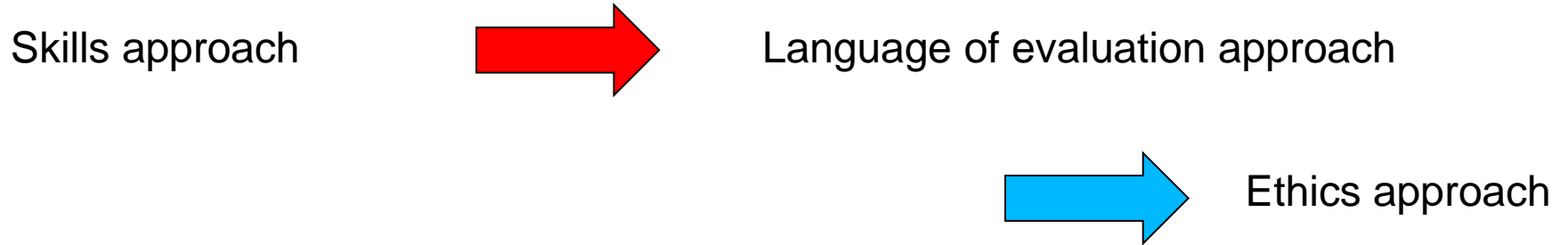
# Conclusions from our CT study

- All the lecturers we interviewed say CT is important, but find it hard to define.
- They conceptualise CT in different ways. The skills approach seems to be favoured.
- They emphasise that CT means different things in different disciplines and at different levels.
- CT is more than a set of discursive strategies, but discursive strategies are important to “frame and “display” critical thinking.

# Applications



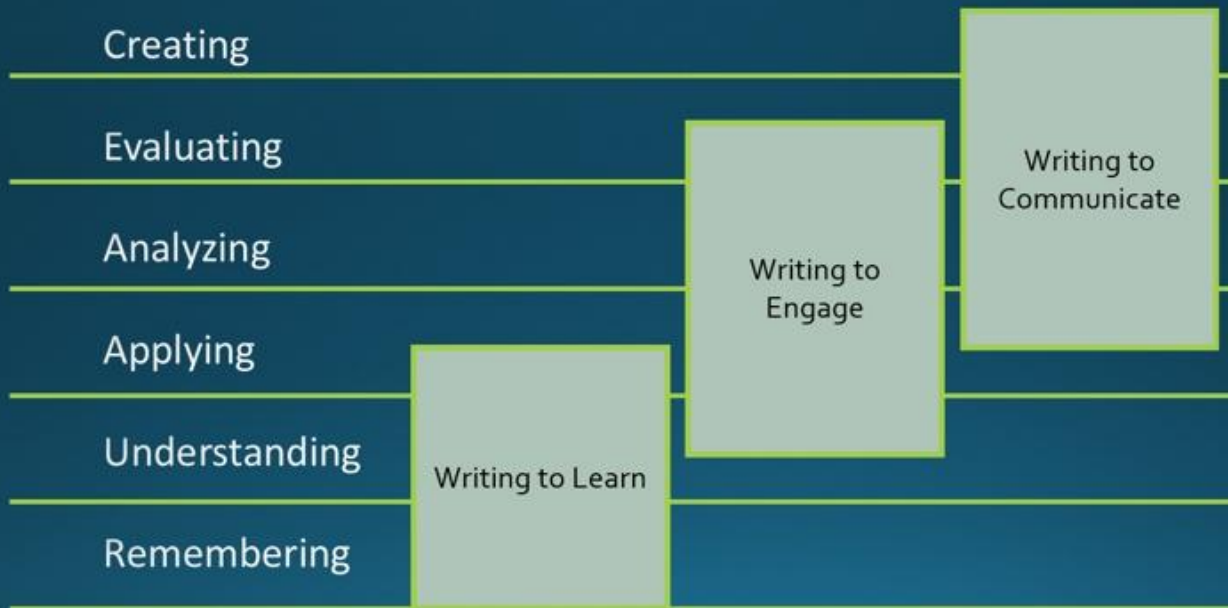
# Applications



English for Academic Purposes / English for Specific Purposes

# Applications / EAP

## Mapping Critical Thinking to Writing



# Applications / EAP

To prepare for essay writing:

Brainstorming

Preparatory discussion

Prepare arguments for/against

Prepare arguments for/reverse roles

Write one paragraph then submit to peer review

Advocatus diaboli

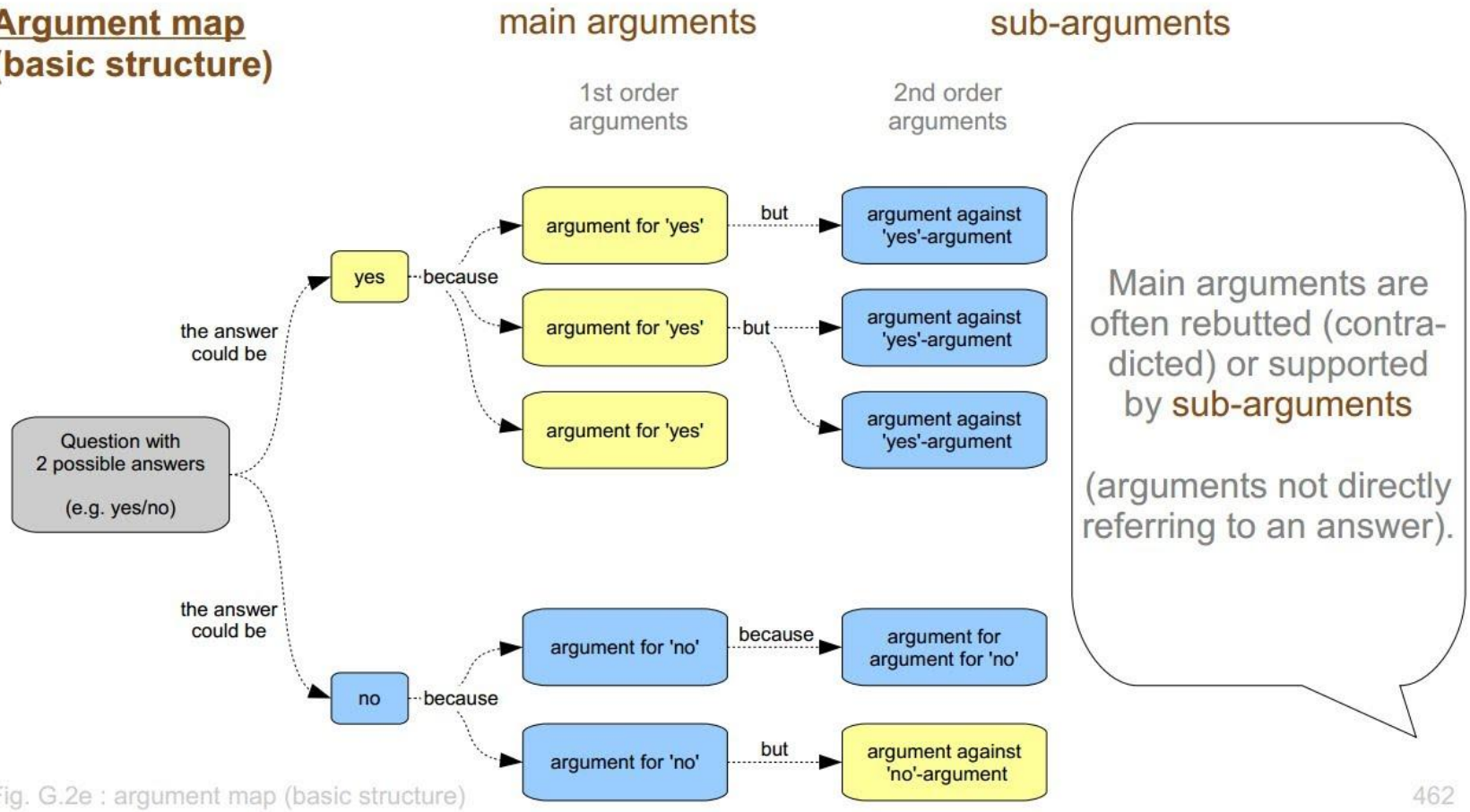
Socratic method

Class debates

....

# Applications / EAP

## Argument map (basic structure)



# Applications / EAP

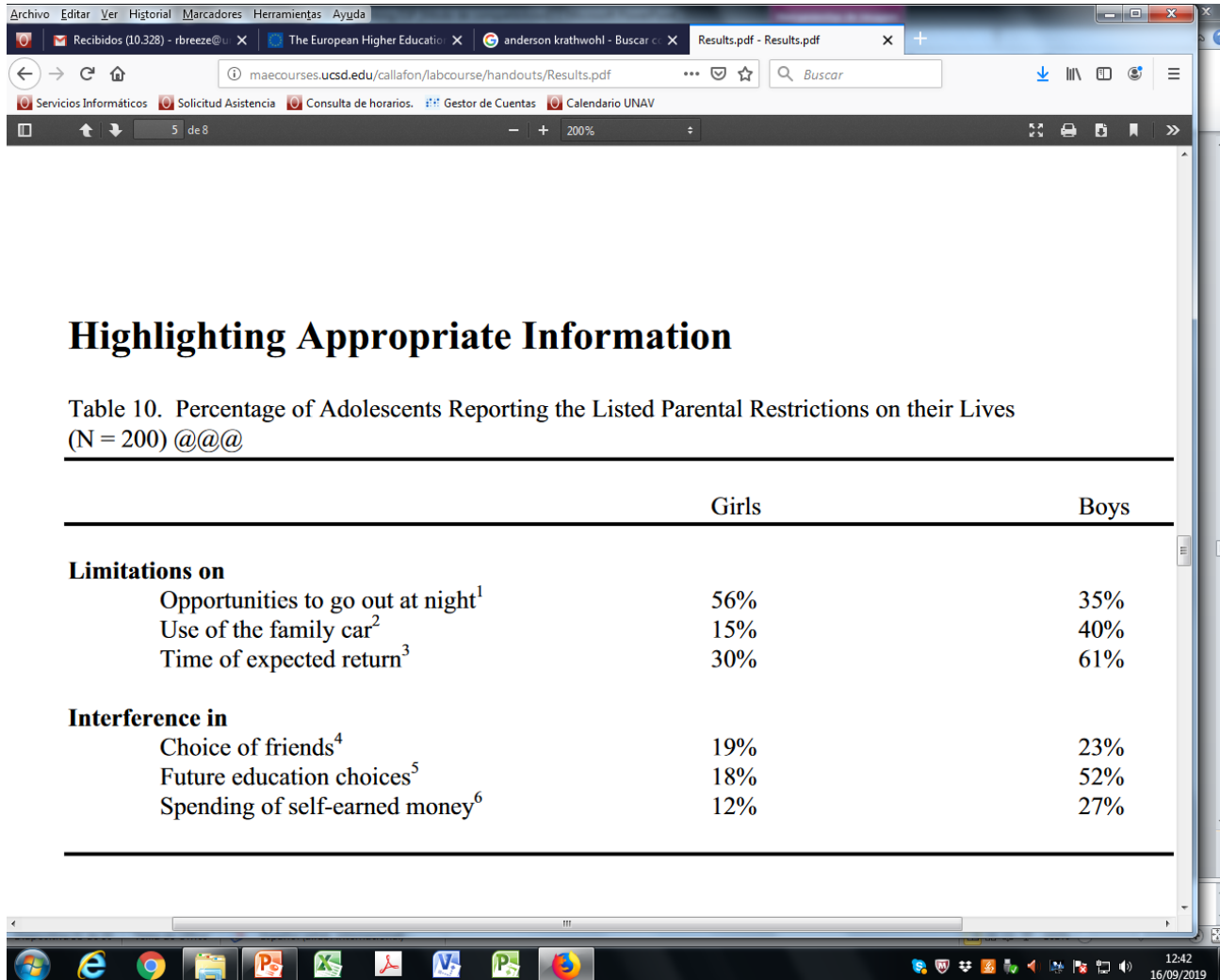


Table 10. Percentage of Adolescents Reporting the Listed Parental Restrictions on their Lives  
(N = 200) @@@

|   | Girls | Boys |
|---|-------|------|
| <b>Limitations on</b>                         |       |      |
| Opportunities to go out at night <sup>1</sup> | 56%   | 35%  |
| Use of the family car <sup>2</sup>            | 15%   | 40%  |
| Time of expected return <sup>3</sup>          | 30%   | 61%  |
| <b>Interference in</b>                        |       |      |
| Choice of friends <sup>4</sup>                | 19%   | 23%  |
| Future education choices <sup>5</sup>         | 18%   | 52%  |
| Spending of self-earned money <sup>6</sup>    | 12%   | 27%  |

# Applications / EAP

Genre – e.g. essay

Ordering arguments / counterarguments

Techniques of persuasion

Strength of claim



# Applications / EAP

**Highlighting Appropriate Information**

Table 10. Percentage of Adolescents Reporting the Listed Parental Restrictions on their Lives  
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Below are three students' data commentaries based on the chart above. Which student's highlights are the most informative? Choose one and be prepared to give reasons for your choice.

Language of evaluation

# Applications / EAP

Response papers (arguing back...)

Essays based on previous reading (e.g. 2 contrasting viewpoints)

Essays about “real” topics

Research papers based on small-scale research projects carried out in the classroom/using google forms

E

S

P

# Ideas from:

Engineering

Nursing/medicine/pharmacy

PR and marketing

Journalism / media studies

Law

# Engineering: A new invention.....

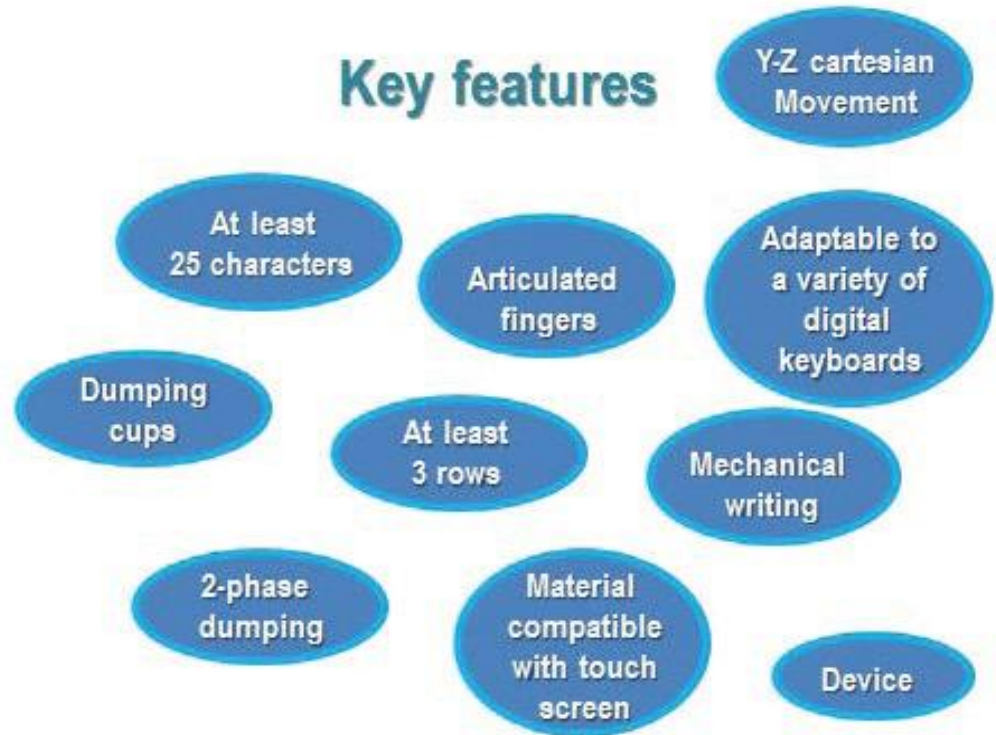
A patent claim is a single sentence composed of three parts: the introductory phrase, the body of the claim, and the link that joins the two:

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Preamble and transitional phrase | A writing instrument for making a mark on a writing surface, the writing instrument comprising:  |
| Element A                        | an elongate protective sheath with a central cavity extending along a length of the elongate protective sheath;  |
| Element B                        | a solid material disposed within the central cavity so that a person can grip the protective sheath and guide a tip of the solid material extending out of a first distal end of the elongate protective sheath to make the mark on the writing surface; and |
| Element C                        | an eraser disposed adjacent to a second distal portion of the elongate protective sheath opposite the first distal end.  |

# A new invention.....



## Key features



Writing a patent claim

# Engineering.....

More ideas:

- Create a graphical abstract for your paper and post it on the website for your classmates' comments
- Create “poster” papers (using own project or published paper) and defend them (and attack them)
- Solutions to problems: decision-making tasks (Which bridge should we build? How should the town council spend the transport budget? Which type of train should we buy?)

# Medicine/Nursing/Pharmacy

- Abstracts:
- Collect sets of abstracts of papers from different studies about common nutritional/lifestyle issues: e.g. Is it healthy to eat red meat? Why do young people smoke? Do health campaigns have an influence on people's lifestyles?
- Students should assemble these abstracts to create a “review” paper.

## Class research:

- Choose a simple questionnaire-based study.
- Students replicate the study with their peers, using the same questionnaire, and write up the results comparing their own results with the original paper.



# PR and Marketing



Read guidelines about handling customer complaints

Writing complaints

Answering the complaints

Evaluating the answer

Evaluating the guidelines

# Media: Deconstructing a text...

Identifying sources

Comparing media texts with their sources

# Media: Deconstructing a text....



# Media: Deconstructing a text....

- Read the text carefully to identify all possible sources
- Grade the sources in terms of (likely) reliability
- Grade the sources in terms of bias
- Find the sources in the Internet and compare them with the article
- Use a fact-checking site to contrast the points made in the article
- Look at discursive strategies in the text (hedging, boosting, foregrounding, presentation of “experts”, etc.) that may distort the message







# Media: Writing for international readers



# Writing for international readers

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Friday, September 14, 2018

**Rest pods for university students** ▾

Posted by  Geraldine Tan Shun Ting at Friday, September 14, 2018 1:06:16 PM  
Last Edited: Friday, September 14, 2018 1:09:08 PM



Feeling tired in school? National Technological University (NTU), a local university in Singapore, recently launched their new rest pod in the school's library for weary students to take a break.

This initiative was launched on September 10, as seen from the school's Facebook page.

Rest pods are only accessible by booking through NTU library's facilities booking system, while on the school's wifi network.


After booking, students can take a short break in the rest pods for a maximum of 30 minutes.

Why capped at 30 minutes? Under the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section, it explains that a 10 to 20-minute-long nap should suffice to provide users with a "dose of alertness", and anything lasting more than 30 minutes could potentially cause users to be more lethargic instead.

University students' well-being and mental health have been a prevalent issue in Singapore in the recent years.

Professor Michael Chee, director of the Centre for Cognitive Neuroscience at Duke-NUS Medical School said "The positive thing is that society is beginning to recognise that sleep is important. The next step is to make provision for better sleep - it'll take companies, government bodies and society at large to shift that."

**Comments: 4**

 Maria Fernanda Callejón Ferrer said...

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Sep 9, 2018 - Sep 15, 2018 (1)  
Rest pods for university students

15:45  
11/09/2019

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**Comments: 4** Comment

**María Fernanda Callejón Ferrer said...** Monday, September 24, 2018 4:31:43 PM CEST

I really like this article. It has a "catchy" headline that draws you to read it and the information is well presented. I thought that the grammar and the vocabulary were spotless. Short sentences loaded with meaning. Great work.

Regarding the content itself, the writer did well by explaining acronyms and not assuming that the reader knew everything, i.e.: National Technological University (NTU).

The last paragraph was a nice touch, since it gave a little bit more context, expanding on how this has been a prevalent issue in the past.

As a whole, I think it works well for an international audience. Thinking about publication, links to previous articles covering the issue would be useful.

**Amy Nicole Karpowicz said...** Tuesday, September 25, 2018 8:47:57 PM CEST

I really enjoyed reading this article. The photo and headline caught my attention. Also, I like how you added the photo because it gives the reader a better understanding of the content. I like how you added the quote too.

I think the last paragraph could be expanded more and put closer to the top of the article. Knowing the background information as to why the university is launching these pods is more important than the actual details about the pods. Think of the inverted pyramid.

Adding more context as to how well-being and mental health have been more important in Singapore recently could help the reader understand more as well.

Overall, this article was easy to understand and it flowed well. From an outsiders perspective, it makes sense and is enjoyable to read.

**Leah Jean President said...** Wednesday, September 26, 2018 10:16:20 AM CEST

I liked how you let the reader know why the pods were necessary by bringing up mental health and well-being. It tells the news, which is interesting in itself, but also let's you know why it is relevant. However, I wish you would have perhaps expanded further to tell us why students from Singapore might need this more or as much as students in other countries, since Singapore seems to be the only ones doing this at the moment.

15:46 11/09/2019



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### Spanish prime minister publishes doctoral thesis due to plagiarism accusations

**The government subjected Pedro Sánchez academic text to two separate detection services and it passed.**


Due to plagiarism and, the Spanish prime minister, Pedro Sánchez from the socialist party, has had his work tested via two detections programs, Turnitin and Plagscan.

The results were published by La Moncloa (the prime ministerial palace). In a official statement the government declared that the thesis passed the coincidence study correctly.

He also published the full work digitally because it was only available physically. The decision was taken after the Parliament demanded to completely see the thesis.



Adding to the political demands, the Spanish daily ABC ran a front-page story claiming that Sánchez had copied entire paragraphs from other authors, although the examples that it provided have their sources referenced in footnotes and in the bibliography while other media outlets stated that the work was completely made by the economist Carlos Ocaña who was the chief of staff for the Industry Ministry under a PSOE administration.



13 SEPTIEMBRE 2018 Jueves ABC.es

Portada de la tesis de Pedro Sánchez y uno de los ejemplos plagueros que cuestiona

15:46 11/09/2019

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# Universidad de Navarra

## News blog 19 September: Eduardo Sanz Campoy

Comments: 2

Comment



 Geraldine Tan Shun Ting said... 

Friday, September 21, 2018 12:57:58 PM CEST

This article is pretty interesting for an international readership as it talks about how the Spanish prime minister posted a thesis to dispel plagiarism allegations. Since this is about Spain's prime minister, I feel that it piques an interest to international readers as it shows a lot about the credibility of a country's prime minister.

The organization of this article first talks about the current situation of the prime minister's plagiarism, why it happened and the background of this issue in Spain. The language and style of this article is mainly formal, but some grammatical and punctuation errors could be spotted throughout the article.

Some terms in the article can be elaborated further for international readers. For example: "PSOE" administration. In addition, the article can also touch more on the issue surrounding controversies of politicians being caught with fake masters to make it more reader-friendly for international readers that may not have the full knowledge on this matter. It is good to have pictures in the article, but for international readers, the pictures are quite hard to understand as they are in Spanish. Hence, perhaps to make it more understandable, captions that translates the picture into English can be placed in the article.

 Ruth Breeze said... 

Wednesday, October 10, 2018 6:05:31 PM CEST

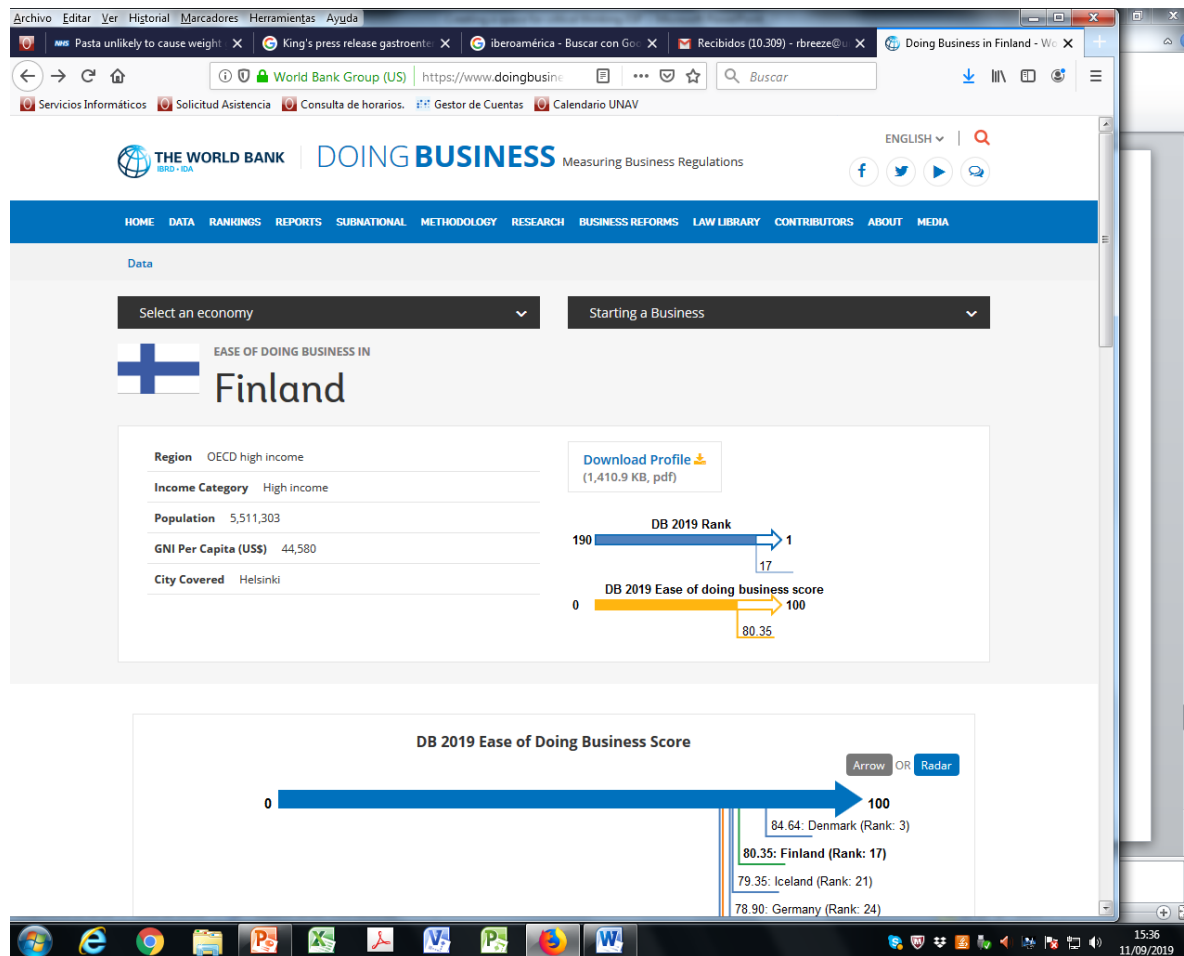
A good topic!!! Yes, Geraldine is right. Some more explanations would be needed for an international readership. Also, avoid use of slang ("legit", for example).

15:47 11/09/2019

# Law: Researching a legal topic

- The head of your department has just told you that she has a new client who is interested in setting up a business in (country X).
- Use the World Bank website “[www.doingbusiness.org](http://www.doingbusiness.org)” to find out whether it is easier to set up a business in (country X) or in your own country.
- Write a memo to your boss providing relevant information.

# Law: Researching a legal topic

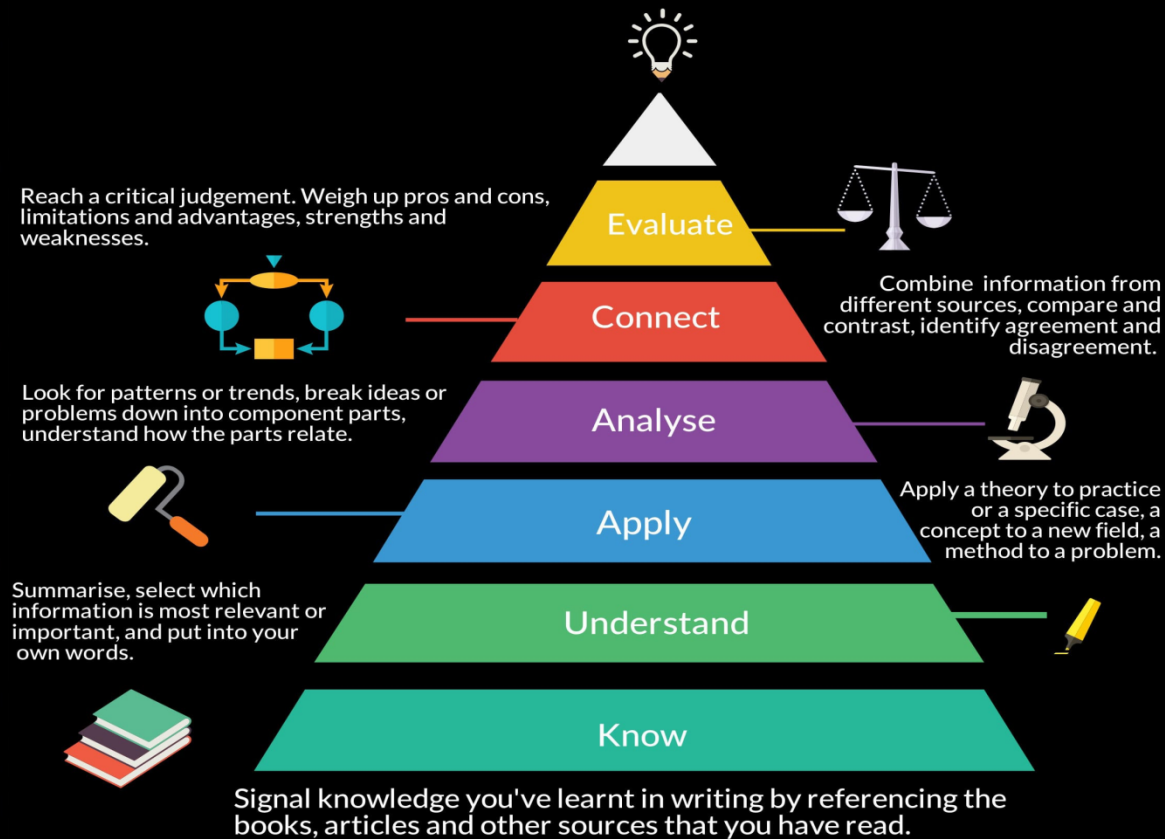


# Law.....

Other ideas for promoting CT in English for Legal Purposes:

- Buying and selling real estate: comparisons , writing advice, writing client information leaflets
- Rewriting official information in “plain English” for non-specialists, or comparing two “plain English” versions
- Comparing two sections or clauses from different countries, to identify differences and assess implications
- Comparing the preamble to different constitutions (from English-speaking countries), to relate these to historical and cultural background

# CRITICAL THINKING: Bloom's taxonomy



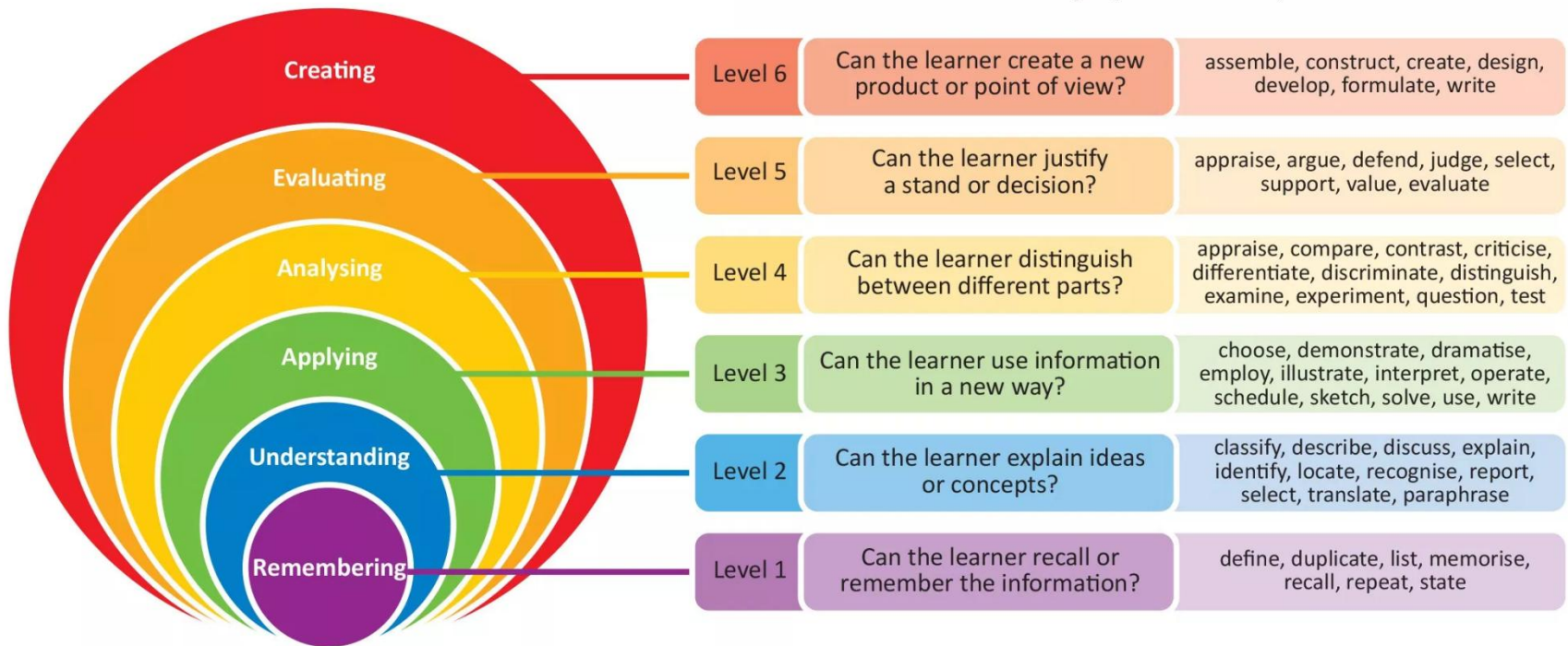
Based on Bloom's Taxonomy.

Skills  
approach

Descriptors /  
rubrics



## Bloom's taxonomy (revised)



Language of evaluation

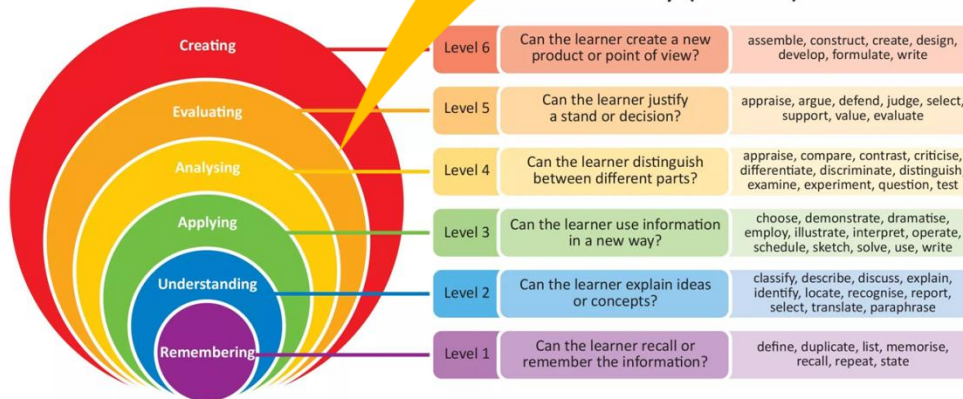


Genres, discourse strategies, etc.

Register, specialised lexis

Subject knowledge, CT skills

...om's taxonomy (revised)





Case study  
Evaluate news article on  
health-related topic:  
Is this news accurate?  
What social implications  
might this have?

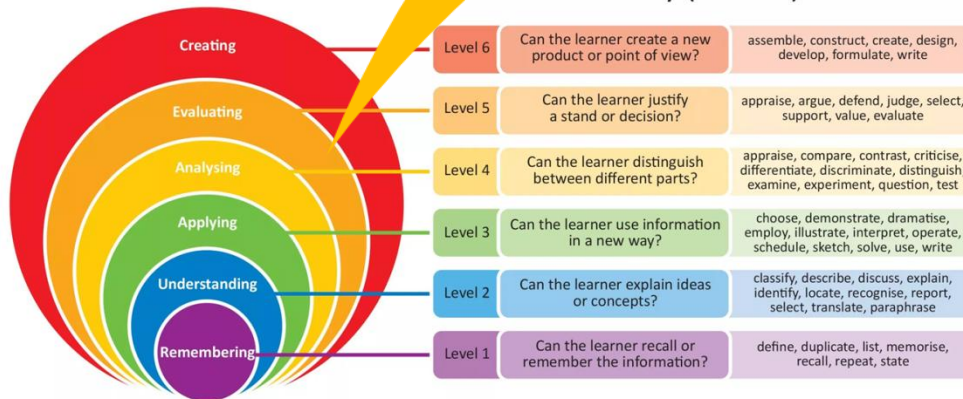
Genres and strategies:  
object (media), target  
(essay)

Social implications

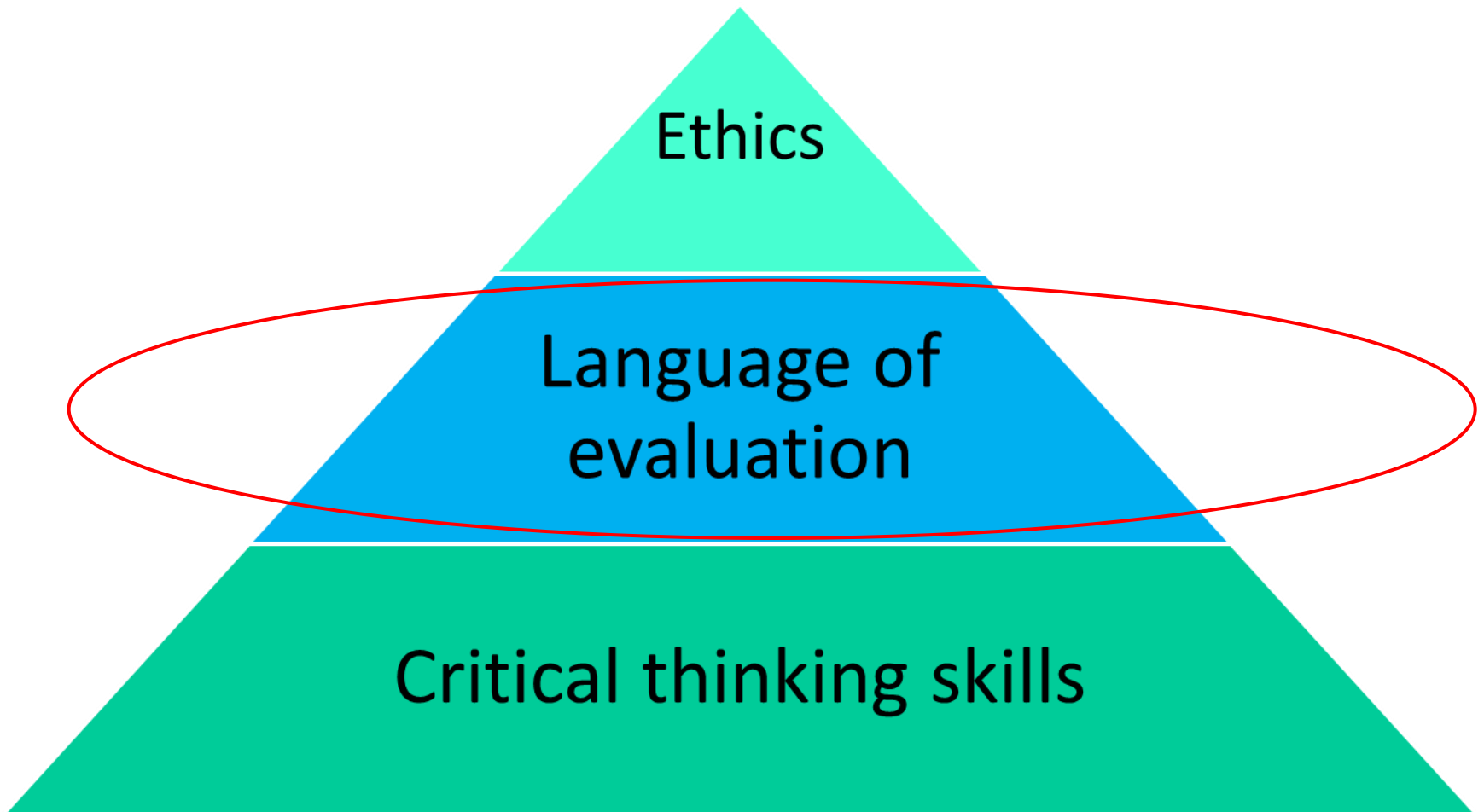
Use correct register and terms

CT skills: analyse, compare, evaluate

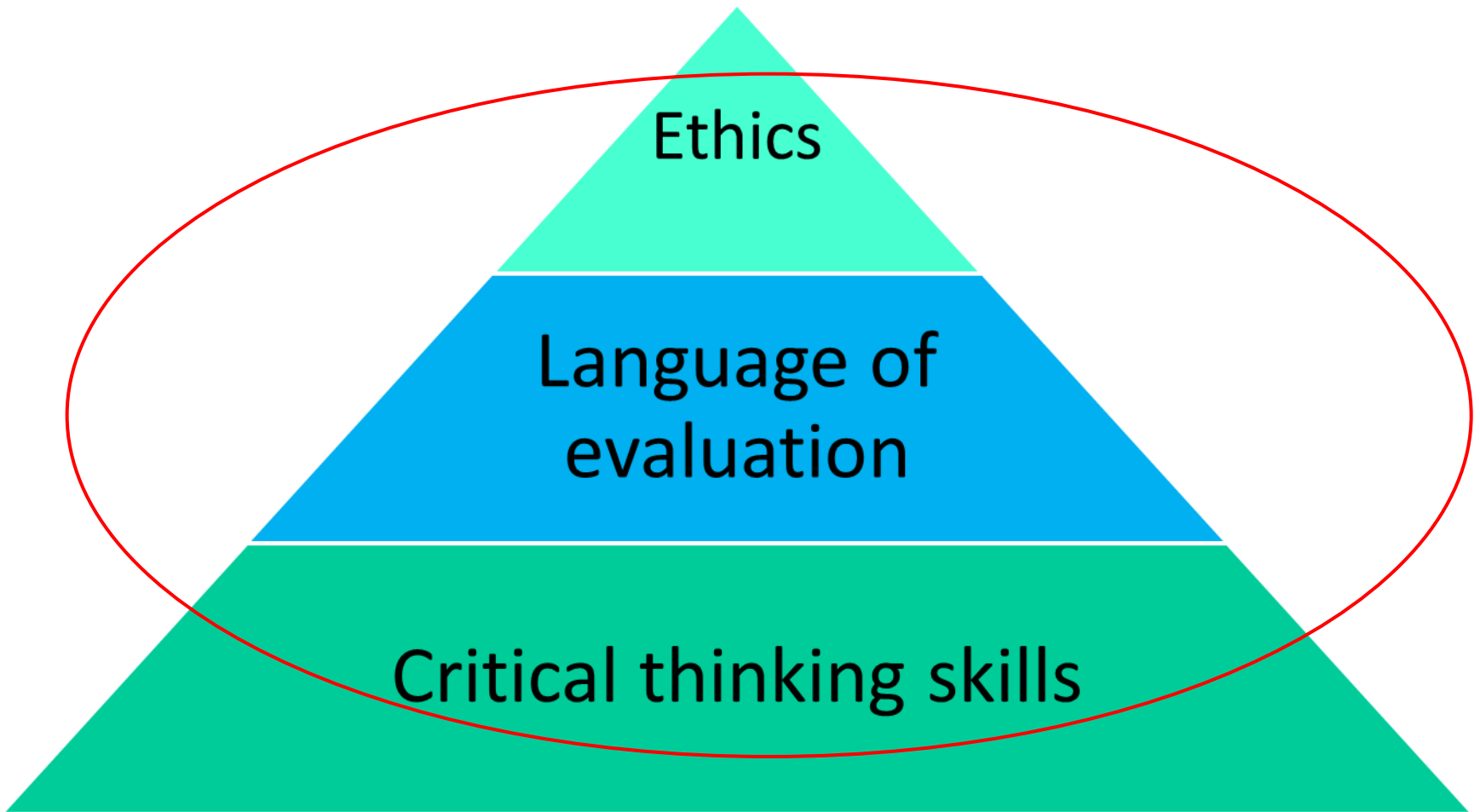
om's taxonomy (revised)



# Putting the parts of CT together



# Putting the parts of CT together



Thank you! ..... ¡¡Gracias!! ..... Eskerrik asko!



**Ευχαριστώ**

rbreeze@unav.es

Barrie, S. & Prosser, M. 2004 Generic graduate attributes: Citizens for an uncertain future. *Higher Education Research and Development* 23, 4, 243-246.

Benesch, S. 2001. *Critical English for Academic Purposes*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.

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