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CRITICAL THINKING ABOUT CROSSCULTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
CHINESE AND AMERICANS IN ENGLISH EDUCATION IN TAIWAN

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education:
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

by
Chih-Liang Huang
September 2002

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ABSTRACT

In Taiwan, the grammar translation method has long been the methodology of choice for teaching English. Students learn English for one purpose: getting high scores for entering the next level of schooling. Critical thinking, concept development graphic organizers and critical reading are seldom introduced in class. Therefore, students only memorize grammar rules and vocabulary words but do not know how to think critically and apply their knowledge in their daily lives. This project is designed to teach crosscultural differences in English education in Taiwan employing a strategy-based curriculum.

By comparing crosscultural differences between Taiwan and American cultures, students will have a strong desire to learn English in order to know more about American culture. Helping students learn English with pleasure instead of pressure is my teaching goal. Therefore, the purpose of this project is to address the problems stated above and improve English as Foreign Language learning for the students of Taiwan by applying critical thinking, critical reading, concept development graphic organizers, and constructivist learning to compare crosscultural differences between Taiwan and the United States.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Project

English is very important in Taiwan because it is an international language used for communicating with other foreigners in the world. People who have good English ability have an advantage in finding a better job. The economy of Taiwan is based on international trade, so using English is essential for doing business. Most advanced technology is written and used in English, so having good English ability makes it easier to acquire more knowledge. Therefore, learning English has become more and more popular in Taiwan.

English is a compulsory course in Taiwan, especially if students wish to apply to prestigious schools. There are many "cram" schools in Taiwan because students want to improve their English ability after normal school hours. Extensive use of "cram" school indicates that students feel that their English classes in school do not prepare them adequately.

Most students in Taiwan have to study English for more than three years, but they do not know how to use English in their daily lives. Most English teachers in

Taiwan use the grammar-translation method to teach English. In any typical classroom in Taiwan, students just copy everything the teacher explains during class; teachers assist students in converting text from English to Chinese. Most of the time, the teachers apply the grammar-translation methods they learned from their teachers to teach their students. Most English teachers use Chinese to teach English. Some of the teachers do not have confidence to speak English inside or outside of the classroom. There is no doubt that students find it difficult to be interested in learning English because most teachers only emphasize reading and writing abilities but neglect speaking and listening.

The goal of this curriculum design project is to develop innovative teaching ways in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in Taiwan that will enable students to become more interested in learning English.

Target Teaching Level: The Junior High School

I plan to teach junior high school students in Taiwan. It is very important for these students to start to learn English well because early contact plays an important role in making students interested in learning a new language. The first step is trying to instill in learners a strong desire to learn it. In Taiwan, because

most students are taught by the grammar-translation method, the content of textbooks focuses on grammar rules and vocabulary words. Providing students proper curriculum materials is essential for teachers to succeed in teaching English in the junior high school. The purpose of learning English at this level should be to help students like learning English, not only for taking more tests. Therefore, teachers should have more creativity and flexibility as they prepare their teaching material without simply preparing more examinations.

Although I have not had extensive teaching experience in teaching junior high school students, it is a really challenging but exciting prospect for me. Teaching English with pleasure instead of pressure is my teaching goal. There will be some difficulties for me to overcome but I deeply believe that I will learn a lot from the process.

English Classes and Environments in Taiwanese Junior High Schools

At the junior high school level, English plays an important role in determining in which high schools students can enroll. Therefore, students think that getting higher grades in English can help them to reach their goal of entering a prestigious high school. Although some teachers really want to change this situation, it may

take a long time. However, it is never too late to start. The Ministry of Education tried to improve the content of the textbooks and abolished the entrance exams two years ago. However, at this point, teachers, students, and students' parents are still confused about the procedures and rules for applying to exclusive high schools. There is no doubt that the purpose of abolishing the entrance exams was to reduce students' stress in studying, but setting fair rules and instruction should accompany this revolution.

Structural Problems in Teaching English in Junior High Schools

Education in Taiwan currently suffers from two different kinds of difficulties: structural problems in educational administration and instructional challenges. Three pressing administration shortcomings are pressure for high-test scores, excessive class size, and over-reliance on outdated textbooks.

Pressure for High Test Scores. Students' goal of getting high scores in order to enter prestigious schools has been deeply rooted and has extended over many years. It is not so easy to change traditional thought even though the entrance exams were abolished. Therefore, students do not realize the real purpose for learning

English. They are not eager to learn it actively. Most teachers believe that the best way to advance students' English ability is to test them. Although it is equitable for students to take a test, excessive testing will kill the desire to learn English. Changing this situation will require continued effort. It will depend on the cooperation of the government and schools.

Large Class Size. There are about forty to fifty students in a class in the junior high schools. It is natural for teachers not to pay enough attention to each student. Thus schooling is impersonal, although teachers really try their best to teach. The best way to solve this problem is to make class sizes smaller. Are there enough classrooms? Are there enough qualified teachers? There are still a lot of problems to solve before reaching this goal. Students should learn voluntarily so they can learn more. Students learn with each other, not for the sake of competing. Teachers must become advisors, giving proper help in the process of learning.

Outdated Text Books. The content of textbooks is really old-fashioned and boring and must be changed if students are to be more interested in learning English. If I could decide the content of textbooks, I would emphasize authentic tasks by giving them supplementary materials

like songs, readings, and videos. The materials would be drawn from cultures all over the world, so it would be very interesting to learn English and learn about different cultures at the same time.

Instructional Problems in Teaching English in Junior High Schools

Four pressing instructional shortcomings in Taiwan's English teaching are lack of critical thinking and concept attainment, excessive teacher-centered direction, lack of crosscultural content, and lack of critical reading skills.

Lack of Critical Thinking and Concept Attainment. In Taiwan, students are trained to memorize the teaching materials instead of thinking critically. They also rarely use concept development graphic organizers to attain their concepts. Therefore, developing students' ability in critical thinking and concept attainment is very important and necessary. Teachers should provide students more opportunities to practice thinking for themselves. At the same time, teachers may apply concept development graphic organizers in class to motivate students' learning.

Excessive Teacher-Centered Direction. Most teachers use teacher-centered direction in class. Students do not have many opportunities to express their opinions and

learn by themselves. Students only follow the teacher's direction without thinking on their own; their only goal is to get high-test scores by memorizing what is taught. Therefore, teachers should give students more freedom to express their own ideas and allow them to make errors instead of restricting students' thinking.

Lack of Crosscultural Context. The content of textbooks in Taiwan shows lack of crosscultural context. Crosscultural context can facilitate students to be interested in learning English. Teachers can help students to train their thinking by comparing crosscultural differences. Students are curious to know new things, so adding crosscultural context in class can increase their desire to learn English.

Lack of Critical Reading Skills. Teachers only ask students to memorize the content and vocabulary words without evaluating the content. Students need to learn how to develop their sensitivity to the reading material and understand the author's motivation. It is very essential for students to think individually because they can learn how to learn in their own ways. Teachers need to give students more time to read and think, then encourage them to express their thoughts freely.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to explore reading strategies that promote a critical thinking approach to crosscultural content in English teaching, and provide curriculum for crosscultural differences between Chinese and Americans in English education in Taiwan.

The goal of my project is to provide students more opportunities to learn English and help them enjoy the learning process. Thus, students can learn for themselves and experience more fun in learning English.

Comparing the two different cultures is very interesting and meaningful for students as they are expected to cultural diversity. The project presents six units designed for students to compare crosscultural differences between Chinese and Americans. Students learn how to use graphic organizers to compare two different cultures and practice thinking critically. Students also learn some reading strategies applied in those units.

Content of the Project

This project consists of five chapters: Introduction (Chapter One), Review of the Literature (Chapter Two), Theoretical Framework (Chapter Three), Curriculum Design (Chapter Four), and Proposed Assessment (Chapter Five).

Chapter One describes the background and problems of English as foreign language learning in Taiwan and the basic scope of the project. Chapter Two explores five major concepts: critical thinking, critical reading, concept development graphic organizers, constructivism, and crosscultural understanding. Chapter Three provides a theoretical framework based on the five key concepts of the project and a model to guide the teaching of reading. Chapter Four introduces the curriculum units and explains the connection of the instructional lesson units to the theoretical framework in Chapter Three. The appendix presents the curriculum unit. Chapter Five proposes the assessment that corresponds to the instructional lesson units introduced in Chapter Four.

Significance of the Project

In order to solve those problems in teaching English in junior high schools in Taiwan, it is really helpful for me to design this curriculum project. Much emphasis is focused on some ways to make the teaching and the texts more interesting. On the other hand, it is also important for students to learn English naturally, happily, and actively.

The goal of my project is to develop a practical and meaningful curriculum that helps students understand the purpose of learning English so they can put it into practice in their daily life. Students will learn how to apply critical thinking and concept development graphic organizers in learning English, giving them improved tools not only for acquiring English but also for enhancing their learning in general.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Critical Thinking and Second Language Learning

Applying critical thinking in second language learning is beneficial in order for students to learn more actively and effectively. Teachers can teach students how to develop their abilities in evaluating reading materials and in summarizing an author's main ideas. Critical thinking is a student-centered method; students have to participate in class actively and learn for themselves. Critical thinking skills that are a part of second language acquisition can generalize to other content areas, even those taught in the first language. Moreover, these skills can enhance the quality of life outside of the classroom. Thus, applying critical thinking in second language learning can be deeply meaningful.

The Definition of Critical Thinking

According to Scriven (1996), critical thinking is the "intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and

action" (p. 32). It is the process of learning how to think efficiently.

Angelo (1995) observed, "Most formal definitions characterize critical thinking as the intentional application of rational, higher order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, problem recognition and problem solving, inference, and evaluation" (p. 6).

According to this, critical thinking encourages students to think for themselves, a process that students can learn to develop gradually. Halpern (1989) called critical thinking "directed thinking" because it focuses on obtaining a desired outcome, and students can learn from evaluating the outcome.

Characteristics of Critical Thinking

(Wade (1995) identified eight characteristics of critical thinking. Critical thinking involves asking questions, defining a problem, examining evidence, analyzing assumptions and biases, avoiding emotional reasoning, avoiding oversimplification, considering other interpretations, and tolerating ambiguity) According to this, teachers need to encourage students to justify questions without feeling afraid and analyze reading materials by searching for supporting evidences. Teachers also need to teach students to think reasonably without

personal emotion. Learners should try to analyze and judge a variety of outcomes by applying logic systematically and rationally instead of oversimplifying. Students should be willing to accept different opinions to come up with new ideas. Therefore, students will improve their abilities to think critically.

Another characteristic of critical thinking identified by many sources is metacognition. Metacognition is thinking about one's own thinking. Wellman (1985) defined metacognition as "a person's cognition about cognition." More specifically, "metacognition is being aware of one's thinking as one performs specific tasks and then using this awareness to control what one is doing" (Jones & Ratcliff, 1993, p. 10). Metacognition helps students discover how they learn best. Teachers can use metacognition to teach students to think directly about learning. In addition, teachers can encourage their students to use self-monitoring and self-evaluating. According to Underwood (1997), learning how to learn, developing a repertoire of thinking processes which can be applied to solve problems, is a major goal of education. Therefore, metacognition is vital for learners to think critically.

Critical thinkers are willing to organize content and make their own judgments by evaluating the main concepts. They like to think in different ways. According to Halpern (1989), there are four characteristics of critical thinkers (see Table 1).

Table 1. Characteristics of Critical Thinkers

Characteristic	Definitions
Willingness to Plan	Outlining or diagramming or structuring a response rather than acting impulsivity.
Flexibility	The willingness to consider new points, try things a new way, and reconsider old problems.
Persistence	The willingness to start or engage in a thoughtful task.
Willing to Self-Correct	Good thinkers learn from errors and utilize feedback to recognize the factors that led to the error.

(adapted from Halpern, 1989, p. 29-30)

Critical thinkers can be flexible about evaluating different opinions and generating main ideas. They realize that finding evidence is a very important part of making judgments. They are also willing to correct themselves in

order to make better judgments. Beyer (1995) explained some essential aspects of critical thinking (see Table 2).

Table 2. Essential Aspects of Critical Thinking

Aspect	Definitions
Dispositions	Critical thinkers are skeptical, open-minded, value fair-mindedness, respect evidence and reasoning, respect clarity and precision, look at different points of view, and will change positions when reason leads them to do so.
Criteria	To think critically, one must apply criteria. One needs to have conditions that must be met for something to be judged as believable.
Argument	A statement or proposition with supporting evidence. Critical thinking involves identifying, evaluating, and constructing arguments.
Reasoning	The ability to infer a conclusion from one or multiple premises. To do so requires examining logical relationships among statements or data.
Point of View	The way one views the world, which shapes one's construction of meaning. In a search for understanding, critical thinkers view phenomena from many different points of view.

(Beyer, 1995, p. 56)

In the process of developing critical thinking, students learn how to think, but not what to think. They offer opinions with reasons and make judgments using

specified criteria. Teachers want students to think for themselves and not merely to learn what other people have thought.

The Reasons for Teaching Critical Thinking

Beyer (1995) saw the teaching of critical thinking as important to the very state of a democratic nation. He argued that in order to live successfully in a democracy, people must be able to think critically in order to make sound decisions about personal and civic affairs. If students learn to think critically, then they will use sound logic to guide them through the rest of their lives.

Oliver and Utermohlen (1995) considered that students need to "develop and effectively apply critical thinking skills to their academic studies, to the complex problems that they will face, and to the critical choices they will be forced to make as a result of the information explosion and other rapid technological changes" (p. 27). They thought that students should not passively receive information. In the Information Age, there has been an explosion of new information, which challenges the process of learning. Students need to search for more information instead of passively receiving it. From this point of view, teachers should encourage students to take a more active role in learning to apply critical thinking skills,

and thereby prepare themselves to face a variety of problems.

Teaching Strategies in Critical Thinking

CATS (Classroom Assessment Techniques). Angelo (1995) stressed the use of ongoing classroom assessment as a way to monitor and facilitate students' critical thinking. An example of a CAT is to ask students to write a "Minute Paper" responding to questions, such as, "What was the most important thing you learned in today's class?" or "What question related to this session remains uppermost in your mind?" The teacher selects some of the papers and prepares responses for the next class meeting. This can make students more active and motivated to participate in learning.

Cooperative Learning Strategies. Cooper (1995) argued that putting students in group learning situations is the best way to foster critical thinking. He stated, "In properly structured cooperative learning environments, students perform more of the active, critical thinking with continuous support and feedback from other students and the teacher" (p. 8). In this situation, students interact well with other students by using critical thinking skills. Teachers also get immediate feedback from students in order to adjust their teaching techniques. In

cooperative groups, students become interested in learning instead of feeling isolated.

Case Study/Discussion Method. McDade (1995) suggested that the teacher present a case (or story) to the class without drawing a conclusion. Then the teacher leads students in a discussion, allowing students to construct a conclusion for the case and using prepared questions. This is a way for students to organize their ideas toward specific conclusions, because they can think critically and express their own opinions freely.

Question Techniques. King (1995) identified two ways of using questions in the classroom. The first method is reciprocal peer questioning. Following a lecture, the teacher displays a list of question stems (such as, "What are the strengths and weaknesses of..."). Students must write questions about the lecture material. In small groups, the students ask each other the questions. Then the whole class discusses some of the questions from each small group. The second method is readers' questions. This method requires students to write questions on assigned reading and turn them in at the beginning of class. The teacher then selects a few of the questions as the impetus for class discussion.

Ambiguity in Classroom. Strohm and Baukus (1995)

advocated producing ambiguity in the classroom. They suggested teachers do not give students clear material, but rather give them conflicting information that they must think their way through. That way students have to clarify conflicting information by themselves. Through this process of thinking, students learn how to figure out complex issues.

Conclusion

There are thus many advantages to teaching English through critical thinking. To encourage learners to think independently, teachers need to create more interesting activities, thereby permitting students to develop their thinking naturally. It is imperative that students have the ability to analyze and comprehend content. This can be accomplished when students learn actively and enjoy learning. Encouraging students to ask questions is very important in order for teachers to know if students understand the content or not. In Taiwan students are trained to memorize but not to think by themselves. The learning style of Americans is very different from that of Taiwanese. In Taiwan, applying critical thinking in second language learning is beneficial in English education. If teaching critical thinking can improve education, it will

be because it increases the quantity and quality of meaning that students learn to create.

Critical Reading

As they need, students must organize their thinking critically. Teachers can help students learn more actively and systematically by applying critical reading. One advantage of critical reading is that it develops students' ability to make judgments and evaluate main ideas. Critical reading strategies enable students to think strategically as they need. Helping students to read critically is a beneficial way for them to evaluate reading materials and make judgments correctly. Thus, applying critical reading in the classroom is vital while learning a language, not only one's native language but also subsequent foreign languages.

Definitions of Critical Reading

Critical reading means that a reader applies certain processes, models, questions, and theories that result in enhanced clarity and comprehension. According to Flower (1990), critical reading is "the ability to think about and through written texts: to read not only for facts but also for intentions, to question sources, to identify others' and one's own assumptions, and to transform

information for new purposes" (p. 5). Therefore, the process of critical reading is similar to critical thinking. A critical reader can analyze, compare, and contrast the content with other sources of information. Critical reading represents the ability to make judgments and evaluate the relevancy and adequacy of the reading.

According to Knott (2001), "To read critically is to make judgments about how a text is argued. This is a highly reflective skill requiring you to 'stand back' and gain some distance from the text you are reading" (p. 56). Therefore, teachers need to help students learn how to find relevant information to support the main concepts. Students should have more freedom to express their ideas without restriction so they can come up with their own new ideas. Teachers facilitate students to make improvement gradually instead of forcing them only to memorize the content of reading. During the process of learning, students may have difficulties. Teachers can direct students appropriately so they can learn more efficiently.

Impetus for Critical Reading

The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) Report in 1981 revealed that 85% of all 13-year-olds could correctly complete a multiple-choice check on comprehension but only 15% could write an acceptable

sentence summarizing the paragraph they read. This report was the impetus for the re-evaluation of standard teaching methods of reading. According to this report, students had difficulties organizing others' ideas and summarizing the main ideas systematically.

Today, professional organizations and the professional literature support critical thinking in the classroom and call for teachers to guide students in developing higher level thinking skills (Neilsen, 1989). Students need to exercise inferential thinking, decision-making, and comprehension during the reading process. The reading classroom is the logical place for students to begin their learning. These skills have been associated with reading instruction for years. They have become core skills in the reading classroom.

Children's literature is a powerful tool for teaching critical reading. It offers children the opportunity to actively engage in texts while simultaneously considering ideas, values, and ethical questions. (Through literature, students learn to read personally, actively, and deeply (Sweet, 1993).) Teaching students to think while reading is referred to in the professional literature as "critical reading." It is defined as "learning to evaluate, draw inferences, and arrive at conclusions based on evidence"

(Carr, 1988). According to this, students can develop their ability in reading critically by having more training. Teachers can help students learn how to evaluate the reading materials.

Critical Reading in Classroom

Teachers must create an atmosphere that fosters inquiry and creates an interesting environment. Students must be encouraged to make predictions, to question, and to organize ideas that support value judgments. Two techniques for developing these kinds of critical reading skills include problem solving and learning to reason through reading. Flynn (1989) described an instructional model for problem solving which promotes analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of ideas. She stated that "When we ask students to analyze we expect them to clarify information by examining the component parts. Synthesis involves combining relevant parts into a coherent whole, and evaluation includes setting up standards and then judging against them to verify the reasonableness of ideas" (p. 664).

Beck (1989) adopted a similar perspective, using the term "reasoning" to imply higher order thinking skills. Inference plays a central role in reasoning and problem

solving. For Beck, children's literature has the potential to engage students in reasoning activities.

Wilson (1988) suggested that teachers re-think the way they teach reading and look critically at their own teaching/thinking processes. She cautions against skills lessons that are repackaged in the name of critical thinking but which are only renamed worksheets. She points out that teaching students to read, write, and think critically is a dramatic shift from what has generally taken place in most classrooms.

According to Wilson, critical literacy advocates the use of strategies and techniques like formulating questions prior to, during, and after reading; responding to the text in terms of the student's own values; anticipating texts, and acknowledging when and how reader expectations are aroused and fulfilled; and responding to texts through a variety of writing activities which ask readers to go beyond what they have read to experience the text in personal ways.

Post-Structuralism

Post-structuralism, like its related second cousin postmodernism, is a slippery term for anyone to define. As a result, any basic outline such as this summary is by

necessity extremely general and open to controversy by theorists.

As Applebee (1994) has pointed out, the English curriculum's primary objective should be the enhancement and maintenance of the conversational feature of culture within the domain of the English classroom. Applebee and his colleagues advocate a view of curriculum that creates "a domain for culturally significant conversations into which we want our students to be able to enter" (Applebee, 1994). Applebee's aim, which demonstrates how post-structural theorizing has influenced English curriculum development, is to create such domains by holding to one of Applebee's key principles: "content that does not invoke further conversation is of no interest; it is dead as well as deadly." Blau (1993) provided a solid introductory essay linking current literary theory with actual teaching of literature. Johnson (1994) discussed how readers are profoundly affected by such social categories as race and gender, while Patterson (1992) considered reading as a discursive practice and demarcates the shift toward post-structural views of individualism.

Strategies of Critical Reading

There are some practical skills of critical reading useful for students to improve their ability to read

critically. Spache (1981) listed six skills necessary for critical reading: 1) investigating sources; 2) recognizing author's purposes; 3) distinguishing opinion and fact; 4) making inferences; 5) forming judgments; 6) detecting propaganda devices. Students need to learn how to develop their sensitivity to the reading material and understand the author's motivation. It is essential for students to think individually because they can learn how to learn in their own ways. On the other hand, they become more willing to accept different opinions. Knott (2001) suggested several critical reading skills. He considered that critical reading occurs after some preliminary processes of reading. Students should begin by skimming research materials, especially introductions and conclusions, in order to strategically choose where to focus their critical efforts. Therefore, students can recognize the key points the author made. When highlighting a text or taking notes from it, students must teach themselves to highlight the argument. The main purpose of highlighting a text is to realize the content more easily and efficiently. Students can learn what the author wants to express and understand the reasons why it is expressed that way. The teacher can help the student learn how to highlight the reading material. Therefore,

students will be more familiar with the ways of finding the main concepts.

There are some comprehension skills necessary to critical reading. A critical reader has the ability to read for main ideas and details and to recognize inferences and conclusions; and the ability to adapt the rate at which materials are read to the situations met. Therefore, students should be trained to distinguish main ideas and details for analyzing the reading materials. Students also need to focus on which levels are appropriate for themselves. Teachers need to realize students' various learning situations and help them know how to deal with different reading materials.

Conclusion

Critical reading is useful to help students learn more efficiently and actively. Teachers have a responsibility to teach students how to read critically. The development of students into critical readers has long been considered an important goal of reading instruction. Therefore, critical reading in instruction is becoming more and more necessary for students.

There are some practical strategies for critical reading that aid students to develop their ability to read critically. Students can learn how to distinguish main

points and evaluate the reading materials. They also learn how to make judgments in their own ways. They need to analyze the content by raising their own questions so they can learn more from the process of solving these problems.

Helping students become interested in reading is very important for teachers. If students are interested in reading they can read more efficiently. Teachers need to make efforts to help students become willing to read critically. When students read critically they can increase their ability to find new questions and to know how to find answers in their own ways. Therefore, critical reading can facilitate a student's active reading and class participation.

Teaching critical reading is so beneficial for students that teachers should apply critical reading as often as possible. Teaching critical reading will be important in my future teaching to help students read efficiently. However, it is not so easy to apply critical reading in different situations. Helping students learn in interesting and active ways is my teaching goal.

Concept Development Graphic Organizers

Helping students to develop a capacity to organize their concepts is very important for teachers. Not only

can students learn how to organize their concepts systematically but also they can develop the ability to use their own knowledge and experiences to think critically. Teachers can help students to be more interested in learning actively by applying concept development graphic organizers in the classroom. Students can have much fun using them to improve their learning.

Definitions of Concept Development Graphic Organizers

According to Lanzing (1997), a concept map is a way of representing or organizing knowledge. However, a concept map goes beyond the typical outline in that concept maps show relationships between concepts, including bi-directional relationships. Usually, a concept map is divided into nodes and links. Nodes (often circles) represent various concepts; and links (lines) represent the relationships (propositions) between concepts.

The concept map is a visual graphic that represents how the creator thinks about a subject, topic, etc. It illustrates how knowledge is organized for the individual. Martin (1994) stated, "concept maps are two-dimensional representations of cognitive structures showing the hierarchies and the interconnections of concepts involved in a discipline or a subdiscipline" (p. 11).

Concept maps have their origin in the learning movement called constructivism. In particular, constructivists hold that prior knowledge is used as a framework to learn new knowledge. In essence, how we think influences how and what we learn. Concept maps identify the way we think, the way we see relationships between knowledge. Concept maps can thus illustrate faulty views individuals may have and help teachers to understand how students construe meanings from subject matter. The teacher who constructs concept maps for classes is interested in students understanding relationships between facts, not just "knowing" the facts.

Ausubel (1968) stressed the importance of prior knowledge in being able to learn about new concepts. Novak (1993) concluded, "Meaningful learning involves the assimilation of new concepts and propositions into existing cognitive structures." A concept map is a graphical representation where nodes (points or vertices) represent concepts, and links (arcs or lines) represent the relationships between concepts. The concepts, and sometimes the links, are labeled on the concept map. The links between the concepts can be one-way, two-way, or non-directional. The concepts and the links may be

categorized, and the concept map may show temporal or causal relationships between concepts.

Purposes of Concept Mapping

Concept mapping is a type of knowledge representation. Jonassen and Grabowski (1993), state that structural knowledge may be seen as a separate type of knowledge. "Structural knowledge provides the conceptual basis for why. It describes how prior knowledge is interconnected.... Structural knowledge is most often depicted in terms of some sort of concept map that visually describes the relationships between ideas in a knowledge domain." (p. 433). Representing knowledge in the visual format of a concept map allows students to gain an overview of a domain of knowledge. Because the nodes contain only a keyword or a short sentence, more interpretation is required of the reader, but this may be positive. Concept mapping can be used for several purposes: to generate ideas (brainstorming); to design complex structures (long texts, hypermedia, large web sites); to communicate complex ideas; to aid learning by explicitly integrating new and old knowledge; and to assess understanding or diagnose misunderstanding.

Therefore, it is really necessary for students to use concept development organizers to help them analyze the

reading materials systematically and get more particular ideas. Teachers also can assess students' learning more efficiently as they learn how to read the content in different ways. On the other hand, students can become more interested in learning by using concept development organizers. They can become involved in the learning process more actively and enjoy the process of finding new ideas. Moreover, students learn more as they play a game, without undue pressure. They can express their own ideas freely without inhibition. Teachers can pay more attention to students and give them appropriate help in time.

Concept Maps and Curriculum Design

Concept maps can be used as excellent planning devices for instruction. Edmondson (1993) describes the importance of using concept maps to develop the curriculum for a veterinarian program: "Concept maps are effective tools for making the structure of knowledge explicit, and our hope is that by using them in our planning...the material will be more accessible and more easily integrated by students" (p. 4). Thus, students can learn more actively and systematically by using concept maps. They can develop their ability to connect their prior experiences and knowledge with new information. Teachers

can help students understand the importance of using concept maps to organize their main ideas.

Martin (1994) conducted a study in which he taught education majors to use concept maps to make lesson plans. The teachers in the study found the maps quite useful for the development of course plans. "Our students view concept mapping as giving teachers a more comprehensive understanding of what they are preparing to teach, eliminating sequencing errors, and enabling teachers to develop lessons that are truly interdisciplinary" (p. 27). According to this, teachers can prevent unnecessary errors by using concept maps. They can know how to teach in an orderly way and set teaching goals more clearly. From this point of view, teachers can learn from using concept maps. On the other hand, students also can learn step by step without feeling nervous and uncertain. Students are afraid of learning something not familiar to them. Thus, teachers can use concept maps to help students understand easily the teaching content.

Teachers can learn something from their students. Dyrud (1994) stated, "You can understand how students may see or organize knowledge differently from you, which will help you better relate to the students and to challenge their ways of thinking" (p. 57). Teachers need to learn

more to improve their knowledge to teach in better ways. Teachers can learn from students by recognizing the variety in ways students learn. According to this, teachers can interact with students well by participating together.

Applications of Concept Mapping

Concept mapping is considered a creativity tool because drawing a concept map can be compared to participating in a brainstorming session. Some ideas become clearer and the mind becomes free to receive new ideas when one puts ideas down on paper without criticism. These new ideas may be linked already on the paper, and they may also trigger new associations leading to new ideas.

Novak's original work with concept mapping is about learning. Constructivist learning theory argues that new knowledge should be integrated into existing structures in order to be remembered and be recognized as meaningful (Novak, 1993). Thus, concept mapping stimulates this process by making it explicit and requiring the learner to pay attention to the relationship between concepts.

Concept maps can also be used as assessment tools. Concept maps drawn by students express their conceptions (or misconceptions) and can help the instructor diagnose

the misconceptions that make the instruction ineffective (Ross & Munby, 1991). The conceptions students may have are often incomplete and deficient, leading to misunderstanding of instruction. Hence, using concept maps can help students prevent misconceptions.

Concept mapping is also gaining inroads as a tool for problem-solving in education. It may be used to enhance the problem-solving phases of generating alternative solutions and options. Because problem-solving in education is usually done in small groups, learning should also benefit from the communication enhancing properties of concept mapping (Novak, 1993). According to this, concept mapping provides students more alternative ways to think for themselves. From the process of solving problems, students learn how to think critically. Therefore, concept mapping is really practical for students to apply in learning.

Conclusion

Using concept development organizers is very useful for students to think more critically and systematically. Teachers can use them to help students think according to their own experiences or prior knowledge.

Concept mapping is hard work for many students in the beginning, but it is the kind of necessary hard work if

teachers want to really improve learning. It is comforting that the strategy gets easier and easier to do over time until it is almost second-nature. Teachers need to make more efforts to apply it in classroom.

Concept mapping is a powerful tool that encourages students and educators to organize their knowledge about a content domain and to be explicit about the nature of relationships between ideas (Spoehr, 1994). Students can learn more actively by using concept mapping.

Concept mapping is a technique for representing the structure of information visually. There are multiple uses for concept mapping, such as idea generation, design support, communication enhancement, learning enhancement, assessment, etc. Applying it to teaching English builds language skills and thinking skills simultaneously.

Constructivist Teaching and Learning

A constructivist teacher and a constructivist classroom can be distinguished from a traditional teacher and classroom. Students are involved in an active process of meaning and knowledge construction instead of passively receiving information. Constructivist teaching can foster critical thinking and motivate students to learn.

Definitions of Constructivism

Constructivism is an epistemology, a learning or meaning-making theory that offers an explanation of the nature of knowledge and how human beings learn. It maintains that individuals create or construct their own new understandings or knowledge through the interaction of what they already know and believe and the ideas, events, and activities with which they come in contact (Richardson, 1997). Thus, constructivism is an educational philosophy that proposes that students ultimately construct their own knowledge.

Constructivism is a philosophy of learning founded on the premise that, by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in (Cannella & Reiff, 1994). According to this, students should have more opportunities to construct their own ideas and understand how to find useful information. Teachers can help students to construct their concepts systematically and learn to think critically.

Fosnot (1989) defined constructivism by reference to four principles: learning, in an important way, depends on what we already know; new ideas occur as we adapt and change our old ideas; learning involves inventing ideas rather than mechanically accumulating facts; and

meaningful learning occurs through rethinking old ideas and coming to conclusions about new ideas which conflict with our old ideas. Thus, students need to be encouraged to think critically and allowed to make errors. Teachers also can help students to use their prior knowledge to construct main concepts.

The Role of Students in Constructivist Classroom

A constructivist classroom is a student-centered classroom. The student-centeredness of a constructivist classroom is clearly apparent in a reader-response approach to literature. Recognizing the significance of the unique experiences that each reader brings to the reading of a selection of literature, the teacher in a response-centered approach seeks to explore the transaction between the student and the text to promote or extract a meaningful response (Rosenblatt, 1978). According to this, teachers need to relinquish the traditional position of sole authority, and place the student in a central position in the classroom. Students can share their experiences with each other rather than simply absorb the teacher's experiences. The learning process is active and students learn more for themselves.

In a discussion of language arts instruction based on constructivist theories of language use and language

development, Applebee (1993) suggested that rather than treating the subject of English as subject matter to be memorized, a constructivist approach treats it as a body of knowledge, skills, and strategies that must be constructed by the learner out of experiences and interactions within the social context of the classroom. In such a tradition, understanding a work of literature does not mean memorizing someone else's interpretations, but constructing and elaborating upon one's own within the constraints of the text and the conventions of the classroom discourse community (p. 200). From a constructivist perspective, more student-centered approaches are emphasized. A traditional perspective focuses on teaching. A constructivist student-centered approach places more focus on students learning than on teachers teaching. From a constructivist view, knowing occurs by a process of construction by the knower. Lindfors (1984) advised that how teaching should originate from how students learn. Thus, students can learn more efficiently for themselves.

The Role of Teachers in Constructivist Classrooms

A crucially important aspect of a teacher's job is watching, listening, and asking questions of students in order to learn about them and about how they learn so that

teachers may be more helpful to students. Calkins (1986) noted that there is a thin line between research and teaching. At the same time teachers teach students, students also teach teachers because students show teachers how they learn.

Teachers just need to watch students and listen to them carefully. This kind of watching and listening may contribute to teachers' ability to use what the classroom experience provides to help them create contextualized and meaningful lessons for small groups and individuals. The ability to observe and listen to one's students and their experiences in the classroom contributes to a teacher's ability to use a constructivist approach. In turn, a constructivist approach contributes to a teacher's ability to observe and listen in the classroom. Thus, the process is like a vital circle. Students and teachers learn with each other.

Communication in Constructivist Teaching

Communication is an important aspect of a constructivist classroom: it unites teachers and students in a common purpose. Smith (1993) confirmed that negotiating curriculum means "custom-building classes every day to fit the individuals who attend" (p. 1). Boomer (1992) explained that it is important when

communicating for teachers to talk openly about how new information may be learned and about constraints such as obligatory curriculum. He commented on the meaning of communicating the curriculum: Negotiating the curriculum means deliberately planning to invite students to contribute, and to modify, the educational program, so that they will have a real investment both in the learning journey and the outcomes. Negotiation also means making explicit, and then confronting, the constraints of the learning context and the non-negotiable requirements that apply (p. 14).

Cook (1992) explained why communicating about the curriculum with students is important. He stated that "learners will work harder and better, and what they learn will mean more to them if they are discovering their own ideas, asking their own questions, and fighting hard to answer them for themselves. They must be educational decision makers. Out of negotiation comes a sense of ownership in learners for the work they are to do, and therefore a commitment to it" (p. 16). A constructivist teacher offers his or her students options and choices in their work. Teachers need to invite students to participate in a constructivist process that allows them to be involved in decisions about their learning. The

process of students' learning actively involved in their own learning creates a vital reality in a constructivist classroom. Students can participate in the construction of the curriculum by discussing with classmates or having high-quality interaction with the instructor. Finally, students can participate in evaluating their assignments.

Constructivist Learning Environment

Wilson (1996) defined a constructivist learning environment as "a place where learners may work together and support each other as they use a variety of tools and information resources in their guided pursuit of learning goals and problem-solving activities" (p. 5). He emphasized "learning" environments as opposed to "instructional" environments in order to promote "a more flexible idea of learning," one which emphasizes "meaningful, authentic activities that help the learner to construct understandings and develop skills relevant to problem solving" (p. 3).

Constructivist classrooms are structured so that learners are immersed in experiences within which they may engage in meaning-making inquiry, action, imagination, invention, interaction, and personal reflection. Teachers need to recognize how people use their own experiences and prior knowledge and perceptions, as well as their physical

and interpersonal environments to construct knowledge and meaning. The goal is to produce a democratic classroom environment that provides meaningful learning experiences for autonomous learners.

Honebein, Savery, and Duffy (1996) attempted to link the theory of constructivism with the practice of instruction. They have derived a number of instructional principles from constructivism. One principle is that teachers' role is to challenge the students' thinking. Another principle is that students' ideas should be tested through social negotiation against both alternative and collaborative learning groups.

In a traditional classroom, an invisible, imposing and impenetrable barrier between student and teacher exists through power and practice. In a constructivist classroom, by contrast, the teacher and the student share responsibility and decision-making and demonstrate mutual respect. The democratic and interactive process of a constructivist classroom allows students to be active and autonomous learners. Using constructivist strategies, teachers become more effective. They are able to promote communication and create flexibility so that the atmosphere is very good in the classroom. The learning

relationship in a constructivist classroom is mutually beneficial to both students and teachers.

Conclusion

Constructivist teaching is an effective way to teach. Not only can it promote students' autonomy but it can also encourage students to learn actively and meaningfully. It is essential that teachers improve their teaching skills by applying constructivist teaching. This is can also help students to achieve their learning goals.

In constructivist teaching, students play the main roles in the classroom. Thus, students can have more time and opportunities to think for themselves. On the other hand, teachers have their responsibility to help students when they encounter difficulties during the learning process.

Learning is a search for meaning. Therefore, learning must start with the issues around which students are actively trying to construct meaning. Teachers have to focus on making connections between facts and fostering new understanding in students. Teachers tailor their teaching strategies to student responses and encourage students to analyze, interpret, and predict information. Teachers also rely heavily on open-ended questions and promote extensive dialogue among students.

There is no doubt that constructivist teaching can develop students' ability to construct their knowledge and increase teachers' professional development. This fosters a democratic classroom atmosphere, in keeping with the way English should be learned for use in a democratic society.

Crosscultural Understanding

Crosscultural understanding is very important in second language learning acquisition. Language is a part of culture. Thus, learning a target language should be related to the target culture. When students have a strong desire to know a culture, they are willing to learn its language. Teachers need to introduce the target culture to a greater extent instead of teaching only grammar rules and vocabulary words. Every culture has its own unique characteristics. Hence, teaching students crosscultural differences is beneficial for second language acquisition.

What is Culture?

There are many definitions of culture. Damen (1987) described culture as, "learned and shared human patterns or models for living; day-to-day living patterns. These patterns and models pervade all aspects of human social interaction. Culture is mankind's primary adaptive mechanism" (p. 367). Thus, culture includes many aspects

of life such as behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols. Different cultures have different ways of life. Every culture has its own characteristics that indicate its particular living environment.

There are other definitions of culture. Hofstede (1984) added, "Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another" (p. 51). According to this, culture is very complex because it contains every aspect of life. Different living environments result in different cultures.

Diaz-Rico and Weed (1995) stated, "The important idea is that culture involves both observable behaviors and intangibles such as beliefs and values, rhythms, rules, and roles. Culture is the filter through which people see the world" (p. 193). Thus, teachers need to be broad-minded enough to accept different cultures and be willing to teach in a multicultural classroom. Knowing about culture can provide people with a deeper view of the world and the realization that people live in different ways. Students also can interact with classmates of different cultural backgrounds to understand different values.

Culture Shock in the Classroom

People sometimes experience anxiety as they encounter a new culture. Definitions of culture shock are numerous. Furnham and Bochner (1989) stated that culture shock is "...when a sojourner is unfamiliar with the social conventions of the new culture, or if familiar with them, unable or unwilling to perform according to these rules" (p. 250). According to this, a newcomer not familiar with the new environment will feel nervous.

According to Diaz Rico and Weed (1995), "Culture shock may follow euphoria as cultural differences begin to intrude. The newcomer is increasingly aware of being different and may be disoriented by cultural cues that result in frustration. Deprivation of the familiar may cause a loss of self-esteem. Depression, anger, or withdrawal may result. The severity of this shock may vary as a function of the personality of the individual, the emotional support available, and the perceived or actual differences between the two cultures" (p. 203). Thus, culture shock happens in different environments. An individual may experience a form of it in an international move, such as moving from one region of the country to another or when one changes jobs. Teachers need to pay attention to students' cultural background in order to

provide them with appropriate support and help. Teachers can also prepare some topics about different cultures for discussion in class. This will reduce students' nervousness about learning English in class. Addressing culture shock openly keeps students to recognize their anxiety towards unfamiliar experiences.

Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is instruction designed to accommodate the cultures of several different races in an educational system. This approach to teaching and learning is based upon consensus building, respect, and fostering cultural pluralism within racial societies. Multicultural education acknowledges and incorporates positive racial idiosyncrasies into classroom atmospheres.

As stated by Bennett (1995), "to dwell on cultural differences is to foster negative prejudices and stereotypes, and it is human nature to view those who are different as inferior" (p. 29). Teachers need to pay attention to crosscultural differences and give students an orientation of acceptance towards diverse cultures. Students can also be willing to contact different cultures instead of rejecting them. There is no definite right or wrong in comparing cultures. Each culture is formed as a reaction to the environment and is a result of tradition.

Students are empowered through collaboration with each other. Power no longer needs to be viewed as a fixed quantity that is parceled out by the teacher. In contrast to the traditional classroom, the collaborative classroom generates power that is shared by the participants in the learning environment (Cummins, 1989). Multicultural literature is a primary vehicle for generating dialogue. The literary work becomes the shared body of experience, allowing students to respond from the perspectives of their individual cultural backgrounds. The teacher uses thought-provoking questions to enhance students' connections to the literature and to establish a relationship of cultural equality between students.

Griffin (1995) summarized five principles of instruction that have emerged from research in cognitive science: 1) knowledge is constructed, 2) through active participation, 3) in a social context, 4) in which forms of communication developed in the culture are encouraged and available, and 5) used to establish a community of learners. Practices that support these principles include small-group instruction, ample opportunities for children to participate and work directly with materials, and tasks that enable children to discover new ideas and concepts in the process of working with materials. These practices can

be applied in crosscultural education to help students form concepts about their own culture and that of others. For example, in Taiwan, students study Chinese culture as they learn about English-language target cultures.

Characteristics of Chinese Culture

A key characteristic of Chinese culture is pride mixed with pragmatism. The Chinese are very proud of their society. They value their own culture and religion but are open and pragmatic towards the religions and cultures of others.

The Role of the Family. The roles of members of a Chinese family are highly interdependent (Ong, 1993). Traditionally the family has been the most fundamental and important unit of society among the Chinese and this is still true. The family is also an important economic unit. It is still very common for three generations to live together. (In my example, I have lived with my grandmother for twenty years).

Chinese people are often shy, especially in an unfamiliar environment (Chin, 1996). Gentle and friendly tones of greetings are helpful. It is more appropriate to address older consumers and/or family members by "Mr. or Mrs." as it can be viewed as disrespectful to address older people by their first names. If an individual's

parents or other older relatives are participating in a conversation, it is extremely important to give the older family members equal attention while discussing the care of the younger family member.

Parents are the highest authority in the family. To maintain family harmony, child rearing focuses on obedience, proper conduct, control of emotion and personal desire, moral training, impulse control, achievement and the acceptance of social obligations. Chinese are brought up to remain an integral part of their families throughout their lives, instead of being trained to function independently (Bond, 1986).

Lee (1996) emphasized that as a result of the social, political and economic changes described above, there is no one "typical" Chinese family. Although most families share many of the same beliefs and traditions, they also have their differences and variations in values.

Role of Community. Confucian philosophy advocates that individuals put group needs above personal needs. The Chinese have a strong sense of community. In mainland China, every large building complex or neighborhood has committees or associations formed by voluntary or selected residents--mostly retired residents or housewives--that

address residents' family, environmental, recreational, and other needs and issues.

Reviewing their core values can help Chinese students evaluate their beliefs as they encounter, for example, American culture. Understanding one's own culture provides strong support as students are exposed to new ways.

Characteristics of American Culture

America is a country of mixed cultures brought by immigrants from around the world. Americans value their own culture but are broad-minded enough to accept different cultures. They respect privacy and are profoundly future-oriented. The concept of family is based on individual happiness and love.

Privacy. According to Althen (1988), respecting one's privacy is important to Americans. The notion of individual privacy may make it difficult to make friends. Because Americans respect one's privacy, they may not go much beyond a friendly "Hello." Ironically, it is usually the foreigner who must be more assertive if a friendship is to develop.

The Family. Another aspect of American society that may bewilder non-Americans is the family. According to Lanier (1988), the nuclear family structure (parents and children) is so alien to most cultures in the world that

it is often misunderstood. The main purpose of the American family is to bring about the happiness of each individual family member. The traditional family values include love and respect for parents, as well as for all members of the family. However, the emphasis on the individual and his/her right to happiness can be confusing. It allows children to disagree, and even argue with their parents. Whereas in most other cultures such action would be a sign of disrespect and a lack of love, that is not the case in the United States. It is simply a part of developing one's independence.

Conclusion

Crosscultural understanding is very meaningful and interesting because every culture has its own characteristics. Culture is developed as time goes by; therefore, culture changes in different periods. Learning a second language needs to be related to crosscultural understanding. Students should be encouraged to explore and contact different cultures in order to maintain interest in learning the target language.

There is no definite right or wrong characteristic of a culture because a culture is formed gradually according to the geographic environment, the residents, and the outside effect. That is why there are so many different

cultures in the world. People should broaden their minds to accept different cultures. Thus, teachers should help students become exposed to different cultures.

For helping students learn English in an interesting way, teachers need to pay attention to students' performance in the classroom. Some students are afraid of expressing their true feelings in the classroom, so teachers should encourage them to develop and voice their own opinions and problems. Teaching the target culture not only can increase students' motivation in learning English but also help students use English in their daily life. On the other hand, students will learn how to introduce their native culture in English. Students will be eager to use English in this way. Sometimes teachers should be like students' friends to encourage their true feelings. Teachers can help students to enjoy learning if they incorporate crosscultural lessons while studying English.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A Model to Achieve Teaching Crosscultural Differences: Components and Elements

The literature review in the previous chapter has explored a variety of strategies that can be applied in Taiwan to teaching crosscultural differences between Chinese and Americans in English, including critical thinking, critical reading, concept development graphic organizers, crosscultural understanding, and constructivist teaching/learning. In order to achieve the goal of teaching crosscultural differences, a model of elements consisting of comparative definition, content, modality (type of thought) and operation (process of thought) can be constructed (see Figure 1). This model will help EFL teachers to teach crosscultural differences by applying those teaching strategies. The model of teaching crosscultural differences is comprised of five major components, critical thinking, critical reading, concept development graphic organizers, crosscultural understanding and constructivist teaching/learning.

Components-> Elements:	Critical Thinking	Concept Development Graphic Organizers	Critical Reading	Crosscultural Understanding	Constructivist Teaching/ Learning
Definition	The ability to think actively and efficiently by analyzing, inferring, problem solving and conceptualizing	The way of representing or organizing knowledge with a graphical representation	The ability to read critically by evaluating the context, identifying the author's assumptions, and transferring information for new purposes	To compare crosscultural differences for understanding different cultures	Teaching students how to learn, depends on their prior experiences as they construct concepts.
Content	Text, events, decisions	Text	Text	Comparison of life /behaviors/ roles	Teaching and learning
Modality	Logic	Picture, chart, graphics	Conceptualization	Customs, habits, traditions and behaviors	Metacognition
Operation	Questioning and evaluating information and decisions	Making pictures, graphics	Examining, analyzing	Comparing	Planning, self-evaluating, and self-monitoring

Figure 1. A Model of Teaching Crosscultural Differences

The Component of Critical Thinking

Teachers can apply critical thinking to teach English. Students can learn how to think critically and actively by analyzing, inferring, problem solving, and conceptualizing. The content is text, events and decisions. The modality is logic so students will learn to

think rationally. Students need to analyze the content, whether crosscultural or other reading. Students also learn to identify problems and solve them in order to conceptualize the main ideas.

The operation involves questioning and evaluating information and decisions because teachers ask students to think for themselves. This kind of mental process is needed for the purpose of thinking critically.

The Component of Concept Development Graphic Organizers

In order to provide students good tools to train their thinking, concept development graphic organizers can help students to present or organize knowledge more easily and interestingly. The content is text. The mental tools are pictures, charts, and graphs. During the process of learning students may have difficulties. Therefore, teachers can help students to be more interested in learning actively by applying concept development graphic organizers in the classroom. Using concept development organizers is very useful for students to learn to think more critically and systematically as they study English.

The Component of Critical Reading

It is very practical for teachers to apply critical reading in class. When students read critically they can

increase their ability to pose new questions and to know how to find answers in their own ways. Therefore, critical reading can facilitate students' reading more actively and participating in class more often. The content is text. The modality is conceptualization. The operation is examining and evaluating because students can realize that the reading process is self-learning. Students can examine themselves to identify their errors and then correct them. Reading critically not only can facilitate students' understanding of the reading content but also can stimulate their deeper thoughts.

The Component of Crosscultural Understanding

Understanding crosscultural differences is very important in second language acquisition. Language is a part of culture. Teachers need to give students more opportunities to learn the target culture. From the process of comparing different cultures, students will be more interested in learning the target language. The content is comparison of life, behaviors and roles. The modality is customs, habits, traditions, and behaviors because students can put their learning into practice in their daily life. The main purpose of learning a language is to use it in daily life. The operation is comparing different cultures. Everyone has his or her opinions to express

freely. There is no right or wrong culture: there is only appropriate or not. Teachers should encourage students to think instead of restrict their thoughts.

The Component of Constructivist Teaching/Learning

Constructivist teaching can foster critical thinking and motivate students to learn. Thus, constructivist teaching/learning is very beneficial and flexible for teachers and students. Students can learn based on their prior experiences and construct their own concepts. The content is text. The modality is metacognition because students can learn from the process of constructing their learning. The operation is planning and evaluating. Students learn to plan their learning and evaluate the teaching materials. Therefore, students can develop their ability in constructing their knowledge to generalize main points.

Use of the Theoretical Model

With the model provided by this project, teachers can teach students how to apply these strategies to learn English. A teacher's main responsibility is to help students how to learn by themselves. Teachers need to teach students those strategies by directing them correctly. Reading does not just mean knowing the content.

Reading should be interesting so students enjoy reading and are eager to learn more useful information.

Students will find that learning about crosscultural differences is very interesting and meaningful. They can apply their learning strategies in second language acquisition and practice thinking in their own ways. Therefore, students not only enjoy the learning process but also get new ideas for themselves.

CHAPTER FOUR

CURRICULUM DESIGN

This curriculum project is designed to develop students' ability to learn English by comparing crosscultural differences between Taiwanese and American cultures. Each lesson includes information about both Taiwan and American cultures. Students learn how to compare the two cultures according to learning strategies.

Curriculum Organization

This curriculum is composed of three units. There are two lessons in each unit based on crosscultural differences between cultures of Taiwan and the USA (see Appendix). Each unit focuses on reading materials that are appropriate for junior high school students. The texts are about different topics drawn from Taiwanese and American cultures. The intent of the lesson plans is to help students to participate actively and feel free to learn, to understand the characteristics of USA and Taiwanese cultures, and to compare crosscultural differences by using graphic organizers.

Each lesson features several focus sheets, task sheets, an assessment sheet, and a self-evaluation sheet. The lesson plans provide ideas and activities designed for

teaching crosscultural differences between Taiwanese and American cultures. The topics of Lessons One to Six are as follows: crosscultural differences in Taiwan and USA relating to cultures in food, special occasions, gift-giving, dining out, and the visiting homes and business. At the beginning of the class, students brainstorm their ideas, or practice constructing the main ideas. The purpose of the activities is to provide students a warm-up including background information or learning strategies to help them focused on the topic and objectives of the lesson.

There are three kinds of teaching materials in the lesson plans: the focus sheets containing texts for reading; the task sheets containing activities helping students to learn the learning strategies; and the assessment sheets, which include different items assessing students' learning. In addition, self-evaluation sheets are provided at the end of every lesson. Self-evaluation sheets offer an opportunity for students to self-monitor and evaluate their learning. Assessment sheets serve as summative assessment for the lesson.

Curriculum Use of the Model

This curriculum is derived from the model in Chapter Three, as well as from the review of the five key words in Chapter Two. Therefore, the following explanation of the key words will show how these key words correspond to this curriculum for attaining the teaching goals (see Table 3).

Table 3. The Distribution of Strategies in Lesson Plans

Components	Lesson Plans					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Critical Thinking	X	X	X	X	X	X
Critical Reading			X	X		
Concept Development Graphic Organizers	X	X			X	X
Constructivist Teaching and Learning	X	X	X	X	X	X
Crosscultural Understanding	X	X	X	X	X	X

The Component of Critical Thinking

In order to achieve the goal of understanding crosscultural differences, students should have the ability in thinking actively and efficiently. Therefore, students need to learn how to question, evaluate, information, and make decisions. In the lesson activities, students have peer discussion about issues relating to Taiwanese and American cultures. They brainstorm together

to think critically for themselves. Teachers play an important role in encouraging students to express their thoughts freely. In the task sheets, students also learn how to solve problems in decision-making activity and role-play to debate key issues.

The Component of Critical Reading

This curriculum focuses on improving students' reading ability. Applying critical reading in the lessons is essential for students to learn how to evaluate the context, to identify the author's assumptions and to transfer information for new purposes. In the lessons, students work with their partners to discuss advantages and disadvantages of Taiwanese and American cultures. They learn how to evaluate the texts and generate the main ideas together.

The Component of Concept Development Graphic Organizers

In this curriculum, concept development graphic organizers play an important role in familiarizing students the learning process. Using a graph can help students to think critically and extend their concepts. In the task sheets, students have an opportunity to learn how to use a graphic organizer to compare two different

topics. Therefore, students develop their thinking ability naturally while creating a graphic organizer.

The Component of Constructivist Teaching and Learning

The main purpose of constructivist teaching is helping students to learn according to their prior experiences. Constructivist teaching can foster critical thinking and motivate students to learn. A constructivist approach contributes to one's ability to observe and listen in the classroom. In the task chains, teachers give students an opportunity to discuss the topic in the lesson and observe students' performance. Teachers assist students' learning in class. In the self-evaluation sheets, students evaluate themselves to make further progress. Using task sheets, students learn how to construct the main ideas and make decisions by themselves.

The Component of Crosscultural Understanding

Teaching crosscultural differences is very interesting and meaningful because students can increase motivation by means of the process of comparing the native culture and target culture. In this curriculum, the main objective of each lesson is helping students recognize different characteristics of Taiwanese and American cultures and compare these two cultures. Students can

identify customs, tradition, behaviors, and habits well from these lesson plans.

In conclusion, applying these learning strategies will provide students with tools to learn crosscultural differences. Students can enjoy the learning process with those activities developing student's ability to think critically. Teachers encourage students to share their own experiences and express their own opinions. Therefore, students learn for themselves and realize that learning can take place with pleasure instead of pressure. Good interactions between teachers and students improve the atmosphere in the classroom. Students will know how to apply these learning strategies in future learning, not only in English but also in other academic areas.

CHAPTER FIVE

ASSESSMENT

Purpose of Assessment

Diaz-Rico and Weed (1995) stated that there are a number of purposes for assessment: Proficiency tests determine a student's level of performance; diagnostic and placement tests provide information to place students in the appropriate level of academic or linguistic courses; achievement tests assess the student's previous learning; and competency tests assess whether or not a student may be promoted or advanced (p. 177). Hence, different kinds of tests have different kinds of purposes. In this curriculum, the main purpose for assessment is assessing the student's learning. Standardized reading assessments are mainly based on multiple-choice formats in Taiwan. This type of assessment cannot measure students' real achievements and improvement. These tests may not assess the real reading ability of students because they just measure the result or product. Therefore, students may suffer the problems of the restriction of the testing situation.

Therefore, reading assessment should be more flexible in order to assess students' real reading ability.

Teachers need to pay attention to the processes of students' learning and adjust the curriculum and materials according to students' need. The purpose of assessment is to give students opportunities to improve their learning with pleasure instead of restricting students' thoughts and subjecting them to severe pressure.

Assessment of the Curriculum Project

According to Kern (2000), reading tests should do the following things: 1) assess readers' understanding of pragmatic implications; 2) provide opportunities for students to link comprehension to production; and 3) allow for individual differences in responses. Thus, reading assessment needs to be flexible in order to assess students' real understanding of the texts. Teachers should give students freedom to express their main ideas and encourage them to participate in class actively.

The key purpose of this curriculum is teaching students to compare crosscultural differences between Taiwanese and American cultures. In this curriculum, before reading the text, students are encouraged to discuss with classmates key issues about Taiwanese and American cultures. The main purpose of the warm-up is to activate students' prior knowledge. Assessing background

knowledge before students read the content is very essential for students to make connection between old and new learning experiences. Teachers assess students' background knowledge thorough brainstorming and peer discussion.

In order to provide opportunities for students to link comprehension to production, in each lesson teachers use assessment sheets to evaluate students' reading comprehension. In the two lessons of Unit One, the teacher asks students to work in groups to design a graphic organizer based on similarities and differences. Students work together to comprehend the reading materials and try to compare the two different cultures. Designing a graphic organizer helps students develop their concepts related to the topic. In the two lessons of Unit Two, the teacher evaluates students' final thoughts on the articles as they write some reasons to support their positions. Students comprehend the reading content and decide the preferred characteristic from the two different cultures. In the two lessons of Unit Three, the teacher asks students to list similarities and differences of Taiwanese and USA cultures. Teachers can evaluate students' comprehension from the process of comparison.

At the end of every lesson, students receive self-evaluation sheets. Students can evaluate their learning process by themselves. Teachers can adjust the teaching method or materials for next class according to students' responses. Students are encouraged to answer those questions freely in order to improve their learning from the self-evaluation.

In summary, adequate and effective assessments are very important for teachers to achieve the teaching goals and students to realize their progress of learning. Teachers should adjust their teaching approaches according to the outcomes of assessments in order for students to achieve better comprehension and learn to think critically.

The most important purpose of teaching is helping students to achieve their learning goals instead of depressing their learning desires. Assessments are useful tools for teachers to gain insight into comparison and student learning styles. Additionally, with supplemental information educators can adapt their teaching styles to the needs of their students.

APPENDIX
LESSON PLANS

Unit One - Crosscultural Understanding Taiwan-USA: Daily Life

Lesson Plan 1: Food

Lesson Plan 2: Special Occasions

Unit Two - Crosscultural Understanding Taiwan-USA: Friends

Lesson Plan 1: Gift-giving

Lesson Plan 2: Dining Out

Unit Three - Crosscultural Understanding Taiwan-USA: Social Life

Lesson Plan 1: Visiting Homes

Lesson Plan 2: Business

Unit One: Lesson One

Crosscultural Differences in Food

Content: Characteristics of USA and Taiwan Cultures in Food

Objectives:

1. To help students to participate actively and feel free to learn.
2. To understand the characteristics of USA and Taiwan cultures in food.
3. To help students to compare crosscultural differences in food between USA and Taiwan by using a graphic organizer.

Material:

- Focus Sheet A-1
- Focus Sheet A-2
- Task Sheet A-1
- Assessment Sheet A-1
- Self-Evaluation Sheet A-1

Task Chain 1: *Helping students to participate actively and feel free to learn*

1. The teacher asks students to work in groups of three.
2. The teacher asks students to discuss some special things of Chinese and the USA cultures.
3. The students are encouraged to answer questions based on their experience on books, movies, TV programs or other people's experiences in their daily life.
4. The students share their experiences in the classroom.

Task Chain 2: *Understanding the characteristics of the USA and Taiwan cultures in food*

1. After the discussion, the teacher distributes Focus Sheet A-1 and A-2 and asks students to work in groups to differentiate the characteristics of the cultures of the United States and Taiwan.

Task Chain 3: *Helping students to compare crosscultural differences in food between the USA and Taiwan by using a graphic organizer.*

1. The teacher distributes Task Sheet A-1 to students for teaching students to use a graphic organizer in comparison and outlining.

Assessment:

1. The teacher distributes Assessment A-1 to students and asks students to work in groups to design a graphic organizer based on the similarities and differences.
2. The teacher distributes Self-Evaluation Sheet A-1 to students and encourages them to answer freely.

Focus Sheet A-1
Food in Taiwan

The Meals of the Day

Most Westerners, when thinking of Chinese cuisine, immediately think of rice, rice, rice. Indeed, in Mandarin and Taiwanese, the word *fan*, literally meaning “rice”, may be used to refer to meals and food in general. However, this may be a good time to point out that not all rice is equal. The rice consumed in Taiwan is the same as the Japanese Calrose variety—short-grained and sticky. It is better than the rice you will eat in Mainland China and different from the long-grained, fragrant rice favored by the Chinese from Thailand through to Singapore.

Breakfast

Taiwanese like to eat three “squares” a day and then snack now and again. Breakfast is called *dzau tsan* (early meal) or *dzau fan* (early rice) and is normally taken between 7:00 and 9:00 a.m. If the family is Western-oriented, they might have a glass of milk with a slice of bread, into which has been folded either pork floss (*rou sz*) or a fried egg. Sometimes they might be prepared buns from the local bakery. These buns often have fillings that can be an annoying or pleasant ‘surprise’ for Westerners expecting a plain bun. It might be sweetened condensed milk, pork floss, tuna fish, sweetened bean paste, or a hotdog. If you aren’t sure of the freshness, take care. This is especially true of some “cream horns” or prepared sandwiches with mayonnaise. Think of your intestines before your purchase. Not to sound too loud a warning: we must also comment that we have had some excellent croissants and pastry from local Taiwanese bakeries as of late.

If the family prefers local taste, breakfast can be one of several things. Rice porridge (Mandarin *jou*, Taiwanese *buh*) is served with side dishes of peanuts, salted duck egg, pickled seaweed or cucumber, preserved fish, or canned fried gluten. Northern *Wai Sheng Ren* brought with them their *shau bing* and *you trau* breakfast breads. *Shau bing* (roast cakes) is a flaky crusted bread pocket with sesame seeds sprinkled on the outside. *You trau* (oil sticks) are deep-fried Chinese crullers. The chef will put a long thin string of dough into an immense oil-filled wok standing over a large flame. The string will balloon out to make a thin golden brown and crispy rod. This is folded in half and inserted in the *shau bing* pocket. It is frequently accompanied by *bou jyang* (soybean soup), which is served hot or cold, sweet or salty. The white sweet type is common and can be found everywhere. The hot salty type is made by taking raw soybean milk and adding a spoonful of dried pickled radish, sesame oil, chili oil, salt, bits of broken *you trau*, and shallots. It tastes like a divine cream of chicken soup--worth looking for.

Lunch

For students, office workers, or factory people, lunch (*wu tsan* or *wu fan*, 'noon meal') is usually eaten between 12:00 and 1:00 p.m. and is frequently in a *byan daog* (lunch box). This term is not used in China and came from the Japanese *o bento*. The *byan dang* was traditionally brought from home and heated at the school or office. Today there are small eateries that sell them "to-go" in Styrofoam containers. They will also deliver to local offices.

Usually the meal contains steamed white rice and a fried pork chop, or fish, a chicken drumstick, or sweet pork, stir-fried vegetables, mustard greens, dried bean curd, etc. an alternative are the *dz ju tsan* (self-serve meals) which are served in small cafeterias. In the late morning, the chefs busy themselves cooking up vast aluminum trays of food: fried and steamed fish, eggplant, bean curd, greens, pork chops, fried eggs--usually 12 or more dishes. You are asked first if you want rice or porridge and then you can just point at what you want on top. The lady will help it onto your disposable tray. A weak soup is available.

Dinner

The ideal Taiwanese family will eat dinner together. The meal is called *wan fan* (late rice). They will usually have soup, two vegetables, and chicken or seafood—enough for a typical family of three. More dishes will be prepared if Grandma is around to help cook and eat. Today, though, Dad is out entertaining, Junior is off to cram school, and Mom eats a specialty at a push cart to remind her of the flavors of her youth.

When they have all returned home they might go out together for *syau ye* (midnight snack). This might be a bowl of noodles, or *chau doufu* (smelly bean curd—they say it smells like a sewer and tastes like a dream; bean curd's equivalent to Blue Stilton cheese). Or it could be *lu rou fan* (ground meat sauce on a bowl of rice), *rou geng* (breaded, deep-fried bits of meat in a thick sauce), or *rou dzung* (glutinous rice, egg, mushrooms, dried shrimp, and pork mixed together and steamed in a leaf).

Tomorrow, they have decided to go out for dinner. With so many hundreds of eateries and restaurants to choose from, the only problem is deciding where.

(Bates & Wu, 1995)

Focus Sheet A-2 *Food in USA*

American cuisine in itself is not bad. Our cooks have an abundance of fresh ingredients and heritage of wonderful regional dishes: apple pie, calm chowder, southern fried chicken, Louisiana gumbo, barbecued oysters, fresh buttered corn, buttermilk biscuits, strawberry shortcake, and hundreds of other fine dishes. As many guidebooks lamely say, it is possible to eat very well in America.

It is also possible to eat very badly, and many Americans do--by choice rather than necessary. A lot of supermarket food, while cheap and plentiful, is produced to provide the most calories with the longest shelf life and the shortest preparation time. The result is frozen dinners, packaged sweets, instant puddings, bottled salad dressings, and canned sauces. Manufacturers are working night and day to invent new products that will captivate the public. Almost any conceivable meal is available ready-made.

The problem is that most of this stuff isn't much good. It supplies calories, but in real satisfaction it doesn't measure up to anything fresh or home-cooked. Even fruits and vegetables are raised to survive long shipping or storage periods, rather than for taste. Meats are tender and good (unless you like a gamey taste), but very fatty and distressingly laden with hormones and antibiotics. Also, most supermarket food is wrapped, canned, frozen, jarred, or packaged in such a way that you can't examine it until you get it home. (many are so well sealed that they're maddeningly difficult to open even at home.) If you do try to open jars or poke into packages, management will be distressed.

If you come from a country with severe food shortages, you won't complain, but most foreigners find American food takes some getting used to. And some searching for the gold among the dross.

Sweet and Bland

A Tanzanian said he found American food so bland he nearly starved when he first came. "Back then, I couldn't even find a bottle of Tabasco (a hot sauce) in my little town." Then he discovered pizza and survived. The American palate has become braver that it used to be, but in the average household you won't find much seasoning in use beyond salt and pepper.

And sugar. There seems to be no end to the march on sweetness. One food writer swears that at a banquet he attended he was served a cup of M&M's (little candies) for an appetizer. Americans are stuck on sugar, and sugar (or some other sweeteners) is added to most packaged foods. It's hard to find a snack that isn't sweet, and even some main course dishes are served with a sweet, such as pancakes with

maple syrup and lamb with mint jelly. American pastries are very sweet, and Americans eat sweet desserts much more regularly than most peoples.

A lot of sodium (an element in salt) is regularly added to packaged foods, which has caused such an outcry among doctors (too much is said to bad for the heart) that new lines of foods are coming out advertising themselves as “sodium-free.” There are also a lot of sugar-free foods, but you have to read labels carefully to make sure you aren’t just getting honey or corn syrup or an awful-tasting artificial sweetener.

A law requires the contents of foodstuffs to be listed on the package, in the order of the greatest to the least quantity. It’s enlightening reading.

Eating Habits

The first two meals of the day eaten by an American are generally quick. The classic American breakfast of bacon and eggs is seen more on weekends than when the whole family is rushing to school and work. Cereal with milk and a cup of coffee is probably the usual morning sustenance of the average American. Lunch consists of a sandwich, soup or salad. Dinner is the large meal of the day. (when the lunchtime meal is the big one it can also be called “dinner,” and when the evening meal is simple, it may be called “supper.”)

The American dinner has fallen under medical disapproval due to its high cholesterol content. The meal typically consists of a large piece of meat, ketchup, vegetables with butter, potatoes (fried or with butter), and a sweet dessert. It might also be an equally fatty frozen meal, heated in the microwave oven, a high-calorie pizza or a bucket of fried chicken.

A large proportion of Americans report that they would like to change their diets, but habits are hard to break. The beans, vegetables, and whole grains that doctors keep urging us to eat require time to cook, which, we haven’t got. Take-out Chinese food is many people’s idea of a low-calorie, low-cholesterol meal, but actually our Chinese restaurants use a lot of fat.

Snacking

There appear to be people who rarely eat a whole meal at once. Instead, they just grab a snack when hungry--a hot dog, a doughnut, or a container of sweetened yogurt. At home they snack while standing in front of the open door of the refrigerator.

What seems to distress our foreign visitors about snacking is the lack of seriousness about food. For people who invest a great deal of time thinking about mouthwatering dishes shared with friends and family, the life of a snacker hardly seems worth living. To us, it’s a life rich in efficiency, pared down to the essential elements. If only we could speed up sleeping.

Good Eating

There is, thankfully, another side to this story. Dismayed by a landscape of tasteless fast foods, a reaction has sprung up. It began with the appearance of health food stores, which stock foods in as close to their natural states as possible—wholewheat flour and breads, organic produce (fruits and vegetables grown without chemical fertilizers or pesticides), and wide assortments of nuts, beans, and grains.

Recent Asian and Middle Eastern immigrants have improved the quality of produce markets, and gourmet food stores and fresh fish markets have proliferated. Major cities have grocery stores selling staples for every kind of cuisine. It is possible to find excellent ingredients in most parts of the country—although it may take extra effort and money.

Foodies

There have always been some Americans gourmets, who take great pleasure in good food. The newest, trendiest version of these are known as “foodies.” Foodies are exacting about everything that passes their lips. They are on a voyage of discovery, constantly on the lookout of new and exotic foods: baby beets, sun-dried tomatoes, varieties of mushrooms, salsas, and tiramisu. Cheeses alone absorb vast quantities of their attention. They eat only baby lettuce and fresh pasta. They watch famous chefs on television, cook, and explore new restaurants. They do not touch fast food.

Because of the time and financial investment required of foodies, most are Yuppies (Young Upwardly Mobile Professionals) or Dinks (Double Income No Kids) about American eating, but their influence seems to be spreading.

(Wanning, 1999)

Task Sheet A-1
Graphic Organizer-Introduction

Name: Comparison Matrix

Description: Linked by characteristics or attributes.

Uses: Describe and compare attributes and characteristics of items (things, people, places, events, ideas, etc.), brainstorming.

Critical Questions:

- What items do you want to compare?
- What characteristics do you want to compare?
- How are the items similar and different based on the characteristics?

Suggestions: Place an 'X' in the box to indicate if an item possesses that characteristic. Make sure the student is clear and agrees on the definition of the specific characteristic.

How are they alike? How are they different?

		Characteristics			
		walk	talk	swim	read
Items to be compared	Person				
	Dog				
	Cat				
	Fish				

Answer key:

How are they alike? How are they different?

		Characteristics			
		walk	talk	swim	read
Items to be compared	Person	X	X	X	X
	Dog	X		X	
	Cat	X		X	
	Fish			X	

(<http://www.graphic.org>, 2001)

Assessment Sheet A-1
Create Your Own Graphic Organizer

Directions:

Please work with your group members and compare similarities and differences between the food in the United States and in Taiwan. After the comparison, make your own graphic organizer and explain to the class.

Note: Similarities: 40%, Differences: 40% Graphic organizer: 20%

Similarities: at least two each one 20% Differences: at least four, each one 10%

Graphic organizer: use at least one graphic, 20%

90	Excellent
80	Good
70	Needs improvement
60	Study harder

Self-Evaluation Sheet A-1

Name:					
Score:					
I learned how to compare food	1	2	3	4	5
I know how to use a graphic organizer	1	2	3	4	5
I made myself understood during the discussion	1	2	3	4	5
I know how to compare two different things	1	2	3	4	5
I learned a lot and enjoyed the class	1	2	3	4	5

5: excellent

4: good

3: acceptable

2: needs improvement

1: pay more attention in class

How can I learn more in class?

Do I get any different ideas from group members?

What do I learn to apply in the future?

Unit One: Lesson Two

Crosscultural Differences in Special Occasions

Content: Characteristics of the USA and Taiwanese Cultures in Special Occasions

Objectives:

1. To help students to participate actively and feel free to learn.
2. To understand the characteristics of the USA and Taiwan cultures in special occasions.
3. To help students to compare crosscultural differences in special occasions between the USA and Taiwan by using a graphic organizer.

Material:

Focus Sheet B-1
Focus Sheet B-2
Task Sheet B-1
Assessment Sheet B-1
Assessment Sheet B-2

Task Chain 1: *Helping students to participate actively and feel free to learn*

1. The teacher asks students to work in groups of three.
2. The teacher asks students to discuss some special things of Chinese and USA cultures.
3. The students are encouraged to answer questions based on their experience on books, movies, TV programs or other people's experiences in their daily life.
4. The students share their experiences in the classroom.

Task Chain 2: *Understanding the characteristics of USA and Taiwan cultures in special occasions.*

1. After the discussion, the teacher distributes Focus Sheets B-1 and B-2 and asks students to work in groups to differentiate the characteristics of the cultures in the United States and Taiwan.

Task Chain 3: *Helping students to compare crosscultural differences in special occasions between USA and Taiwan by using a graphic organizer.*

1. The teacher distributes Task Sheet B-1 to students for teaching students to use a graphic organizer in comparison and outlining.

Assessment:

1. The teacher distributes Assessment Sheet B-1 to students and asks students to work in groups to design a graphic organizer based on similarities and differences.
2. The teacher distributes Self-Evaluation Sheet B-1 to students and encourages them to answer freely.

Focus Sheet B-1
Special Occasions in Taiwan

Childbirth

Pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood are all very important to the Taiwanese. The extension of one's family is the only way to ensure that one will be taken care of in old age and in the afterlife. For a man, the birth of a son ensures the continuation of the family line and name, vital in Confucian thought. Family planning measures by the government have been successful in controlling population growth, except during particularly auspicious years, such as the Year of the Dragon, when they explode. (A Chinese friend once commented to Chris that he had hit the "cosmic jackpot" by having twin sons born in the Year of the Dragon!) Because families are similar than in decades past, even more attention is lavished on the mother and child than ever before.

The parents want to make sure the child gets off to the best start. This manifests itself in obvious and practical ways, such as eating nutritional supplements and highly nutritious foods during the pregnancy. However, other ways are more esoteric. A fortune-teller will be consulted to try to ascertain the most propitious date and time for the birth. Providing they are full-term, mothers might request to be induced or give birth by Caesarian section at the appointed time. They will also consult the fortune-teller on the selection of a name. The fortune-teller does not select the characteristics, but rather tells the parents the propitious number of strokes the characteristic of the name should contain. Since the surname is never changed and the first characteristic of the given name is usually the same for all the male or female children in that generation of the family, it means that the second characteristic of the given name must be chosen carefully.

After being released from the hospital, the mother and baby will customarily go into one month of traditional confinement called *dzwo ywe dz* (literally, "to sit for a month"). During this time, she will be physically inactive, expect for feeding the baby. She is also not supposed to bathe or wash her hair (although now they surreptitiously do), and she will consume vast quantities for tonic foods prepared according to custom and Chinese medical theory. The most popular Taiwanese postpartum tonic is *ma you ji*, a whole free-range chicken cooked in a steamer in a combination of sesame oil and rice wine. All the cooking and tending were traditionally done by the baby's maternal grandmother, but *dzwo ywe dz* centers have now sprung up around the island to provide the service in a hospice environment.

Weddings

The big day arrives. The wedding might be held in a church, at home, or at Taipei's City Hall. Less time is spent in planning the exchange of vows than the banquet. The banquet is a very big event, very important, and much face is attached to it. It is paid for by the groom's family. The size of the banquet is measured by the

number of tables required, each seating 12 guests at a cost of between NT\$12,000 and the sky's the limit! This price is per table for a set banquet menu not including drinks. An average-size banquet might require 30 tables. Bookings for the best menu at the best restaurant that can be afforded must be made well in advance for auspicious days.

The *Hai Ba Wang* (Ocean Emperor), prominently located at the corner of Chungshan North Road and Minsu East Road, is an example of a banquet hall that caters to weddings. Formerly the Roma Hotel, all 12 stories were converted into a restaurant with private function rooms. Business is booming and they have set up branches in many locations.

The grandparents and parents of the groom and the guest of honor normally sit with the bride and groom at the head table, always located furthest from the entrance, next to a wall. Behind the table on the wall is a red neon light or silk banner with the 'Double Happiness' character (*Shwang Syi*) on it. At other tables will be seated friends and business associates of the groom's parents, relatives from both sides, and you perhaps.

You will need to bring a cash gift in a *hung bau* for the newlyweds. The amount will vary depending on their relation to you. You should give more if one of them is a subordinate, a very special friend, or the child of an important business contact; less if they are just a friend. The *hung bau* should contain at least NT\$1,000 for each person you bring with you. If you and your spouse attend, that means NT\$2,000. At the entrance to the *syi jyou* will be a table, perhaps covered in a bright satin cloth, on which people are writing names. The people at this table are accepting, counting, and recording the *hung bau* given by guests. A *hung bau* is expected even if you are the guest of honor—an even larger amount perhaps.

During the dinner, the newlyweds will go from table to table and toast each group of guests.

(Bates & Wu, 1995)

Focus Sheet B-1
Special Occasions in USA

New Babies

It is customary for a friend to give a “baby shower” for an expectant mother. Traditionally, only other women are invited, and each arrives with a present for the baby, prettily wrapped. The usual routine is for the party to begin with refreshments and chat, followed by the opening of the presents. The women sit in a circle and the mother-to-be opens the presents one by one amidst “oohs” and “aahs”. Baby books, bonnets, little stretch suits, toys, blankets, and anything else a baby might want are all appropriate. A handmade item is especially appreciated.

There is no particular custom for visiting after the baby is born. Good friends might arrange to stop in a week or more after the birth, bearing a present if they haven’t already contributed one at the shower. As new parents are harried and have little time to cook, they will be grateful if you bring them something for their dinner.

Christening: A ceremony at which a baby is named and received into the Church, usually as part of Sunday morning services. If you are invited to one of these, just do what everyone else does, and don’t be insulted if you’re not invited--usually only relatives are.

Weddings

The traditional American wedding was rocked by the sixties and emerged in a variety of new forms. It became popular for couples to write their own vows and to add a variety of personal touches to the proceedings. Nonetheless, many of the old customs survive, even if in an updated form, and some couplings are more tradition-bound than ever before.

The most important thing to know about weddings is that you must arrive on time. This is an occasion when the guests should appear before the hosts; it is most embarrassing to arrive after the bride has already walked down the aisle. As wedding ceremonies start on time and are usually very short, you may miss the main event entirely by being late.

The Classic Church Wedding: When the American girl dreams of her wedding, she probably sees herself wafting down a church aisle on her father’s arm, radiant in a long white dress.

You as a guest are occupying a pew in the church. When the professional music begins and the first members of the wedding party are visible, the congregation rises to its feet. Ushers, bridesmaids, and flower girls lead the procession, and the bride and her father bring up the rear. The groom, best man, and minister slip in quietly to their positions in front.

The minister begins, "Dearly beloved, we are gathered here together to join this man and woman in matrimony..." After his opening, the groom steps in to the father's place. (Modern variations remove the implication that the bride is a piece of livestock being given from the father to the husband.) Rings are exchanged--to be worn on the fourth finger of the left hand--and the ritual questions asked, "Do you take this man to be your husband/wife, to have and to hold, to love and cherish, in sickness and in health, till death do you part?"

By this time many in the audience are becoming weepy and getting out their handkerchiefs. The minister concludes with, "I now pronounce you husband and wife," the organist breaks into Mendelssohn's Wedding March, and the happy couple sweeps joyfully back down the aisle, with the wedding party trailing afterwards.

The congregation departs, falling into the arms of long-lost relatives on the way out, and all go off to the reception.

Presents: An old-fashioned custom is to display wedding presents received before the wedding at the reception, but most people do not consider showing off "the loot" entirely tasteful. You may bring your present to the wedding (it won't be opened until later), but most couples would prefer you mailed it to their home address.

Theoretically, one is allotted a year after the wedding in which to send a present, although most people don't wait that long. Cash is not quite as frequently given here as in some countries, although it is often most welcome. If you are uncertain, you might inquire from relatives as to the couple's wishes. Should the couple already have a house groaning with toasters and china, it may be there is nothing they would like better than money.

But cash (make it a cheque) should not be your first thought. The traditional wedding present is a handsome household item--anything from a good frying pan to a candelabra. Some brides register their desires at a prominent local store. Having found out where the bride is registered, you then need only appear there and pick out whatever is in your price range. Shopping at prominent stores in general has the advantage that the couple may easily return your present if they don't like it or if it's a duplicate.

Price should be affected by the lavishness of the wedding reception--but often you can't help but feel that you should at least cover the cost of your dinner. The real determinants of price should be your fondness and goodwill towards the couple, their needs, and how much you have to spend. A well-chosen gift of low cost will arouse delight among decent people. And if your own resources are small, the couple should feel badly should you spend more than you can afford.

If you are invited to a wedding and cannot attend, you are not obligated to send a present--although you may wish to. (You must, however, mail your regrets as soon

as possible.) Likewise, if you receive an announcement after the fact of the wedding, a gift is entirely optional.

Quite promptly after sending your present, you should receive a thank-you note, giving specific and personal reasons as to why the couple was so delighted with your present. To not acknowledge a wedding present is unforgivable.

(Wanning, 1999)

Task Sheet B-1
Graphic Organizer-Introduction

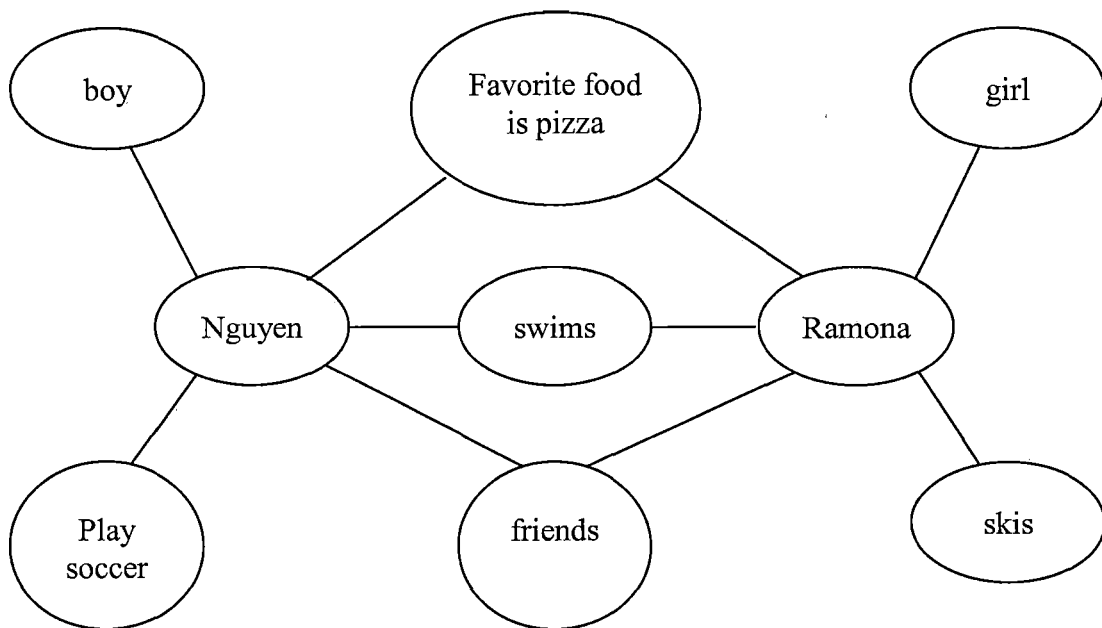
Name: Double Cell Diagram

Description: Two items linked by characteristics or attributes.

Uses: Describe and compare attributes and characteristics of two items, things, people, places, events or ideas.

Critical Questions:

- What items do you want to compare?
- What characteristics do the items have in common? What are not in common?
- How are the items similar and different



(<http://www.graphic.org>, 2001)

Assessment Sheet B-1

Create Your Own Graphic Organizer

Directions:

Please work with your group members and compare similarities and differences between special occasions in the United States and in Taiwan. After the comparison, make your own graphic organizer and explain to the class.

Note: Similarities: 40%, Differences: 40% Graphic organizer: 20%

Similarities: at least two each one 20% Differences: at least four, each one 10%

Graphic organizer: use at least one graphic, 20%

90	Excellent
80	Good
70	Needs improvement
60	Study harder

Self-Evaluation Sheet B-1

Name:					
Score:					
I learned about the knowledge of special occasions in Taiwan and USA.	1	2	3	4	5
I know how to use a graphic organizer	1	2	3	4	5
I made myself understood during the discussion	1	2	3	4	5
I know how to compare two different things	1	2	3	4	5
I learned a lot and enjoyed the class	1	2	3	4	5

- 5: excellent
- 4: good
- 3: acceptable
- 2: needs improvement
- 1: pay more attention in class

How can I learn more in class?

Do I get any different ideas from group members?

What do I learn to apply in the future?

Unit Two: Lesson One

Crosscultural Differences in Gift-giving

Content: Introduction to Gift-giving in Taiwanese and the USA Cultures

Objectives:

1. To apply critical reading to compare crosscultural differences in gift-giving between the cultures of Taiwan and the USA.

Materials:

Focus Sheet C-1
Focus Sheet C-2
Task Sheet C-1
Assessment Sheet C-1
Self-Evaluation Sheet C-1

Task Chain: *Critical Thinking*

1. The instructor distributes Focus Sheets C-1 and C-2 and asks students to read the articles.
2. The instructor distributes Task Sheet C-1 and lets students solve questions in Part One-Decision Making.
3. Divided groups of three to discuss the topics and contents they got from the texts.
4. The instructor splits students into two different groups with “pro” and “con” ideas about crosscultural differences in gifts-giving between Taiwanese and USA cultures. The students role-play and take turns debating the issues.

Assessment:

1. The instructor evaluates students’ final thought on the articles in the Assessment Sheet C-1.
2. Students self-evaluate their own learning process and achievement on Self-Evaluation Sheet C-1.

Focus Sheet C-1
Gift-giving in Taiwan

Gift-Giving

The way of giving and receiving gifts is an important part of both face and *ren ching wei* (enthusiasm), and it should be taken seriously. Different occasions call for different gifts to be given. However, the following should never be given:

1. Knives or scissors. Sharp objects are not auspicious in Chinese culture. Giving any gift which is sharp or used for cutting suggests you want to cut off your relationship with the receiver.
2. Clocks and watches. They are inauspicious; to 'send a clock' is synonymous with deliverance to one's final end. (However, one of Chris' business associates once gave him a beautiful cuckoo clock, so this custom may be dying out. On the other hand, he could have received the clock from a foreign friend and wanted to be rid of it, hence returning it to another foreigner.)
3. Handkerchiefs. These are associated with crying and funerals.
4. Towels. These are a common gift to funeral attenders, so they have a bad association.

Gifts should be wrapped. The paper should be appropriate to the occasion. Red or gold are auspicious colors, but never just white, unless you are going to a funeral and giving towels away.

The ritual of presentation and receipt is important. The gift should be held in two hands, palms up if possible, and formally presented to the receiver. She or he should in turn use two hands to accept the gift, taking the time to look at and admire the beautiful wrapping, commenting on it all the time to the giver and the bystanders.

The person receiving the gift will usually not open it when it is presented. Urging them to do so will cause embarrassment. This is to preserve the face of all parties; if they are disappointed with the gift and it shows, you lose face; if the gift is better than those presented by other guests, the others lose face.

Though not opening the gift, they will chime with a chorus of "you shouldn't have." This does not mean you shouldn't have. You should have! Giving a gift gives both of you face. The more generous the gift, the more face for you and the receiver. Do not skimp. An inappropriately cheap gift will label you as either a "foreign devil" who does not know better, or even worse a "niggardly devil" (*syau chi gwei*).

The Taiwanese are very practical people and gifts for rites of passage are frequently not purchased items, but cash. Except at funerals, money is always presented in even denominations in the ubiquitous *hung bau*, the auspicious red envelopes which often have gold characters on them. If a purchased gift is called for, then name brand or designer items are preferred because of the face they confer. Below we have listed some events that might call for gift-giving, along with the type and possible value of the gift to be presented.

Occasion	Gift
House Visit	Gift worth around NT\$500-1,000
Graduation	<i>Hung bau</i> of NT\$1,000, or engraved pen
Engagement	Cakes
Wedding	<i>Hung bau</i> , usually NT\$1,000-2,000 from each person attending the banquet
New house/business	Paintings of propitious scene (rice fields, fish, oranges, the god of wealth)
Death	Wreath, canned goods display, or white envelope of at least NT\$1,001

(Bates & Wu, 1995)

Focus Sheet C-2
Gift-giving in the USA

Giving

Except for a few special occasions, Americans are not big gift-givers. Although a salesman may pass out free samples, there is no ritual exchange of presents among executives. In fact, if one American businessman were to give another a nicely wrapped present that had no bearing on the company's business, the recipient would consider the gift quite inexplicable, unless the object were valuable. Then the move could look like an embarrassing attempt at bribery. Even an inexpensive present could be taken as a slightly crass attempt to win somebody's consideration.

Americans have learned something of the role that gift-giving plays in certain other cultures, and when an American businessman goes to Tokyo, he goes equipped. But among ourselves, we don't see that we need presents. Presents cement the blossoming friendship among business partners. But as we do not need friendship to do business, we do not need presents either. We have contracts instead.

Even friends may never exchange presents. When I go abroad, I try to bring back little mementoes for close friends, but nobody would feel slighted if I didn't. I may occasionally buy a copy of a book for a friend, but I rarely remember a friend's birthday, and few people outside of family remember mine. If someone gave me presents too often I would think it tiresome, and I would feel the burden of having to reciprocate. Besides, like most Americans, I have plenty of stuff already.

However, a gift from a foreigner--suitably typical of his or her homeland--has greater dimension than anything my fellow Americans could give me and will not go wrong, except to government employees who are prohibited from accepting gifts. Otherwise, do not hesitate to give small tokens to personal or business friends if you want to. But do not be insulted if you get nothing in exchange.

Receiving

One usually opens a present immediately and in front of the donor. (Exceptions: Christmas and birthday presents may be saved for the day, and wedding presents, as mentioned, are not opened at the wedding.) The best reaction is outright pleasure and delight at receiving something so lovely/ indispensable/ thoughtful. Show as much enthusiasm as possible and return to the subject periodically thereafter.

The donor will be particularly pleased if you emphasize that the gift shows his or her unusual sensitivity to you and your tastes. ("How did you know that my old sugar bowl broke and that I collect Scottish china?" "Peonies are my favorite flowers!") It is not necessary to go on much about how the donor should not have gone to all the trouble, etc. Too much of that and we begin to think maybe indeed we should not have and become embarrassed that we did.

The Guest

You may want to bring a bottle of wine or flowers to a dinner party, but the practice varies in different social sets and you are never expected to. In more formal houses, the flowers may already be magnificently arranged, and your hosts do not at the moment of your arrival wish to go poking around looking for the right vase. Nobody will mind if you bring a nice wine, but your host is not obliged to serve it that evening. The grander the house, the less appropriate a present is. After all, you wouldn't show up at the White House with a bottle of wine under your arm.

Christmas

Christmas accounts for most of the necessary gift-giving in this country. Children in many different families receive presents only at Christmas and on their birthdays--but then frequently in great quantity. Some people give all their relatives presents; others only give to their immediate family. Children are expected to give as well as to get presents.

Some friends exchange presents at Christmas and some don't. Some instead give presents to the small children of friends. I usually keep a few spare presents on hand around Christmas of the generic type--candles, fruitcake--wrapped under the Christmas tree so that if people unexpectedly produce presents for me, I have something for them.

Christmas is the time to settle the score with anyone who has been helpful throughout the year. There are certain required cash outlays--to doormen, babysitters, house cleaners, newspaper deliver--for anyone who has served you regularly. You might want to give a little something (not money!) to your children's teachers or to those among them who have especially extended themselves.

There is a considerable flow of liquor bottles during the holiday season. In business, Christmas presents are often a one-way street--the buyer gets the present. If a company has been favoring you with their business, you give. They don't need to give you anything; it's enough that they pay their bills.

Within the company, bosses may hand around gifts to their subordinates--or they may not. Many companies give a small Christmas bonus to all personnel. A hard-working secretary is often rewarded with something rather nice, and if the secretary is particularly fond of his or her boss, the boss may get a present too. It is unlikely that you need to provide presents for all your co-workers, though if you work in a small group, everyone may give each other presents. Some departments have lotteries; a hat goes around with everyone's name in it, and you bring a small present to the Christmas party for the person whose name you drew.

(Wanning, 1999)

Task Sheet C-1
Task Chain: Critical Thinking

1. Decision making

Choose a side of pro and con towards gift-giving in Taiwan and the USA. Please categorize the advantages and disadvantages of gifts in Taiwan and the USA.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Gift-giving in Taiwan	Gift-giving in Taiwan
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Gift-giving in the USA	Gift-giving in the USA
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

2. Role Play

1. Work in your group and discuss the advantages or disadvantages in gift-giving in Taiwan and the USA. Be prepared for a debate with other groups.
2. Prepare the advantages and disadvantages that the members have discussed with your group for the debate by pooling.

Assessment Sheet C-1

1. Writing (100%)

Do you prefer gift-giving in Taiwan or the USA? Why? Write some reasons illustrating your opinion. It should contain at least five reasons that support your position. (Each reason is 20 points, total 100 points)

90	Excellent
80	Good
70	Needs improvement
60	Study harder

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Self-Evaluation Sheet C-1

Name:					
Score:					
I learned about gift-giving in Taiwan and USA.	1	2	3	4	5
I learned how to express my opinions well.	1	2	3	4	5
I made myself understood during the discussion	1	2	3	4	5
I learned how to find advantages and disadvantages of a disputed topic	1	2	3	4	5
I learned a lot and enjoyed the class	1	2	3	4	5

5: excellent

4: good

3: acceptable

2: needs improvement

1: pay more attention in class

How can I learn more in class?

What do I learn from the process of debate?

What do I learn to apply in the future?

Unit Two: Lesson Two

Crosscultural Differences in Dining Out

Content: Introduction to Dining Out in Taiwan and the USA Cultures

Objectives:

1. To apply critical reading to compare crosscultural differences in dining out between the cultures of Taiwan and the USA.

Materials:

Focus Sheet D-1
Focus Sheet D-2
Task Sheet D-1
Assessment Sheet D-1
Self-evaluation Form D-1

Task Chain: *Critical Thinking*

1. The instructor distributes Focus Sheets D-1 and D-2 and asks students to read the articles.
2. The instructor distributes Task Sheet D-1 and lets students solve questions in Part One-Decision Making.
3. Students divided into groups of three to discuss the topic and content they got from the context.
4. Then the instructor splits students into two different groups with “pro” and “con” ideas about crosscultural differences in dining out between Taiwanese and USA cultures. The students role-play and take turns debating the issues.

Assessment:

1. The instructor evaluates students’ final thought on the articles in the Assessment Sheet D-1.
2. Students self-evaluate their own learning process and achievement on Self-Evaluation Sheet D-1.

Focus Sheet D-1
Dining Out in Taiwan

The Invitation

Invitations from Taiwanese are normally warm, sincere, and spur-of-the-moment. Do not expect a week's notice for an informal dinner. You might be on the phone with a Taiwanese friend at 3:00 p.m. and be asked out to dinner that night. Let's say you are free and want to go. Return the warmth and sincerity of the invitation in your words and voice. For example, "That sounds great. I have never been to that restaurant before. Thank you." Make sure you get the time and place properly noted. If there is any question, ask to be met at a more obvious popular landmark.

If you are not free, do not just say, "No, thank you". This does not show *ren ching wei* (affection). You should preferably have a reason for not going that is bigger than face of the person asking. That way, he or she does not lose face. This is especially important if the invitation is given in person in front of a group. For example, you are invited to dinner with a business associate, but have another business dinner planned. If you just say, "I am sorry, but I have a dinner planned with Mr. Y of Company Z," it may chill relations. You may not know the inviter's relation or relative status to Mr. Y. What are you saying indirectly, "He is more important than you." Better to say something like, "I wish I could come, but I have bought tickets for my daughter's play/have to be at the school to give a test to students/have to wait at the hotel for a long conference call with my boss."

Since many invitations are spur-of-the-moment, it is not appropriate to add, "But I have left Monday night open and planned to invite you and your staff to dinner." Your invitation will probably be turned down, but it leaves the door open.

Note that, because of the sincere persistence required of *ren ching wei*, some excuses will not do. For instance, you are invited to play a round of golf, a game you have admitted to having played before. If you refuse, using the excuse that you don't have your shoes, they will say, "We can rent shoes at the clubhouse." To say you do not want to wear rented shoes is too stuffy. If you say "no" because you do not have a handicap yet, they will say, "No matter, we can fix it up with the club to let you play." You really must think of a good reason not to take up the invitation.

Invitations to weddings, *man ywe* (baby born for one month), *man swei* (baby born for one year), and company New Year's banquets will be issued in writing or in advance. A wedding banquet (*syi jyau*) invitation is normally red with gold lettering. Invitations to company banquets, on the other hand, will usually be relayed by word of mouth.

The Casual Meal

A typical casual business lunch in any Chinese restaurant is a step above the cafeterias. Ordering is usually done off the menu. If you are with Taiwanese, avoid the temptation to order for the group. Unless you have been in Taiwan for a long time and know the specialties of the restaurant's regional cuisine, then you should ask your Taiwanese friends to order, even if (perhaps *especially* if) you are the host. Out of courtesy, they may ask you to order. Politely insist that *they* order. Do not even pursue the menu; this implies you want to have some say. Turn it over to the "big shot" at the table.

Why? Invariably they will know the house specialty (*jau pai tsai*). They also know the quantities and proper mix to order. Letting them select gives them face, it says you trust them, and, if you are the host, it lets them order things they will enjoy. It also saves you the embarrassing problem of having ordered too little or too many "cheap" fishes. So far, our Taiwanese friends have not abused this trust by ordering only the most expensive things and, moreover, it reaps more *ren ching wei* points.

When you insist they order, you should advise them that you do not like, for instance, sweet and sour pork or cream of *sun yung gai* (yes, it's a joke alright!) because otherwise they may order according to what they *think* a foreigner's taste is. But you should ask them specially not to order a certain dish, only if you really can't handle it (that means you are allergic to it!). Who knows, maybe this restaurant has a tastier way of preparing *hai je* (sea cucumber)? It is completely appropriate to ask what they have ordered and to review the dishes one by one as they come. Individual dishes frequently have stories behind them and this can become one of the most interesting things about the repast. It also lets you prepare for what kind of food will be set before you.

How do Taiwanese order foods? They will normally order one dish per person, plus a soup and rice or noodles. If the meal is for four people, they might order, for example, one meat, one fish, two vegetable dishes, one soup, and plain white rice. Certain styles or types of dishes are not repeated. For instance, two sweet and sour dishes, or two shrimp dishes will not be ordered together. Unlike in the West, Taiwanese do not order for individual diners. This goes back to the practice of the family always eating together as a group. Unless you are eating lunch box-style, the dishes are almost invariably shared.

You will be expected to try everything. Respond enthusiastically to dishes which you like and give a reasoned explanation of why. Likewise, politely say that the things you do not like are not to your taste, but be sure you have tried some first. Anyway, they will know what you do enjoy by watching you, so it is best to be upfront.

Mind Your Manners

During the meal it is possible that the host or your neighbor will serve your plate. He or she will do this either with the serving spoon or “public-use” chopsticks (*gung yung kwaidz*), which should be returned to the dish they came from. Alternatively, they might deftly reverse their own chopsticks and use the back end. Thank them for their hospitality. Though it is not expected, you may return the gesture with another dish later, but make sure you use the public-use chopsticks and return them to the platter afterward. If you aren’t so deft at using chopsticks, it is probably best to sit this one out, rather than risk dropping food over your host (it has happened!).

When serving yourself, you should again use the public-use chopsticks or serving spoon, if provided. If they are not provided, you may ask for public-use chopsticks to be brought to the table. Your friends will not think this queer and may possibly commend you on your knowledge of Taiwanese eating habits. If it is a very informal group of friends, and they are using their own chopsticks to serve themselves, then you may do so. However, do not dredge your chopsticks or spoon through the food looking for a choice morsel. Do not even reach across to the opposite side of the plate to get that nice-looking shrimp. It is considered selfish and greedy. Select a piece near to your side of the plate and go for it.

Chopsticks should not be used as drumsticks to bang or tap the table with; nor should you plant them in your serving of rice so that they stand up. This reminds Taiwanese of incense sticks in a censer, used when praying for the dead, so it is not a good sign at the table.

Depending on the class of company you keep, loud belching could be considered rude, acceptable, or naturally expected. Taiwanese are uninhibited at times and belches are frequently heard in mid-sentence: “Hey, Chris, did you--belch--go to Taichung yesterday?” No apology proffered or expected.

Toothpicks will either be on the table or brought to it at the end of the repast, sometimes stuck in pieces of fruit. The Chinese like picking their teeth, be it for hygiene or to get full value from the meal. However, do not open your yap and dig in; the Taiwanese do not want the left hand, while industriously mining away with the right.

The Fight for the Check

Even if you were the one to invite your Taiwanese friends or colleagues out to dinner, drinks, karaoke, and the rest of it, expect a fight for the check. This is not a fight because nobody wants to pay, but the fight of who has the *privilege* to pay. Frequently you will see perfectly happy diners suddenly erupt into a flurry of emotion and hand-waving. You wait for them to come to blows as the volume increases. Don’t

be alarmed. This is merely proper gamesmanship. If it was clearly your invitation to them, make sure you win. Do not let them pull the tab out of your hands and just say, "Okay, thanks." If they have invited you, make a show of trying to get the tab, but eventually yield it to the host, otherwise he loses face.

Sometimes the fight for the check begins at the time of the invitation. The scenario may go something like this. You invite several friends out to dinner. They have already treated you before. One of them insists that he invite you. The frequent ruse given is, "This is my country. When I come to visit your country, you can invite me out." The best reply to this is to jovially (never brusquely) insist that: a) they treated you last time; b) you have been in Taiwan for a while and this is now your second home; and c) without question, you expect them to visit when they come to your country and let you treat them, so this is just your pleasure to take them out now.

One strategy to ensure that you win the fight for the check (if it is known to be your treat) is to discreetly leave your credit card with the cashier before or during the dinner. The same blizzard of grabbing hands will fly when the bill comes, but they will realize at a glance that it is too late, and have to commend you on your artifice. Express your gratitude that they accompanied you for the meal.

(Bates & Wu, 1995)

Focus Sheet D-2
Dining Out in the USA

Fast Food

Fast food establishments, such as McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's, KFC, Pizza Hut, and Taco Bell purvey their specialties from coast to coast (and around the globe). Few urban areas are so small as not to be ringed with a few of them.

Each item, which you step up to a counter to order, is mass-produced according to an exact prescription. The menu, often illustrated, is permanently displayed above the counter. No alcohol is served. Your food comes with an almost equal weight of plastic and paper serving containers and cutlery, which you are expected to throw into the trash when you're finished. You should specify if you want your order to take out.

Fast food restaurants appeal greatly to juvenile tastes. The notorious plastic taste of much of the food offends gourmets, but these places do have the advantage of being clean and extremely cheap. No tipping is expected.

Coffee Shops

"Coffee shop" may be in the name, and it may not. A coffee shop is easily identifiable, however, by its seating arrangements (a counter, booths, and possibly some tables) and bright lighting. You needn't wait to be seated. In the classic coffee shop, waitresses call you "Honey," and cases of pies are lined up behind the counter.

Sandwiches are the mainstay of the menu, although a short-order cook stands over the grill and turns out eggs, pancakes, burgers, and fries. Occasionally a coffee shop will have a dinner menu, but most aren't even open for dinner. The breakfasts are usually an excellent bargain. (Americans like going out to breakfast, especially on weekends.)

A waitress will often offer coffee soon as you sit down. In the hospitable Western part of the country, she will refill your coffee cup as fast as you can empty it. On the East Coast (where "regular" means with cream), you will have to pay for your second and third cups of coffee shop coffee is not highly rated. (There are more and more cafes serving espresso opening up, but these usually feature expensive pastries and delicacies rather than hearty food.)

You may be able to order beer or wine in a coffee shop, but rarely hard liquor. Often you pay a cashier on the way out. You should leave a tip of about 15% on the table because it won't be included on the bill.

Diners

Diners are the rural version of the coffee shop. They do their best to look like railroad passenger cars, and you should not shun one merely because it looks a little rundown on the outside. The food may be excellent, unlike the fast-food franchise that always looks newly minted. Legend has it that you tell a good dinner by the number of big trucks parked in front of it--truck drivers are supposed to know where they'll get their money's worth, although it may be instead that their choice is based on the size of the parking lot. Still, a truck stop may be colorful and probably will be cheap.

Family Restaurants

This is an amorphous category, so-called because you can bring the kiddies; usually meaning the place is fairly casual. The bar, if any, is out of sight; a high chair is available for the baby, and the food is of the familiar American kind--chops, steaks, fried fish, salads, and potatoes. (The "family," however, does not include your dog, which is barred from all restaurants by sanitary codes.) Many family restaurants are Italian, and pizza and spaghetti now seems as American as apple pie.

On entering, you should wait to be seated. No matter how crowded the restaurant is, you won't be asked to share a table with another party, even if you're alone. If you spy a table you prefer to the one you're led to, feel free to speak up.

You'll probably get a basket of bread and a glass of water without asking. Menus are frequently large and elaborate, describing the food in superlatives ("cooked-to-perfection chicken breasts in mouthwatering cream sauce with garden-fresh vegetables"), but you should ignore the adjectives and try to figure out what the dish is.

You may have a choice of ordering a dinner. If you order a la carte, you will be paying separately for the various components of your meal, such as the salad and dessert. The dinner, which costs more, includes the extra courses. Read the small print to find out what comes with what.

At this level of dining you may run into one of the new chummy waiters. Such a one will appear at your table and say, "Hello. How are you tonight? My name is Steve. I'm going to be your waiter. I'd like to tell you about our specials." (If he doesn't tell you the price of the specials, be sure to ask.) You are not expected to introduce yourselves to him. After his speech is over, he will behave much more like a real waiter disappearing when you want him most--than a friend. When you want to call him, you do not hiss or snap your fingers in some countries. You must try and catch his eye.

Your soup or salad will be served before the main course. Presumably this is to keep you happy while you're waiting. The drawback is that after bread and salad, one

is often too full to eat the rest of the meal. As large servings are a feature of family-style restaurants, you may want to ask for a “doggie bag” to take your leftovers home in. The waiter will whisk your plate away and bring back your dinner wrapped up for your next day’s lunch.

Family restaurants have a pleasant lack of presentation and reasonable prices, but do not attract gourmet eaters. A 15% tip is sufficient, as in most restaurants.

The Ethnic Restaurants

In the large cities, you have your choice, from Afghani to Zimbabwean, with prices big and little. The Asian selection has particularly exploded in recent years, and in many of these a little money goes a long way. In the Southwest and California, there are also many wonderful Mexican and other south-of-the-border restaurants. In Middle America, Chinese may be your only choice when the urge for something foreign comes over you.

Regional Restaurants

Keep your eye for regional specialties when you’re traveling around the country. In the South you can hope to find hominy grits, black-eyed peas, mustard greens, Southern fried chicken, sweet potato pie, okra soup, and numerous other specialties. (The South has some wonderful cafeterias you might want to try; most cafeterias in the North are of low quality.)

New England is known for corn, clam, and fish chowder. New England Boiled Dinner (corned beef and boiled vegetables), Boston baked beans, and blueberry pie. In Louisiana, Creole specialties are blackened fish, shrimp gumbo, and Creole pralines. The West goes in for barbecued meats of any kind, corn-on-the-cob, baked trout, and bean soup. However, don’t expect to automatically find New England specialties in New England restaurants, Western specialties in the West, etc. You will probably have to search them out.

Bar Restaurants

Some of the better food is found in places where much drinking done. It won’t be fancy, but simple steaks and large sandwiches are often excellent and not overpriced. You do want to take the noise factor into consideration.

Trendy Restaurants

In many of these places, the chef dreams up original dishes, sometimes in the name of good health. “California Cuisine” made a splash by putting unexpected ingredients together and cooking them with very little fat or cream. Trendy restaurants are the ones talked about, and “foodies” hasten to every new one. Certain regional cuisines periodically become trendy and fill up with fashionably dressed young people.

A surprising turn has made down--home comfort foods--meatloaf, stuffed cabbage, mashed potatoes, brownies with whipped cream--very modish. Thai and Cambodian restaurants remain popular. Very trendy restaurants may play alarmingly loud and awful music by way of suggesting that they are fun places.

(Wanning, 1999)

Task Sheet D-1
Task Chain: Critical Thinking

1. Decision making

Choose a side of “pro” and “con” towards gifts in Taiwan and USA. Please categorize the advantages and disadvantages of dining out in Taiwan and USA.

Advantages of dining out in Taiwan	Disadvantages of dining out in Taiwan
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

Advantages of dining out in USA	Disadvantages of dining out in USA
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

2. Role Play

1. Work in your group and discuss the advantages or disadvantages at dining out in Taiwan and USA. Be prepared for a debate with other groups.
2. Discuss with your group for the debate.

Assessment Sheet D-1

1. Writing (100%)

Do you prefer dining out in Taiwan or USA? Why? Please write some reasons illustrating your opinion. It should contain at least five reasons that support your position. (Each reason is 20 points, total 100 points)

90	Excellent
80	Good
70	Needs improvement
60	Study harder

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Self-Evaluation Sheet D-1

Name:					
Score:					
I learned about dining out in Taiwan and the USA.	1	2	3	4	5
I learned how to express my opinions well.	1	2	3	4	5
I made myself understood during the discussion.	1	2	3	4	5
I learned how to find advantages and disadvantages of a disputed topic	1	2	3	4	5
I learned a lot and enjoyed the class	1	2	3	4	5

5: excellent

4: good

3: acceptable

2: needs improvement

1: pay more attention in class

How can I learn more in class?

What do I learn from the process of debate?

What do I learn to apply in the future?

Unit Three: Lesson One

Crosscultural Differences in Visiting Homes

Content: Characteristics of the Cultures of the USA and Taiwan in Visiting Homes

Objectives:

1. To help students to construct their main ideas.
2. To understand the characteristics of the cultures of the USA and Taiwan cultures in visiting homes.
3. To help students to compare crosscultural differences in visiting homes between the USA and Taiwan by applying constructivist learning strategies.

Material:

Focus Sheet E-1
Focus Sheet E-2
Task Sheet E-1
Task Sheet E-2
Assessment Sheet E-1
Self-Evaluation Sheet E-1

Task Chain 1: *Helping students to construct their main ideas.*

1. The teacher divides students into groups of three.
2. The teacher asks each group to choose a topic about their daily life.
3. Then the teacher distributes Task Sheet E-1 and asks them to write down their ideas.

Task Chain 2: *Understanding the characteristics of the USA and Taiwan cultures in visiting homes.*

1. After the discussion, the teacher distributes Focus Sheets E-1 and E-2 and asks students to work in groups to differentiate the characteristics of the cultures in the United States and Taiwan.

Task Chain 3: *Helping students to compare crosscultural differences in the home visit between USA and Taiwan by applying constructivist learning strategies.*

1. The teacher distributes Task Sheet E-2 to students for teaching students to construct their main ideas of crosscultural differences in visiting homes in Taiwan and the USA.

Assessment:

1. The teacher distributes Assessment Sheet E-1 to students and asks students to work in groups to design a graphic organizer based on the similarities and differences.
2. The teacher distributes Self-Assessment Sheet E-1 to students and encourages them to answer freely.

Focus Sheet E-1
Visiting Homes in Taiwan

Unlike in Japan, it is very possible that you might be invited to visit the home of a Taiwanese friend. This will be a nice opportunity to get to know this person's family better and learn more about the daily life of Taiwanese. They will certainly be lowering the curtain for you, revealing more of their inner lives to a foreigner, so it is important that you make them feel comfortable about what has been revealed.

If you were invited over for a dinner, it would be appropriate to bring a flower arrangement, or a bottle of whiskey or wine. Present this to the person who invited you.

Remember that in most Taiwanese homes, the wearing of street shoes is not permitted. Always make the motion to take your shoes off. Only if the host insists that you can wear them inside should you do so. If asked to remove your shoes, you may be given slippers to wear.

You will probably be led into the living room (*keting*) to meet everyone. Acknowledge the oldest person first. Greet them and get introduced, then do the same to the other people present. Expect a fuss to be made over you. Do you want a drink? Do you want a snack? Was it hard to find this place? Are you hungry? Are you thirsty? Do you want a cigarette? Here's some tea for you. Here are some snacks for you. Please sit. Don't stand up on my account.

You will hear the phrase *bu ke chi* (don't assume a guest's airs) repeated again and again. In other words, make yourself at home. Relax, but remain courteous. Accept this attention with good-natured gratitude, as if you are unworthy.

If there are children, they may come over to have a closer look at you. Talk to them in Mandarin or English. It is bound to provide a reaction that will lead to some laughter. Taiwanese love children and if they see you relaxing with them, it breaks the ice. Unless you are very close to this family, though it is better not to hug or have the children sit on your lap. Anyone whom you have not met before is bound to ask a lot of questions (as discussed earlier in this chapter), so be prepared.

A Note on Bathrooms

During your visit you may need to use the toilet. There are several things to note. Many apartments in Taiwan have only one full bath. If that is the case, you may find a whole family's toiletries in there. Because of the location of drains and hot water, you might also find the washing machine. The floor will frequently be wet. Take all this in your stride. Because you enter the bathroom, you may be asked to put on different set of slippers. There are plastic bathroom slippers. They keep your feet

dry and prevent you from slipping on the wet floor or getting your other slippers wet. Do not wear your house slippers in the bathroom or vice versa.

There are two varieties of toilet in Taiwan. Most apartment are now equipped with the Western-style “sit down” toilet. Especially when outside the home, though, you may find a Japanese-style “squat” toilet instead. These take some getting used to. Squatting is, however, the most natural and “ergonomic” position for bowel movement. Without going into indelicate detail, suffice to say that you face the drain-cowling of the toilet, place your feet on either side of the chasm, and squat. Make sure your cuffs are not in the way and have your toilet paper ready.

Most toilet paper for home use in Taiwanese is not on rolls. It comes in plastic bales pre-cut into approximately 10 by 10-inch single-ply sheets. These are normally kept in a vinyl box on the cistern lid. Return unused paper to the box.

If you are staying for an overnight visit, you may want to take a bath. Taiwanese homes do not have central water heaters. They utilize wall-mounted gas or electric spot heaters that heat water only when turned on and activated by water flow. If you have any questions, ask your host.

Also note that many Taiwanese homes do not have a bathtub. They have showers with no specific cubicle, the water going down a drain in the floor. They do not usually take long system showers. Traditionally, the Taiwanese would fill a large plastic pan with water and use a dipper to ladle water onto themselves, soap up, and then rinse off with the remaining water. In today’s world of decreasing resources, this is probably the most environmentally-friendly way to bathe. By looking at the facilities available, you will be able to figure out what the appropriate bathroom etiquette is. For instance, if you have left soapsuds or hair on the floor, rinse it to drain them away. Do not worry about getting the floor wet.

We advise you to bring your own towel if you go to a Taiwanese house for the night. Taiwanese will normally only keep one small towel per family member and this is usually the size of a kitchen towel. It is quite thin and is used for both washing and drying, being wrung out in between. You will not find a closet full of thick fluffy white cotton towels here.

Coming and Going

Lastly, if you are staying as a long-term visitor with a Taiwanese family, keep the following in mind. They know you are a stranger in a strange land. Hope for your own sake that they feel some responsibility for you. Normally they will, so you should not unduly worry them by disappearing for a night, or leaving for the afternoon without letting them know where you are going and when to expect you back.

(Bates & Wu, 1995)

Focus Sheet E-2
Visiting Homes in USA

The Guests

Visitors from afar may be surprised at how homogeneous the guests are at even a large gathering--no old mothers or dotty uncles or children. People tend to socialize with their own age groups. Children have children's parties; old people have old people's parties. If you find otherwise, you have probably happened in on a family party, or have arrived in rural circles.

This homogeneity of age, however, does not necessarily assist the conversational flow. Because Americans move around and change jobs so much, many of them do not belong to any particular social circle, and their various friends often do not know each other. In fact, the hosts themselves sometimes barely know their guests. They round up their disparate acquaintances in the optimistic hope that some party magic will take over and make the fun.

Too often, conversation falls flat or becomes hard work. We have all at one time or another found ourselves in a room full of strangers looking desperately for a friendly face to talk to. Few hosts find time to do a proper job of introducing people to each other. Under such circumstances, don't hesitate to bluntly introduce yourself. "Hello, I'm Lakshmi Karna," followed by "How do you know the hosts?" are accepted opening lines from which further conversation can usually be developed.

Other parties consist entirely of the troops from the office. On these occasions an air of discomfort can also fall, resulting from the general sense that it's inappropriate to discuss the weather and such with people one sees every day. In the end, business usually wins out, and then everybody relaxes.

Although such office parties take place, it is not considered necessary to entertain work colleagues. People who are inseparable in the office may have never been to each other's homes. An Indian confided, "When I first came here. I was terribly offended that the people I met at work didn't invite me home. Later, I was glad because I wanted to have time to myself too." For better or worse, our busy lives tend to be compartmentalized.

Once you've accepted an invitation to a party, you must attend. If something happens to prevent you, telephone with your excuses as soon as possible. People work hard to give a party; you must remember that it's nearly always your hosts, not the servants, who have spent the day cooking and cleaning, and they could be very upset if you don't show up. Furthermore, other guests may have been invited specifically to meet you.

The Dinner Party

The invitation will probably come by telephone. You needn't say yes or no on the spot ("I'll have to check with my husband and make sure we're free" is standard), but you should provide an answer as soon as possible. If you are married, you can assume that your spouse is invited; unless specified, your children are not. If you are living with a "significant other," that person is usually invited, but it's up to you to make sure that your host knows that the person exists. What you should not do is show up with an unexpected guest--no matter how informal the occasion.

The dress code for a dinner party can be unpredictable, and it's not only foreigners who are puzzled by it. The problem is that there are very few conventions remaining.

People who wear a white shirt and tie to work every day may greet you at the door in jeans. However, if the party includes business associates, a suit is more apt to be in order. Among good friends there's less dressing up, and at a middle class get-together, you are likely to find gentleman without ties but wearing good looking sweaters and slacks. A lot of party dressing consists of looking as if you made an effort for your hosts' sake without forsaking the casual look altogether. Older people, however, may put on suits and dresses to go to their friends' houses.

Women often dress up much more than men--perhaps because there are few opportunities left to wear a pretty dress. At any rate, a woman can always wear dressy pants with a blouse and fit in anywhere. In America, a skirt is more elegant, and more formal, than pants. If you are suffering any doubts as to what to wear, simply ask your hosts ("Is it dressy?")

Protocol

You don't need to walk in the door on the dot of the time you were invited for, but you should arrive within 10 to 20 minutes afterwards. If you're much later, your hosts may grow anxious. American dinner food is usually ready at a particular time and gets overcooked or cold with waiting. At some houses, though, it doesn't matter when you arrive because a long cocktail hour will precede dinner. However, as one rarely knows which houses these are, if you are going to be more than half an hour late you should telephone and say so. Whatever you do, don't arrive early.

The old etiquette was to serve dinner 45 minutes after the time of the invitation, and this is still a good rule of thumb. It is customary to offer people a drink as soon as they arrive. "What'll you have to drink?" says the host. "What have you got?" is the usual answer. There is no need for the hosts to provide everything anyone might want. They may reasonably offer only wine, beer, and soft drinks. Some people put out elaborate hors d'oeuvres (appetizers), while others prefer that their guests save their appetites for dinner.

At Table

If the dinner is the least bit formal, guests will be ushered to a dining table to eat. They should hesitate before grabbing seats and ask the hostess where she would like them to sit. If she is a very vigilant hostess she will have calculated places in advance, probably putting men between women. There is also a fading custom that the place of honor for a man is on the hostess's right and that of a woman on the host's right. Your hosts may say, "Oh, sit anywhere," in which case you may be able to manipulate yourself into a seat next to someone you think you would like to talk to.

Don't start eating until everyone has been served. A few families say grace before meals, which is a thank you to God for the food (such as: "Lord, we ask you to bless this food to our use and ourselves to your service. Amen.") It is embarrassing to be caught with your spoon in your mouth when grace is being said and your head should be bowed. It is nice to repeat "Amen" at the end of the grace.

You may or may not have soup to start, followed by a main course (fish, meat, or perhaps pasta or a casserole) with vegetables. Salad may come before, with, or after the main course. A fattening dessert and coffee generally ends the meal.

Asians sometimes go away hungry from American tables because they consider it polite to refuse food when it is first offered. Here, if you say you do not want more, your hosts will believe you and probably will not urge you further. When hosts offer more food, they like their guests to immediately say, "Yes, please. It's delicious." They also like guests who eat everything on their plates. If you fail to, you should explain that good as the food is, you are too full to finish.

Dinner party conversation is often punctuated with exclamations about how delicious the food is. We do not take for granted that someone can cook and tend to rhapsodise whether they do it very well or not. The rest of the conversation may be wide-ranging. It's important to keep it going, and your efforts will be appreciated. Nothing is worse than a dinner at which the party eats in silence. Be sure to address your remarks equally to the men and women at the table. Women are as educated and well-read as men and resent not being considered equal conversationalists.

Departing

You should not leave immediately after dinner; doing so would suggest that you could hardly wait to leave. You may let a certain conversational period elapse, and then you should make excuses for going at all. You may, for instance, suddenly look at your watch and say, "Good heavens, look at the time. We really must leave." Or, "Whew, past my bedtime. Early game of golf tomorrow." You should do this before your hosts begin to yawn visibly and look threateningly at you. Staying too late is almost as bad as leaving too early. Your hosts still have the dishes to do. If you are not out by 11 p.m., they probably have cause for complaint, and many parties break up

earlier. Should your hosts' object vigorously when you start to leave and beg you to stay longer, do so--but only if you want to. Before departing, say good night to the other guests, expressing your pleasure at having seen or met them.

It is excellent manners to telephone the next day and offer further thanks for the fine time you had, but not everybody does. If you prefer, a note of thanks (even a postcard) is just as good as a phone call--or even better as it takes very little of your time and none of the host's.

Some people may enjoy your company enough to ask you repeatedly to dinner without a return move on your part, but usually you are expected to return the hospitality before being invited back again. This is a convenient custom because if you are not anxious to continue the relationship, you can simply fail to reciprocate. However, if you want to pay them back in some other way, you can send flowers, or invite your friends to a restaurant or to the theatre.

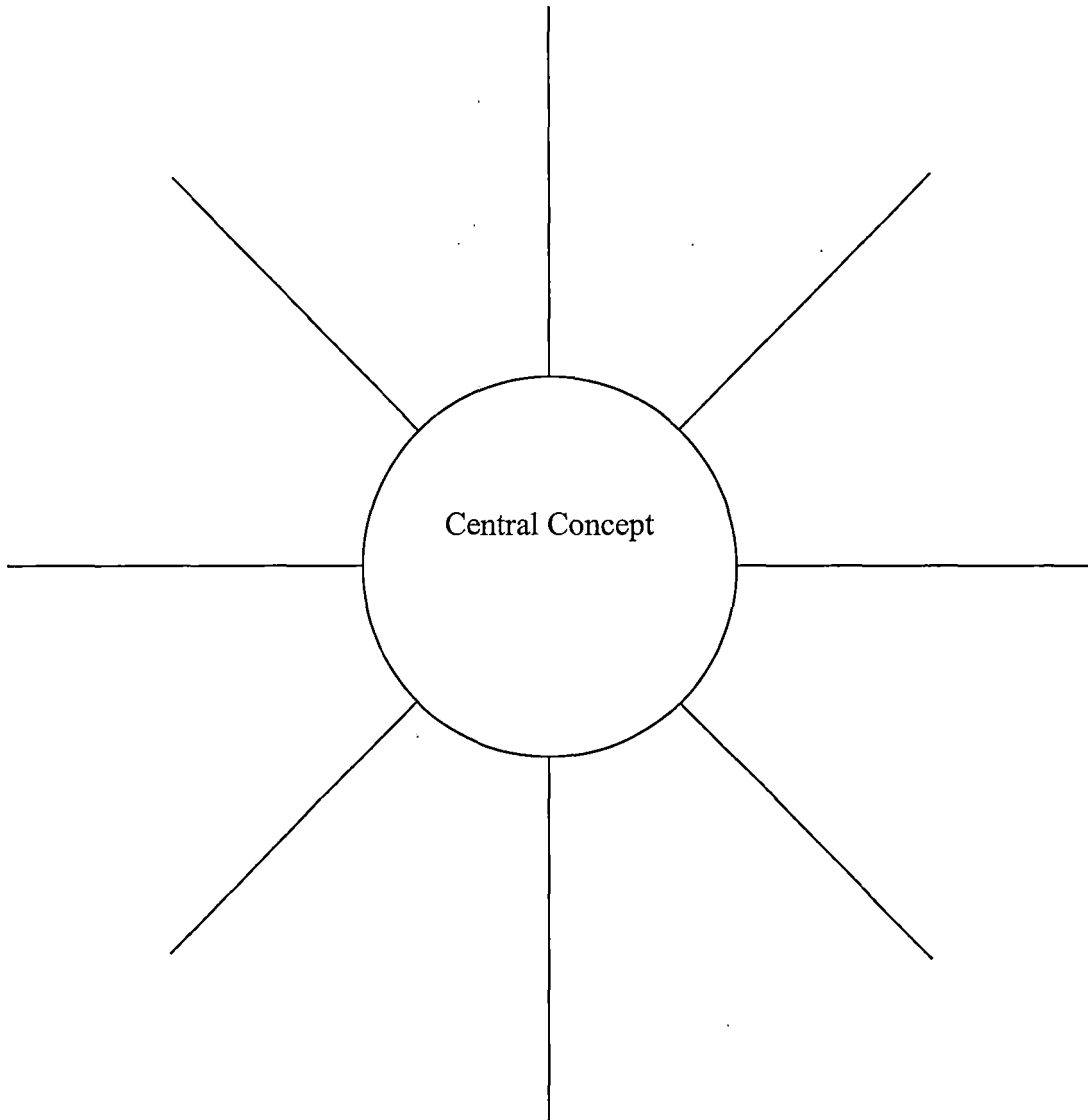
(Wanning, 1999)

Task Sheet E-1

Please choose a topic about your daily life, then discuss this topic with your partners.

Please write your ideas in Concept Map.

Your chosen topic:



Assessment Sheet E-1

1. Please work with your partners to compare the home visit between Taiwan and USA cultures using the T-Chart below.
2. Please write five similarities and five differences. (Each one is 10 points, total 100 points)

Same	Different

Self-Evaluation Sheet E-1

Name:					
Score:					
I learned about visiting homes in Taiwan and the USA.	1	2	3	4	5
I learned how to express my opinion well.	1	2	3	4	5
I made myself understood during the discussion.	1	2	3	4	5
I learned how to find advantages and disadvantages of a disputed topic.	1	2	3	4	5
I learned a lot and enjoyed the class.	1	2	3	4	5

5: excellent

4: good

3: acceptable

2: needs improvement

1: pay more attention in class

How can I learn more in class?

What do I learn from the process of constructing main ideas?

What do I learn to apply in the future?

Unit Three: Lesson Two

Crosscultural Differences in Business

Content: Characteristics of the Cultures of the USA and Taiwan in Business

Objectives:

1. To help students to construct their main ideas.
2. To understand the characteristics of the cultures of the USA and Taiwan in business.
3. To help students to compare crosscultural differences in business between USA and Taiwan by applying constructivist learning strategies.

Material:

Focus Sheet F-1
Focus Sheet F-2
Task Sheet F-1
Task Sheet F-2
Assessment Sheet F-1
Self-Evaluation Sheet F-1

Task Chain 1: *Helping students to construct their main ideas.*

1. The teacher divides students into groups of three.
2. The teacher asks each group to choose a topic about their daily life.
3. Then the teacher distributes Task Sheet F-1 and asks them to write down their ideas.

Task Chain 2: *Understanding the characteristics of USA and Taiwan cultures in business.*

1. After the discussion, the teacher distributes Focus Sheets F-1 and F-2 and asks students to work in groups to differentiate the characteristics of the cultures in the United States and Taiwan.

Task Chain 3: *Helping students to compare crosscultural differences in business between USA and Taiwan by applying constructivist learning strategies.*

1. The teacher distributes Task Sheet F-2 to students for teaching students to construct their main ideas of crosscultural differences in doing business in Taiwan and the USA.

Assessment:

1. The teacher distributes Assessment Sheet F-1 to students and asks students to work in groups to list similarities and differences in business of Taiwan and USA cultures.
2. The teacher distributes Self-Evaluation Sheet F-1 to students and encourages them to answer freely.

Focus Sheet F-1
Business in Taiwan

An Appointment With a Typical Taiwanese Company

As with all things in life, there is never an absolute “typical”. However, there are experiences and perceptions which, when repeated over and over again, give one a feel for the typical in aggregate. Taiwan’s economy has bred a vast sea of small and medium-sized enterprises which support each other, support foreign buyers, and support the larger Taiwanese companies.

These enterprises are normally started by one man (occasionally a woman, or husband-and-wife team) who has garnered some practical experience from a former employer and sets out on his or her own, in some way, to repeat the success. They start out modestly with little capital and long hard hours of work. But they succeed and slowly build the business up. Among these enterprises, it is rare to see a corporate identity or office ambiance. Only the visionary companies, or those looking at selling out, have one. For sure, you may visit much larger and modern corporations with conditions that are most opulent and “Western”, but if you visit any of their suppliers, you will then see the typical company, which we will now visit.

The Pick-up

You have made an appointment with Mr. Fliver Chen, President of Wholesome Goodies Ltd. Fearing that you cannot find his office in its out-of-the-way place, he personally comes to your hotel to pick you up. Despite the fact he has had to drive in 70 minutes of downtown traffic, he arrives only 10 minutes late. The hotel receptionist points you out to him; he comes over with a big smile on his face, and then firmly shakes your hand, introducing himself in English and extending a name card to you. You take his cards in both hands, examine it carefully, and thank him for giving it to you, extending one of your own to him in return.

He is dressed in a European-style, short-sleeved shirt with an open collar, slacks, and scuffed leather shoes (it’s impossible to keep shoes clean between the dust, debris, and damp in Taiwan). He is carrying a *dageda* (cellular phone) and a large bunch of keys. He beckons you to come out to his waiting car. He has given you face by coming personally to fetch you and you thank him for this undeserved attention.

You sit in the front seat of his Volvo 760 and the air-conditioning quickly cuts through your shirt, making you chilly. He has an imported radio cassette player on which he is playing Western classical music. As the car pulls into the traffic, he asks you if this is your first trip to Taiwan, what you think of the traffic, the food, etc.

During the hour-long start-and-stop drive to his office, the conversation is mostly social. He wants to get to know you. So, you should use the opportunity to get

to know him. Feel free to ask of him any question he has asked of you: sports, travel, family, how he came to know you or your company, your schedule.

Finally, he pulls through a red metal gate in a high gray concrete wall. A painted brass company plaque is affixed to the wall, proclaiming the home of “Wholesome Goodies.” There is not much maneuvering room in the parking area but he takes a space reserved for his car near the front door.

Name Cards

The exchange of name cards is a simple ritual that must not be neglected. Like the Japanese, the Taiwanese value name cards. They are the physical reminder of one’s *gwan syi*(relationship). The exchange of cards is not a new thing in China; it was certainly used in the last century, if not earlier. The use of a written description of one’s position or status, usually prepared by a government official to bestow status or power, is millennia old. A person might give you their card to take when visiting another person. It conveys their *gwan syi*.

Treat the name card of the person you meet with the deference you give the man (or woman) himself. Look at it closely, study it, understand their title and name, and comment on their company’s corporate identity if it is nice or new. Do not make the same mistake at the culturally clumsy American vice president of Chris’ acquaintance who offended the Chinese customers he met by collecting a stack of name cards like scrap paper and then dealing out his name cards across the table back to the guests like a brusque Las Vegas croupier. Also, do not run out of cards. In a busy week of networking or sales it is easy to go through 100 cards. Also consider getting a Chinese name.

Be agreeable and inquisitive. Be concerned about the person you are meeting and their company. Be frank, open, relaxed, unhurried, and well-rounded; you will not want to be too liberal in “tipping your hand.” On the other hand, do not be overly secretive either. Sounds like a fine line to draw, doesn’t it? Try to avoid giving answers like, “I am sorry, I cannot tell you. It’s confidential information.” You are telling the person on a direct and perhaps face-losing way that you do thing much more indirectly, for instance, “The information is not ready yet. Can I get you a copy when it’s finished?” The person spoken to may or may not expect to get the information later.

What Do They Expect From You?

So, what is a Taiwanese businessperson looking for in their relationship with a foreigner? Whether you are buying or selling, we feel that what they seek can be summarized in order of importance as follows:

1. Maximization of profits. The Taiwanese businessperson will naturally try to maximize their profits in their relations with you. If you are selling, they will squeeze for price, or terms, or consignment, or all three. Explain how they can profit from your current sales package and what you will do to see that the program is a success. Do as much background checking as possible to verify or discount their claims that a price break is needed for them to be able to profit. Then make your proposal to your management, or make the decision yourself, whichever is appropriate. If you are buying from them, you will probably be promised the moon and receive the late delivery of something less.
2. Dealings on the right level. The Taiwanese are very conscious of hierarchy. Based on their own cultural perspective, a person ranked too low will be seen as ineffectual or a stepping stone, rather than a conduit to working with your office. Not knowing you, they will give you the benefit of the doubt first. If you are not empowered to make decisions and do not establish good *guan syi* with your business ties, they will go around you. Of course, they can tolerate the occasional, "I'll have to check with headquarters," but not consistently.
3. Long-term relations. The Taiwanese business partner would much rather has the opportunity of establishing a long-term relationship with you, rather than a one-off. It saves them having to understand yet another raft-load of foreigners. If they change supplier or customer, it allows them to exercise *guan syi* to the fullest; and it smoothes out their long-term cash flow projections.
4. Friendship. Though it may take several years, your business contact will hope to eventually make friends with you. The Taiwanese are friendly, relaxed folk. The friendship will mature after many shared experiences and hardships.

Bribery, Corruption, Grease, and Gifts

Yes, *hung bau* (red envelopes with money) do still exist. So does bribery. And, no, it is not absolutely necessary. In fact, the book *Doing Business in Taiwan* indicates that, in resolving questions of legality, a resort to bribery and *guan syi* may be disastrous. If your case is strong, the law will prevail. Other sources also indicate that Western companies which operate within the law and which successfully resist opportunities to bribe and corrupt, are able to get the business on the merit of their offer. We agree and disagree.

Let us play a little "line-drawing" game here. When does a gift become a bribe? Although not a legal opinion, a bribe is a substantial inducement given (usually after the event) to guarantee the outcome of an event. A gift, on the other hand, is a

token of esteem used to cement friendly relations and express sincerity. It is usually given before the outcome of the event is known and with no guarantee as to the outcome being expressed.

Taiwanese are emotional people. They have a finely-tuned social awareness. If they do not like you or your company for some emotional reason, they see no reason to favor your offers. They should feel that you and your company are the right ones to deal with. Giving a gift the wrong way, to the wrong person, or indeed giving the wrong gift, can be more disastrous than not giving one at all. Do not treat gifts as bribes or inducements. Get to know the person with whom you want to establish good relations and understand their needs and fears (they have some vision for their department, factory, company). Then treat the gift as something given freely, without coercion, between friends.

If you do not get the business, do not collar the fellow and ask pointedly why you did not get the contract. Instead, invite him out again, ask in what ways your company's offer can be improved in the future, and whether there are any other jobs you can approach him for. Strengthen the network. Who knows? He may even tell you that all is not lost and he is willing to re-open the bidding.

(Bates & Wu, 1995)

Focus Sheet F-2
Business in USA

Get to the Point

By all reports, the single greatest difference between business dealings in the USA and the rest of the world is the American eagerness to get to the point. Most people of the world don't negotiate with strangers. Therefore the first order of business is to get to know their callers, no matter how long it takes. Then they can decide if these are people they want to work with.

All this is a mystery to an American. Why sit around jawing and drinking cup after cup of coffee when you could be making deals? Certainly we want to know if you can deliver, the strength of your company, your resources. Why don't you tell us that, instead of about the beauty of T'ang Dynasty vases? Then we can get down to how much, when, and who plays for what. At the end of several days when the American realizes that he and his new friends haven't yet lighted on one significant aspect of the business he came to talk about, he's ready to exit by the nearest window.

It's not that we're automatons. We're friendly, and we want to be liked. We're glad to have a little let's-all-relax chitchat at the beginning of a meeting. We'll even occasionally offer you coffee, if the company coffee pot isn't too far away. We'll take you out to lunch, but by the main course we expect to have the pleasantries out of the way and got down to brass tacks. We just don't think it's necessary to know someone very well to do business with him or her. After all, if we find we don't like you after we've done a little business, we can dump your company and try a different one.

Another reason that we want to get on with the business at hand is that it's what interests us. Whereas business people from other countries may be frankly bored with business and prefer to talk about other things, Americans are not. It's abstract conversation that bore us; the pragmatic American likes a conversation that is going somewhere. Stuck making small talk for hours, we're like racehorses shut up in the paddock. We long for a chance to show our stuff.

Tick Tock

In the mind of the American businessperson the clock is always tickling, and there are further worlds to conquer. Why append any more time than necessary on this deal? We feel no need to be soul mates. We are not going to base this relationship on trust anyhow. We are going to base it on an elaborate, detailed contract which our lawyers will draw up.

During the workday, Americans are very precise about time. If you're ten minutes late for an appointment, you should apologize. If you're half an hour late, you should have a good reason. When you see your American host drumming his fingers

and looking at his watch, wrap up the meeting quickly. And don't be insulted if he announces he has another meeting and unceremoniously turns you out of his office. Very likely he does have another meeting, and even if you're in the middle of a critical conversation, he has to be there on time. It doesn't mean that he's any less interested in your business.

Making Contact

A lot of business decisions are made in meetings, which can be stormy. Those in attendance are expected to bring up objections, thrash out problems, and defend their positions. Those in a losing position are not supposed to brood about loss of face.

To many foreigners, the American approach is cold and rational; we like a proposal that is based on facts and figures. Of course, we want to know that you're reliable, but our main interest is price, and we are incredulous to hear that in some cultures the business relationship is more important than the price.

Americans will appreciate it if you show up at a meeting armed with all the pertinent statistics and deliver a well-rounded pitch, including the data that proves what a great company you represent. It's a good idea to work in how great you are too, although you must be a little more offhand in forwarding yourself. Americans accept arrogance, but too much boasting can arouse doubts. "Doing business is completely different here," says a Japanese businessman. "I make my presentation, they ask questions and I'm done."

We favor fast-talking, smooth operators, which is why some of our most sparking representatives fail in countries where fast talkers are distrusted. Humility goes a lot further outside the United States. The important thing here is to make it clear that you are a "can-do" kind of person and that you understand what the Americans want.

Straightforwardness

Americans do not appreciate being "strung along." If, as is done in some countries, you offer pleasant reassurances that turn out not to be true, American business people will be highly annoyed--"Why the devil didn't someone tell us?" We want the straight scoop, the real story. If you can't deliver when you said you would (and June 1 means June 1, not sometime in June) tell us now so we can plan for it. We'll still like you better than the bunch that couldn't deliver and didn't tell us.

Those from the Far East may be shocked by the bluntness with which an American reports negative news. "Sorry, but we got a better price from someone else," or "Those blouses were badly made." In another culture your feelings would be considered more important than the truth, whereas we consider that we're doing you a favor by our straightforwardness. Now you know why you're not getting our business

and can do something about it. And we've saved you from wasting your time in anticipation. But this can seem very cold-hearted and rude in some cultures.

Accountability

You may find the decision-making process fairly streamlined in an American company, compared to that in other countries. Certain key decisions will probably require an executive board's approval, but very often there are some bodies along the line with the authority to make lesser decisions. Who these people are is generally not a secret.

Business Entertaining

Americans can be lavish entertainers. We see the value in breaking bread with our counterparts from other countries and most executives have quite decent expense accounts, but few would care to be out every night. If you find yourself less royally entertained than in some other countries, it could be because most Americans prefer a steak and salad themselves to what they regard as the tedium of a five-course meal in a French restaurant.

As conversation isn't our favorite indulgence either, we assume that you too would be as glad to lie down and take off your shoes as to be dragged all over town. So a night out with American hosts will probably not be excessively long. Americans do not consider that their manhood requires them to sacrifice sleep.

If you are traveling with your spouse, be sure that your host knows it so that he or she won't be left out of evening plans. If the American wives (or husbands) don't appear, it is probably because they have business of their own, live in a distant suburb to which your host will be returning on the late train, can't find a babysitter, or are bored stiff by business dinners.

Business Cards

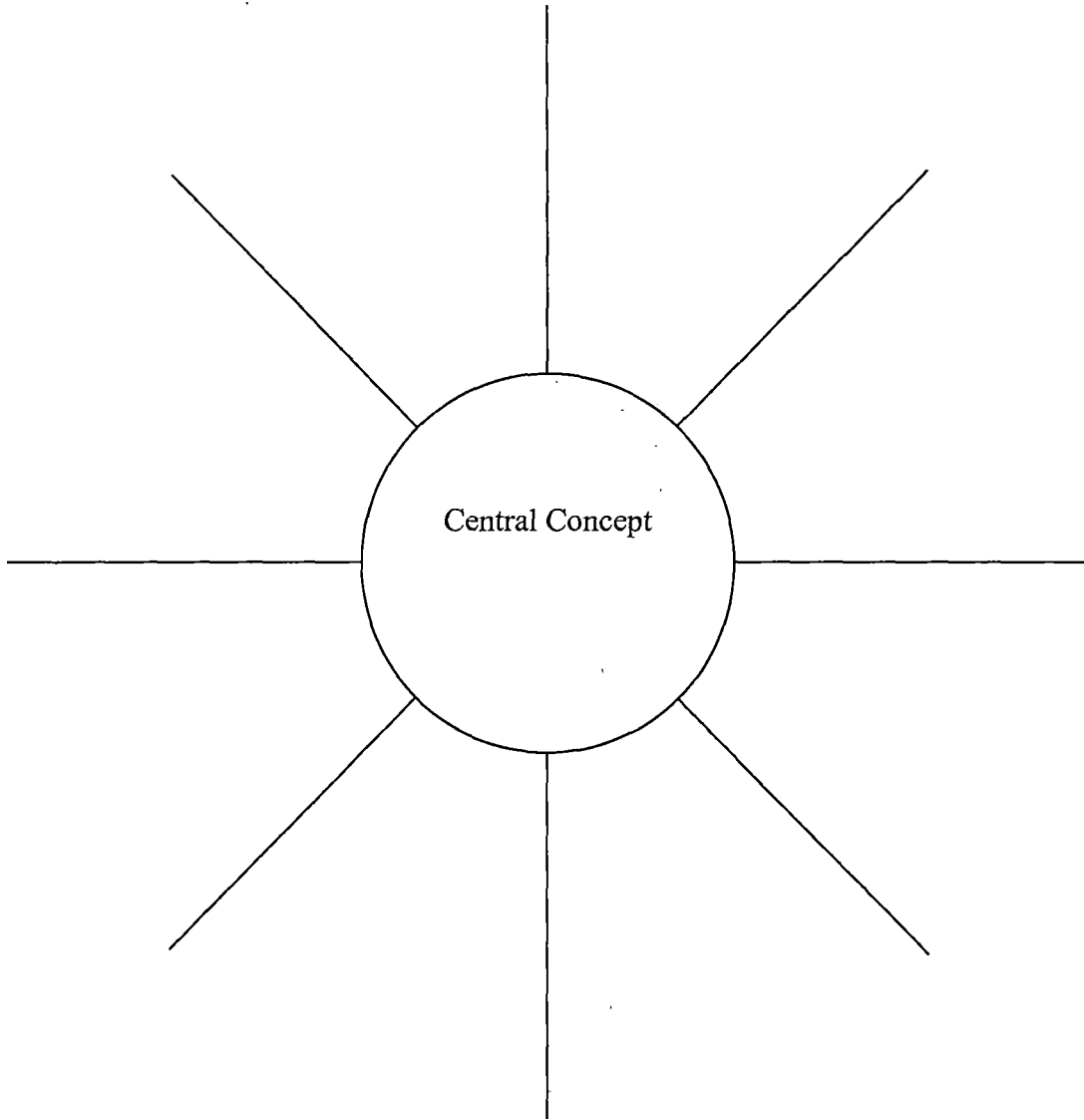
Cards play a minor role in American business and may not come out until the end of a meeting. They are used, mainly to pass on an address and phone number, not as credentials. Most people have them, however, and you should too, printed in English.

(Wanning, 1999)

Task Sheet F-1

Please choose a topic about your daily life then discuss this topic with your partners.
Please write your ideas in the Concept Map below.

Your chosen topic:



Task Sheet F-2

Name: Web -- Simile -- What school is..?

Contributor: Jennifer Keiser

Jennifer is the Webmaster at Inspiration Software.

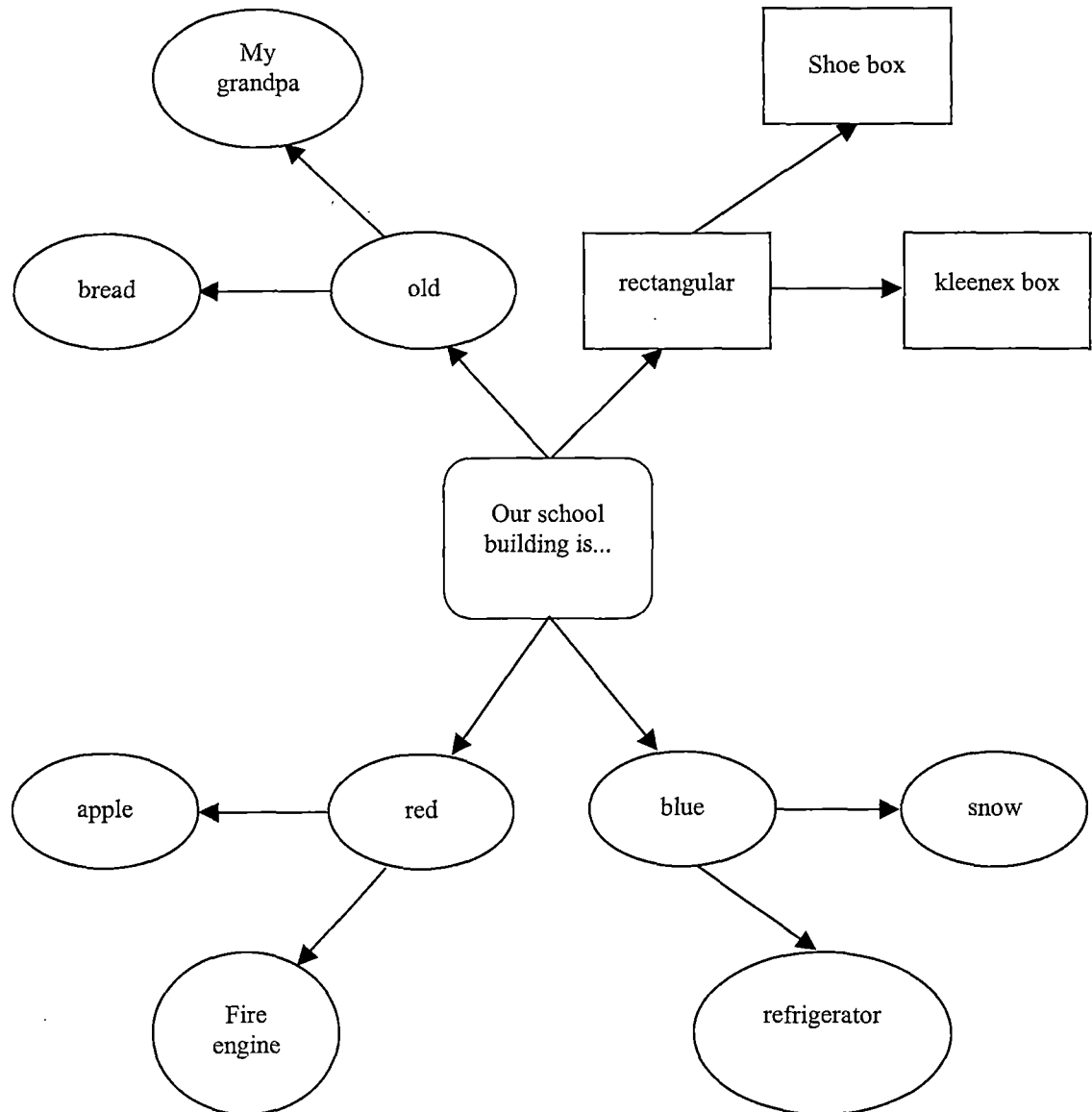
Uses:

What does school, old, and moldy have in common?

Students generate examples of similes in speech and writing using the topic of school.

Use the same strategy for teaching metaphors?

(www.graphic.org, 2001)



Assessment Sheet F-1

1. Writing (100%)

Do you prefer business in Taiwan or USA? Why? Please write some reasons illustrating your opinion. It should contain at least five reasons that support your position. (Each reason is 20 points, total 100 points)

90	Excellent
80	Good
70	Needs improvement
60	Study harder

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Self-Assessment Sheet F-1

Name:					
Score:					
I learned about business in Taiwan and USA.	1	2	3	4	5
I learned how to express my opinions well.	1	2	3	4	5
I made myself understood during the discussion.	1	2	3	4	5
I learned how to find advantages and disadvantages of a disputed topic.	1	2	3	4	5
I learned a lot and enjoyed the class.	1	2	3	4	5

5: excellent

4: good

3: acceptable

2: needs improvement

1: pay more attention in class

How can I learn more in class?

What do I learn from the process of constructing main ideas?

What do I learn to apply in the future?

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