

Book Review

Thinking Beyond the Content: Critical Reading for Academic Success

Authors: Nolan J Weil and Raymond Cepko

ISBN-13: 978-0472089772 ISBN-10: 0472089773

Dongwook Kim Hao Phan

University of St Andrews

Thinking beyond the Text: Critical Reading for Academic Success is written for college-bound ESL students. Therefore, the basic aims of this book are to encourage its readers to read efficiently and understand clearly the various types of academic texts required for successful academic performance in university. This book does not simply provide a series of academic texts. Each chapter of this book also poses several questions to students related to topics and themes of the chapter. After each reading, students can check their own understanding of the text without guidance from the tutor. In that sense, its fundamental aim as a teaching material for increasing the reading ability of ESL learners seems to be fully achieved.

Understanding and thinking about books or academic articles from various points of view is necessary for all students studying in university. However, since some ESL students are not accustomed to critical thinking, they sometimes have difficulty studying in universities in the UK. As this book also focuses on promoting critical thinking skills, it could help those who want to improve their ability to think critically.

In the book, certain sections such as Critical Focus, Critical Focus Application, and For Discussion are aimed at not only enhancing readers' comprehension of the content of a text, but also increasing their ability to think critically. Every question in 'Critical Focus Application', and 'For Discussion' sections includes words such as "your opinion", "what", and "why", which implies that not only should students using this book grasp an understanding of the texts, but they also need to think for themselves about the content. Thus, by studying with this book, instead of reading and accepting information suggested in a text, readers are encouraged to cultivate their own approach to reading actively, critically, and deeply.

This book consists of several chapters with different topics, and those chapters cover various aspects of academic and social issues. By reading about the diverse topics, students can explore connections between different academic disciplines and broaden their views and understanding of the topic by looking at it from various perspectives. Moreover, each chapter and each section requires students to read actively and think autonomously so that teachers do not need to lead the class. However, what is required for teachers using this book is to encourage students to engage in activities such as group discussion and research projects.

Finally, another observation is that international students encounter many unfamiliar words while reading articles or a variety of texts. The book *Thinking beyond the Text: Critical Reading for Academic Success* provides a glossary for ESL readers, or international students. Thus, this enables them to read without referring to a dictionary, which leads the students to learn those words more easily.

In conclusion, through using this book, students can learn about different types of academic readings, and nourish critical and logical thought. As an international student studying with this book, I consider that it provides a real opportunity to enhance English reading skills. Therefore, I would also strongly recommend this book to English learners as well.

CONTACT THE AUTHOR

dk68@st-andrews.ac.uk