

<p><b>Critical Thinking and the Discussion Packet Teaching Method.</b>  Mark Saiki  2/5/2008, rewritten 5/9/2016  e:\front\tools\discussion packets.6dp</p>	
<p><b>1. Need for Critical Thinking.</b> Our difficulty is not that we are now training technicians in record numbers, but that we are educating fewer people to think critically, to contribute to the knowledge needed for a stronger political culture, or to be able to conceive of alternative futures. Loren Baritz, Professor of Intellectual History at SUNY, <i>Backfire: A History of How American Culture Led Us into Vietnam and Made Us Fight the Way We Did</i> (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1985), 328.</p>	<p>Main Ideas:  Analysis:  Evaluation:</p>
<p>Two pervasive demands drive my conviction that it will indeed occur. The first is the compelling need of business for graduates who are constant, active, and adaptive learners. That need is profit-driven, which in our society means it is real. Howard Block, of the Bank of America, says that learning is "almost the sole source of competitive advantage" in our rapidly changing economy. A 1999 report from Merrill Lynch estimates the global market for training and education to be \$2 trillion annually. The domestic U.S. market is around \$740 billion. Of that market, K-12 accounts for \$360 billion; higher education, \$237 billion; and corporate and government training, \$98 billion. Larry D. Spence, Professor of Political Science at Penn State University, "The Case Against Teaching," <i>Change</i> 33 no. 6, (2001), 9.</p>	
<p>"Today's graduates . . . cannot formulate and solve messy real-world problems, work well with others in high-stress team situations, write and speak forcefully and persuasively, or improve their own performance." Larry D. Spence, 1.</p>	
<p>The National League for Nursing requires Registered Nurses to be "leaders, critical thinkers, know how to access new information and communicate it well, and finally, to be flexible and comfortable with change." Lori S. Saiki (DuCharme), B.S., M.S., Nursing Instructor at Front Range Community College, Community College of Denver and now Metropolitan State University, "An Exploration of the Factors Impacting the Success of the LPN-to-RN Transition," (Greeley, Colorado: University of Northern Colorado, December 3, 2007) 3.</p>	
<p><b>2. Problems with Teaching Methods.</b> Although college educators continue to use traditional lecture as their primary method of instruction, the average information retention rate for this method is only 5% for a 24-hour period, compared with alternative ap-</p>	<p>Main Ideas:  Analysis:  Evaluation:</p>

<p>proaches, such as audiovisual aids (20%) demonstration (30%), discussion groups (50%), practice activities (75%), and peer teaching (90%) (Sousa, 1995). Renee T. Ridley, a Lecturer at Murray State University, Department of Nursing, Murray, Kentucky, MSN, APRN, BC, CFNP, "Interactive Teaching: A Concept Analysis," <i>Journal of Nursing Education</i>, May 2007, Vol. 46, No. 5, 204.</p>	
<p>"Encouraging classroom discussion and questions, paper topics involving life process interviews, Socratic-style teaching rather than traditional lecture all aid in helping the transitioning student make the shift from passive to active learner." Lori S. Saiki (DuCharme), 7.</p>	
<p>[T]here's a silver lining for today's journalism students. "We can say to them, 'We don't know how many jobs there are for you guys at local newspapers or television stations,'" Yulsman said. "'But the kinds of things you learn – how to gather information, how to think about it critically, how to package it in compelling ways and how to be innovative – will help you in several careers.'" Tom Yulsman, Professor of Journalism at CU, Brittany Anas, Camera Staff Writer, "CU Journalism Applications Up," <i>Boulder Daily Camera</i>, February 28, 2009 2A.</p>	
<p><b>3. Problems with Textbooks.</b> "Textbooks also keep students in the dark about the nature of history. History is furious debate informed by evidence and reason. Textbooks encourage students to believe that history is facts to be learned. 'We have not avoided controversial issues,' announces one set of textbook authors; 'instead, we have tried to offer reasoned judgments' on them--thus removing the controversy! Because textbooks employ such a godlike tone, it never occurs to most students to question them. James W. Loewen, Professor of Sociology at the University of Vermont, <i>Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong</i> (New York: New Press, 1995), 5.</p>	<p>Main Ideas: Analysis: Evaluation:</p>
<p>Textbooks encourage students to believe that history is a series of facts: names and dates to be memorized. "We have not avoided controversial issues," announces one set of textbook authors; "instead, we have tried to offer reasoned judgments" on them--thus removing the controversy! Because textbooks employ such a godlike tone, it never occurs to most students to question them. James W. Loewen, 5.</p>	
<p>The contest between competing truths is integral to the profession of history. We should create evenhanded history. Good history must be sensitive to authentic memories on all sides of the war we study. However, memories are not a substitute for other kinds of historical evidence. Philip West, Steven I. Levine, Jackie Hiltz, <i>America's Wars in Asia: A Cultural Approach to History and</i></p>	

<i>Memory</i> (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, 1998) 5.	
We must listen to the voices from the opposing army to restore the human face of the enemy. To simply look at the past from the point of view of the victim is to encourage hatred. We Japanese must realize that we were the aggressors too. We were educated to fight for our country. To win the war was our goal. Philip West, 11.	
<b>4. Higher Education.</b> Although college educators continue to use traditional lecture as their primary method of instruction, the average information retention rate for this method is only 5% for a 24-hour period, compared with alternative approaches, such as audiovisual aids (20%) demonstration (30%), discussion groups (50%), practice activities (75%), and peer teaching (90%) (Sousa, 1995). Renee T. Ridley, a Lecturer at Murray State University, Department of Nursing, Murray, Kentucky, MSN, APRN, BC, CFNP, "Interactive Teaching: A Concept Analysis," <i>Journal of Nursing Education</i> , May 2007, Vol. 46, No. 5, 204.	Main Ideas: Analysis: Evaluation:
The sociologist Lionel Lewis concludes that teaching requires little creative thought. College teaching, Lewis claims, merely involves some defining of basic terms and ideas, some exercises or drills, some paraphrasing and commentary on texts, and some supplementary materials borrowed from books. Larry D. Spence, 4.	
Formal education, in short, is not likely to improve the political culture of Americans. Our universities are not prepared, not equipped, and not inclined to educate for deeper and truer political understanding. The current emphasis on technical areas of study, usually in professional schools, goes in exactly the other direction. As we have seen, the technician accepts the world as given, the problem as formulated by someone else. He works within predefined boundaries and is not trained to ask a different question. His training deliberately leads him away from the question why. Loren Baritz, 330-1.	
We cannot rely on either industry or the universities to help. Both institutions have become bureaucratized in the same way as the military in Vietnam. Across America's central institutions, leadership has been replaced by management. The analogy of the body count in Vietnam is the head count in academia and the bottom line in industry. As the body count created incentives to damage the military in Vietnam, head counts and bottom lines do the same to their institutions. All three require deception to succeed, a concentration on the short term, an inability to contemplate future consequences, an emphasis on pleasing the supervisor (with the resulting prohibition on dissent, that is, creativity) rather than on doing the work, requiring loyalty to individuals rather than to an objective, an inability to define purpose, and uncontrollable careerism. Loren Baritz, 328.	

<p><b>5. Inquiry Methods.</b> Asian teachers subscribe to what would be considered in the West a constructivist view of learning. Knowledge is something that must be constructed by the children rather than as a set of facts and skills that can be imparted by the teacher. Harold W. Stevenson, Professor Of Psychology at University Of Michigan, and James W. Stigler, Professor Of Psychology At UCLA, <i>The Learning Gap</i> (New York: Summitt Books, 1992), 188.</p>	<p>Main Ideas: Analysis: Evaluation:</p>
<p>When we witnessed the dynamic teaching in Chinese and Japanese classrooms and began to find out what was behind it, we were hit full force with the reason why much elementary school teaching in the United States is so unimpressive. As long as teachers are in front of a classroom for hours on end, we cannot expect to find the versatility, energy, and inventiveness needed to rejuvenate American education. We should provide large rooms where teachers can meet and work together. This would foster more frequent interaction among teachers and reduce their isolation. Harold W. Stevenson, 207.</p>	
<p>Teachers ask questions for different reasons in the United States and in Japan. In the United States, the purpose of a question is to get an answer. In Japan, teachers pose questions to stimulate thought. A Japanese teacher considers a question to be a poor one if it elicits an immediate answer, for this indicates that students were not challenged to think. Harold W. Stevenson, 195.</p>	
<p>One teacher we interviewed told us of discussions she had with her fellow teachers on how to improve teaching practices. "What do you talk about?" we wondered. "A great deal of time," she reported, "is spent talking about question we can pose to the class which wordings work best to get students involved in thinking and discussing the material. One good question can keep a whole class going for a long time; a bad one produces little more than a simple answer." Harold W. Stevenson, 195.</p>	
<p>It is not uncommon for an Asian teacher to organize an entire lesson around the solution of a single problem. The teacher leads the children to recognize what is known and what is unknown. The teacher directs the student's attention to the critical parts of the problem. The teacher attempts to see that all the children understand the problem. Lessons concerning mathematical computation are presented in the context of solving a problem. Harold W. Stevenson, 179.</p>	
<p>A teacher walked in carrying a large paper bag full of clinking glass. What's in the bag? She pulled out a pitcher, a vase, a teapot, a beer bottle. I wonder which one holds the most water? How can we know who is correct? Fifth grade math, Japan, Harold W. Stevenson and James W. Stigler, 177.</p>	
<p>There is a total of thirty-eight children in Akira's class. There are</p>	

six more boys than girls. How many boys and how many girls are in the class? This lesson began with a discussion of the problem and the children's proposed ways to solve it. The teacher handed each student two strips of paper, one longer than the other. She told the class that the strips would be used to help them think about the problem. She asked the children to line up the strips next to each other and to decide which one represented the boys. A student pointed out that the amount the longer strip protruded beyond the shorter strip represented how many more boys than girls there were in the class. The procedure for solving the problem then unfolded as the teacher, through skillful questioning, led the children to the solution. Fourth grade math, Japan, Harold W. Stevenson and James W. Stigler, 187.