The Effect of Blogging on Field-Dependent and Field-Independent Students’ Critical Thinking

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Outline

• Blogging
• Critical Thinking Definition
• Critical Thinkers’ Characteristic
• The Problem Statement
• Field Dependency Definition
• Characteristics of FDs
• Characteristics of FIs
• Methodology
• Results and discussions
• Conclusion
Blogging

• Giving students a chance to reflect on their own and others’ writing (Oravec, 2002).

• Provide the opportunity for students to create, publish, and share their thoughts (Richardson, 2004).

• Deepen students’ understanding of topics, promoting their ideas, and their writing (Coutinho, 2007).

• Discussing and analyzing not only their own but also others’ blog posts (Huffaker, 2005).

• Thinking more analytically and more critically (Lai & Wang, 2008), which may promote their CT (Richardson, 2004).
What Is Critical Thinking?

The ability of the mind to...
✓ move rapidly in new directions
✓ analyze a problem
✓ imagine solutions and weigh them by rational criteria
✓ find an easy solutions for each problem
✓ resolve ambiguity and complexity
**Critical Thinkers’ Characteristic**

- They are honest with themselves, acknowledging what they don't know, recognizing their limitations, and being watchful of their own errors.

- They regard problems and controversial issues as exciting challenges.

- They strive for understanding, keep curiosity alive, remain patient with complexity, and are ready to invest time to overcome confusion.

- Their judgments are based on evidence rather than personal preferences.

- Recognize that extreme views are seldom correct, so they avoid them, practice fair-mindedness, and seek a balance view.
Despite the increasing interest in promoting students’ CT, very little research has been conducted on students’ cognitive styles particularly students’ field dependency in an online learning environment particularly blogs.
Field Dependency

The way each individual perceives and memorizes.

FD and FI learners are not considered as two different types of people, but rather individuals who prefer particular learning characteristics which are almost stable during time (Altun & Cakan, 2006).
Characteristics of FDs


- Having global perception which enables them to solve cognitive problems globally
- Perceive objects as a whole
- Pay more attention to social cues
- Getting along with other people easily
- Being more sociable, insistent, and perceptive of others’ feeling and thoughts
- Recalling social information like conversation and relationship easily
Characteristics of FIs

• More superior to FD students in learning (Aristoklis & Xenia, 2011).

• More autonomous, competitive, self-reliance, self-confident, and inner-directed (Witkin et al., 1971; Brown, 2007).

• More sensible in learning, relying on internal references (Chen & Macredie, 2004)

• Better in solving cognitive problems analytically than FD students (Witkin & Goodenough, 1981).
Participant

- An intact class of ESL tertiary level students
- **Major:** English language

Using Blogs:

- Posting assignments
- Keeping diaries
- Updating their postings
- Giving comments
- Reading others’ blog posts
- Sharing thoughts and information
Training

1. Training multiple aspects of CT skills: induction, deduction, observation and credibility, and assumption (Ennis et al., 2004)

2. Applying CT skills in their blogging.
Instruments
to classify
students’ field dependency

GEFT
Tracing the simple figure embedded in the complex one in a time limit
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect of CT</th>
<th>Item Number</th>
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<td>52-65, 67-76</td>
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<td>Observation</td>
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<td>27-50</td>
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<td>Assumptions</td>
<td>67-76</td>
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Adapted from Ennis et al. (2004)

79 items

paired-sample t-test

to classify students’ field dependency
# Results

There was a significant positive criticalness in students’ CT ability after they were trained CT skills.

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Discussion

Blogging enhanced both FD and FI students’ CT; however, no significant mean difference was shown between FD and FI students before and after they were trained in CT skills.

Both FD and FI students are able to adjust themselves to online learning (Summerville, 1999).
Discussion

FI students applied more CT in their blogging despite being insignificant.

FI students seem to set their own learning paths more than FDs in online courses (Shahsavar & Tan, 2011)

The course blog as a non-threatening learning environment can cause a positive perception change to promote all students’ CT specially FI students who are not as sociable as FD students (Brown, 2007).
Conclusion

All students are able to promote their CT well on their blogging regardless their field dependency.
Thank You