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Thought-Based Superior Speaking:
An EAP Higher-Order Thinking Course Designed to Accelerate the Spoken Language
Proficiency of Advanced EFL Students

Trabajo de Titulación como requisito previo para la obtención del título de:
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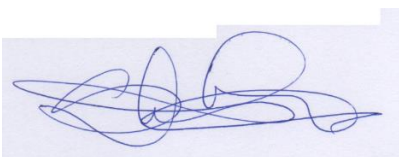
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**THOUGHT-BASED SUPERIOR SPEAKING:
AN EAP HIGHER-ORDER THINKING COURSE DESIGNED TO ACCELERATE THE
SPOKEN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY OF ADVANCED EFL STUDENTS**

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ABSTRACT

A growing demand for English proficiency in the global economic sphere has accelerated the pace of EFL learning, especially in functional, spoken language skill competence.

The purpose of the study is to investigate the need for an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course design that fast-tracks the speaking proficiency skills of advanced L2 learners by cultivating their higher order thinking.

Using mixed-method analysis, the research examined a general English Superior Speaking course I piloted two years ago to determine how it could be restructured to create an effective EAP speaking course by integrating metacognition to accelerate students' verbal language skills. The probe explores ways to turbocharge the students from rote learners to cognitive thinkers to metacognitive strategists. This way, they become self-directed, autonomous scholars who use functional language to plan, evaluate, and monitor their own mental and verbal intelligence. Results of numerous task-based, higher order thinking activities were measured to assess the

potential success of such a unique EAP course. Also, audio, video and written testimonials from participating students were found to attribute dynamic improvement in their thinking and speaking skills to the metacognitive teaching approaches I experimented with in my current Superior Speaking class, and now proposed for the EAP course. The study definitively offers credence to the notion of an EAP public speaking course that uses higher order thinking to boost advanced EFL students' speaking prowess. Further study is needed to explore ways the causal relationship between higher order thinking and higher order speaking can be further developed in L2 students well after the EAP class ends, and to investigate how these students can perpetuate their own self-determined language acquisition.

Keywords: Superior speaking, EAP speaking course, metacognitive thinking, higher order thinking, functional language, study skills, public speaking proficiency.

RESUMEN

Una demanda creciente por obtener una suficiencia en el idioma inglés dentro de la esfera económica global, ha acelerado el ritmo de aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera, especialmente en relación a la necesidad de desarrollar la competencia en inglés en lo que se refiere a habilidades de lenguaje funcional y verbal. El propósito de este estudio es investigar la necesidad de diseñar un curso en Inglés con Propósitos Académicos (IPA) que acelere el dominio de las habilidades de producción oral de estudiantes avanzados de inglés como lengua extranjera, fomentando a su vez el desarrollo de sus capacidades de pensamiento de orden superior. Haciendo uso de un análisis de métodos mixto, la investigación examinó un curso de inglés general en producción oral superior que piloté hace dos años para determinar cómo este podría ser rediseñado en un curso de IPA más efectivo al integrar la metacognición como medio para acelerar las

habilidades verbales de los estudiantes. La investigación pretende lograr que estudiantes de producción oral superior cuyo nivel de aprendizaje es memorístico, puedan convertirse en pensadores cognitivos con estrategias metacognitivas de aprendizaje. De esta manera, se espera que lleguen a ser alumnos auto-dirigidos y autónomos quienes podrán, además hacer uso de un lenguaje funcional para planificar, monitorear y evaluar su propia inteligencia mental y verbal. En este estudio se midieron resultados de numerosas actividades basadas en tareas y de pensamiento de orden superior para evaluar el éxito potencial de este curso único en IPA. Asimismo, se incluyen audios y videos testimoniales de los estudiantes participantes con el fin de evidenciar el mejoramiento dinámico en sus habilidades de pensamiento y producción oral como resultado del enfoque de enseñanza metacognitivo propuesto para el curso de IPA. El estudio definitivamente ofrece credibilidad en relación a la noción de lo que un curso de IPA para hablar en público debe poseer, especialmente al utilizar estrategias de pensamiento de orden superior para incrementar las destrezas orales de estudiantes avanzados de inglés como lengua extranjera. Son necesarios estudios futuros para explorar maneras que permitan visualizar cómo la relación causal entre procesos de pensamiento de orden superior y procesos de producción oral de orden superior puede ser desarrollada aún más en estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera inclusive mucho después que la clase de IPA haya terminado y así mismo, investigar cómo estos estudiantes pueden perpetuar la adquisición de lenguaje auto dirigido logrado en el curso de IPA.

Palabras claves: Curso de lengua en IPA, pensamiento metacognitivo, hablar en público, inteligencia verbal, pensamiento de orden superior, lenguaje funcional, habilidades de estudio, aprendizaje experimental, hablando superior.

1. INTRODUCTION

In every level of EFL learning, students face the task of mastering the four essential language skills: namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking. But a crucial cognitive cohort is often overlooked and seldom talked about. That is the skill of thinking. Thinking is the cognitive link that helps integrate or reinforce the basic language competencies.

It is easy to consider thinking simply as the inconspicuous fifth wheel. It works in sync and incognito with the other four modalities to help second language (L2) learners develop their command of English. But what if thinking was taught exclusively as a priority linguistic skill in the EFL pedagogical framework? What if students were taught to think on a higher level? How could this raise their capacity to process complex, cognitive learning, and improve other core skills, especially those that amplify spoken language proficiency?

This investigative research intends to explore the effects of higher order thinking on speaking. It will ascertain the need to expand upon my existing Superior Speaking (SS) course I piloted at CEC-EPN in the 2018-2020 period, and to convert it to an “EAP Higher-Order Thinking Course” in order to raise the speaking proficiency level of advanced EFL students. Such a new paradigm could help them develop functional study skills, as well as grow their cognitive and metacognitive abilities. In so doing, their spoken language skills could flourish as they express themselves more fluently in verbal form.

Redesigning the existing SS course into one that meets the standard of an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) curriculum will also allow for integrating a more rigorous assessment system. Both formative and summative evaluations would be employed to routinely track, measure, and analyze the impact of higher order thinking on students’ English fluency and study skills development.

2. BACKGROUND

English Language proficiency is an invaluable currency in the global marketplace. Reigning as the most powerful lingua franca, English remains the dominant language of business, commerce, trade, and communication around the world. Countries with a highly skilled English-speaking workforce can integrate more effectively with the international financial market. They are better equipped to attract foreign industries, grow a more robust local economy, and, in turn, produce jobs and a higher standard of living for their citizens.

Many developing countries, like Ecuador, (Educacion, 2012) mandated the study of English in their public school systems, as they work to ensure a foothold in this global economy. Private schools and language institutions also meet, and often exceed the Education Ministry's requirement.

2.1 Ecuador's Spoken Language Challenge

But a crucial player in Ecuador's strategic masterplan to use English as the indispensable commodity that it is, may not be fully up to the task. Apparently, the country's English-speaking sector is not making the grade. According to the most recent English First Proficiency Index, Ecuador ranks last among Latin American nations in English proficiency. (EPI, 2020) In fact, the country rated ninety-third out of one hundred countries whose adult citizens took the latest English language skills test. This great pedagogical conundrum warrants careful study.

2.2 Seeking English Fluency

Since the main objective of learning English is to speak it, speaking is considered by some experts to be the most crucial of the four essential language skills, and, according to Hanifa (2018), the one that creates the most anxiety. EFL university students in Ecuador are well aware that English fluency is critical to personal and professional success at home and abroad. It can provide job opportunities, work-place advantage, foreign university scholarships, all of which require a high

level of verbal language proficiency. (Hanifa, Factors Generating Anxiety When Learning EFL, 2018)

With that in mind, purpose driven EFL students are eager to do what is necessary to take their L2 spoken language skills to the next level. In a recent pre-assessment test, one of my new and more astute SS students said:

“I have a dream. It is to travel abroad to study in one of the best universities in the world. I know that it is difficult, but I do not give up my dreams. Today it is a necessity (to) speak at least 2 languages if you want to get a better job, travel, study, and other.” (SS Student)

Table 2. 1 SS Student Comment

2.3 The EAP Inquiry

Such ambitious and motivated students are the desired target of my innovative English For Academic Purposes (EAP) curriculum that would be a modification of the SS course I pioneered at CEC-EPN two years ago. It is a self-proposed, specialized framework based on my two decades as a high-performance speaker and teacher.

Again, this study aims to examine the need for such an EAP program at CEC-EPN in Quito, one designed as a project-based learning tool to cultivate higher order thinking skills among my advanced EFL students, thus bolstering their peak performance in public speaking.

2.4 Higher Order Thinking

So, what is higher order thinking, and how can it be taught to help EFL students overcome communication anxiety and achieve superior speaking prowess? Tankersley (2005) defines higher order thinking as “going beyond the basic levels of comprehension.” (Tankersley, Higher-Order Thinking, p. 1). Two thinking-based learning scholars, (Swartz & McGuinness, Developing And

Assessing Thinking Skills, 2014), describe the term as strategies that allow good thinkers to effectively manage their thinking.

“It’s learnable intelligence rather than fixed intelligence...with a focus on cognitive strategies, metacognition and self-regulation” (Swartz & McGuiness, Developing And Assessing Thinking Skills, 2014, p. 7). Consider higher order thinking as the antithesis of entrenched rote memory learning, which does not require deeper thought or profound understanding of a subject. Higher order thinking engages students in self-directed processes of critical thinking and problem solving.

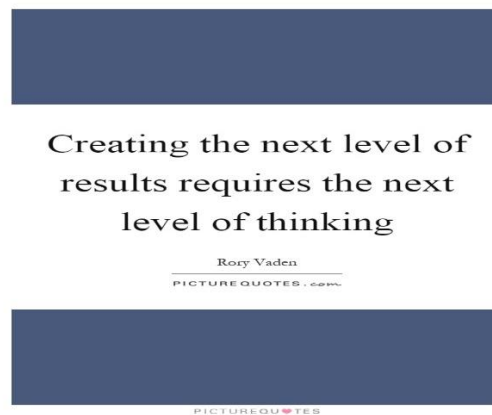


Table 2. 2 Rory Vaden Quote PictureQuotes.com

The significance of my EAP Higher-Order Thinking course reflects the words of self-discipline strategist, Rory Vaden. He famously said, “Creating the next level of results requires the next level of thinking,” (Vaden, 2015, p. 13). So, next level thinkers can conceivably produce next level speakers.

2.6 Birth & Benefits of an EAP Program

The end of World War II created a huge expansion in commerce and technology. That generated massive job opportunities, which triggered a demand for international language. Since the United States emerged as the post-war economic power English was the preferred language. To get better jobs and make good money, workers had to communicate well in English (Hutchinson & Waters,

1987). This predicament birthed a language teaching field known as English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Its most popular branch is English for Academic Purposes (EAP).

Now in more modern times, EAP offers English language learners the communication skills they need for study purposes in higher education (Jordan, English for Academic Purposes, 1997). As Peel indicates, EAP courses allow students to study both their language skills and their study skills (Peel, 2015).

Unlike the standard teaching of general English, EAP methodology concentrates less on grammar and structure, and more on content and functional knowledge. That way, students can use the language in meaningful, real-life situations (Monteros, 2020). The EAP technique helps them, among other things, polish their L2 fluency in order to get better jobs, secure promotions in their company, or to study or travel abroad. For instance, those working to improve their speaking eloquence can develop study skills such as: oral presentations, notetaking, academic writing, research, critical thinking, and problem solving (Jordan, English for Academic Purposes, 1997). Furthermore, language instruments like class discussions, debates, and role play expose the learner to practical disciplines. The underlining objective, some would argue (Monteros, 2020), is to match the students to the course needs, and not the other way around. Consequently, students get strategic language and study skills training relevant to their university majors and specific career paths., according to Jordan (1997).

Below, in Table 2.3, is a detailed EAP Foundation summary chart that distinguishes EAP teaching from General English teaching.

Aspect	EAP	General English
Aims	Meet the needs of particular learners	Improve overall English

Reason for study	To study another subject in English, to enter university	Compulsory, or for interest
Course focus	Needs driven, begins with learner and situation	Level driven, begins with language
Time	Short, fixed	Extended, flexible
Stakes	High stakes	Low stakes
Main skills focus	Reading and writing	Listening and speaking
Text type and approach	Authentic, academic, genre based, explored fully	Interesting, conversational/social, topic based, not explored fully
Style of expression	Clarity, objectivity	Self-expression, creativity
Role of teacher	Equal	Expert
Learning skills	Study skills, especially learner autonomy and critical thinking	None, or limited to language learning skills

Table 2. 3 EAP Summary Chart (Table: <https://www.eapfoundation.com/about/whatisiap>)

2.7. Current CEC-EPN SS Course

The trailblazing SS course I piloted and still teach at EPN’s Center for Continuing Education (CEC) is the result of a preceived vaccum. CEC does not have an EAP program and utilizes the general English teaching method. My teaching style aligns with the EAP teaching philosophy and recognizes the value of higher order thinking. It is function and project based. It relies heavily on communicative, hands-on, and experiential activities. Ample classroom action research, a technique tauted by one researcher (Hermida, 2001), is used to systematically track best practices of both the teacher and the students. All tasks are specifically geared to prepare students to use English in practical, real-world situations.

2.7.1 Gaps in CEC-EPN’s Current Superior Course

CEC-EPN’s Department of Linguistics located in Ecuador’s capital city of Quito is renowned throughout the region. For almost thirty years, it has successfully guided thousands of L2 students on a solid academic and career path. However, some foundational cracks in the system need careful shoring up. In particular, the logistical underpinnings of the general Superior Speaking course I teach suffers numerous structural and procedural fractures. Such a critical review is based on my three years of cautious observation as a CEC instructor.

1. One fault line is caused by ill-prepared learners. A notable amount of students enter my SS class unable to competently express themselves in the target language. To bring these slower, stragglng students up to speed, I am forced to spend quality class time conducting remedial lessons on basic grammar and rudimentary language comprehension. That’s a task superior classes are not designed to do. Consequently, this runs the risk of frustrating qualified advanced students left disappointed or disallusioned. In a routine teacher evaluation, two concerned students commented:

“Not a bad teacher. But I expected a higher level of difficulty in the class. <i>SS Student</i>	“Good teacher. But the classes become repetitive, which makes them boring and tired. <i>SS Student</i>
--	---

Table 2. 4 SS Student Evaluation Comments

The superior classes CEC offers can also be inhomogeneous due to the program’s strong community-based open-door policy. This is well intentioned strategy and works perfectly fine for lower-level English classes. But it can wreak havoc on the higher, superior levels. Since CEC operates as a general English language teaching program, it is not uncommon to have enrolled in the same SS class students of different ages, from different universities, with vastly different needs

and expectations. For example, in a past SS course, my students ranged from a seventeen-year-old high schooler to a fifty plus-year-old grandmother. Naturally, they came with varied and general needs. Mixed in were EPN university engineering students and ambitious, full-time professionals with specific, laser-focused goals to improve their English proficiency.

2. Another fracture is caused by some students' deeply rooted passive learning habits. Their ability to engage in robust and proactive class discussions are evidently underdeveloped. When asked why they routinely shy away from talking in a superior speaking class, some students confessed they were introverts. Others seemed to suffer from the perfectionist syndrome, paralyzed by the fear of saying something wrong. Others admitted never having to speak in class before. These passive habits could be the result of years of teacher-centered, rote learning. And they do not promote the active learning skills needed to ensure critical and higher order thinking, which are innate components of an EAP curriculum.

3. Furthermore, CEC has little to no rigorous procedures in place to sustainably track and assess the performance progress of its SS students. Currently, in each course cycle, students take four key exams, which SS teachers design specifically for their own class. Students are later incentivized (offered 2 free points) to do brief teacher evaluations at the end of the cycle.

The EAP curriculum being proposed addresses these potential problematic areas. First, it uses both pre- and post-assessment tools to track student oral language growth and the corresponding influence of higher order thinking. The EAP course also imbeds frequent project-based communicative activities, similar to what Jordan (1997) promoted. They include peer-to-peer teaching, role play and simulations that reproduce the real-world language and stimulate "higher order reasoning" (Jordan, p. 115).

What’s more, this learning technique is specific to the career and professional goals of our students. Classes are not composed of general, incompatible learners. Also, the applied learning style means students regularly engage in thought-provoking activities that are fun, functional, and meaningful. As students learn by doing, they develop self-confidence, build self-efficacy, and conquer public speaking anxiety more rapidly. Since the “EPA Higher Order Thinking Course” embodies critical thinking and problem solving, it should demonstrate how, when students are taught to think better, they invariably learn to speak better. (*Curriculum and course are used interchangeably*)

2.8 Benefits of Higher Order Thinking

“Each individual’s quality of life is a result of their thinking. (It) is the mainspring of all of his or her actions” (Hamblin, 2008, p. 3). When Bloom’s Taxonomy (Collins, 2014) created the famous framework that classifies learning objectives and outcomes, it cited six levels of cognitive skills from simple to complex, or lower order to higher order. (See Table #5 below). Those levels are: Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, and Creating. General English studies tend to concentrate heavily on the first three lower order skill sets. They teach ELF learners how to remember, understand and apply. By virtue of its objective, EAP courses intrinsically incorporate the higher order domain skills: analyze, evaluate, and create. And that requires higher order thinking on the part of the L2 learner.

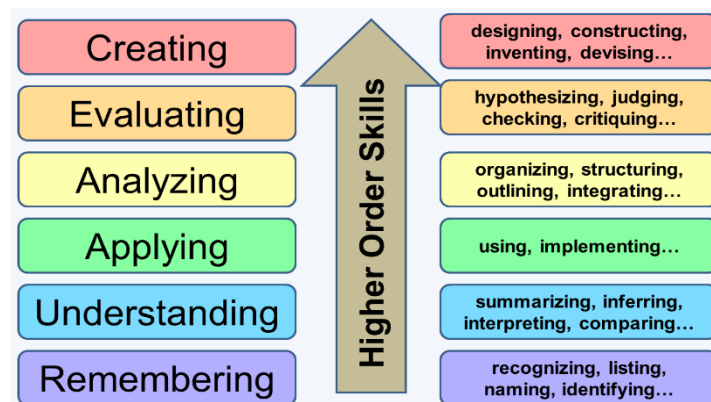


Table 2. 5 Citing: Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning Objectives

That is why these higher order study skills are a priority in the cutting-edge EAP speaking course being proposed, which again, is an expansion of my SS teaching approach. Once exposed to deeper thinking, students more readily learn to analyze, evaluate, and create on their own. Authentic instructional materials have been integrated into the redesigned course and serve as pivotal components. Real-life student tasks include learning how to:

- Conduct rigorous research for dynamic, meaningful debates
- Organize and run bi-weekly SupClub sessions
- Structure, write and deliver thought-provoking speeches
- “Sell” themselves in interviews at high-stakes job fair
- Create and produce resume videos and elevator pitches

Some investigators (Down, 2001) stress this type of situational learning. Students engage in complex, authentic social situations in order to use the target language in real-world scenarios. The experience creates a spoken language outlet that draws on the student’s creative thinking skills.

3. RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the effects of the “EAP Higher-Order thinking Course” on speaking?

4. GENERAL OBJECTIVE

Implement and routinely evaluate an “EAP Higher-Order Thinking Course” to raise the speaking proficiency level of advanced EFL students.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarly consensus abound regarding the argument that claims the best way students learn language skills is by doing. Swartz (2018) contends that, “all students have talent. And one of the

great talents is learning how to find things out for yourself" (Swartz, TV Interview). But that depends on a student's ability to think, analyze and problem solve.

Tankersley (2010) argues that curriculums should be designed to cultivate good thinking, then extend it. For that to happen, she says, teachers must create classroom activities with greater mental depth. And the exercises should require students to process information at the highest level of thought (Tankersley, Higher-Order Thinking, 2005).

5.1 Thinking-Based Taxonomy

To guide this better thinker, better speaker concept, I have designed the EAP course proposal with a thinking-based taxonomy (TBA) similar to Bloom's famous higher order skills scale. It is a simple three-level value difference classification. The TBT illustrates how students will accelerate from passive learners to active thinkers, to, ultimately, metacognitive strategists. See Table 5.1 below.

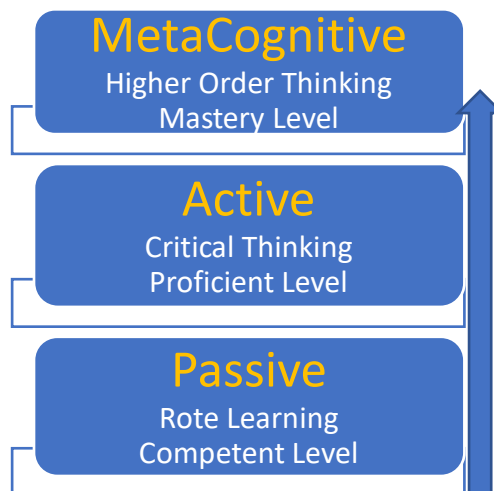


Table 5. 1 Thinking-Based Taxonomy (Created by Sharon Frame)

Perhaps Paulo Freire (1969) might have frowned on this developmental framework, since it mentions rote learning, of which he vehemently disapproved (Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*). For decades Freire argued against what he called, banking education. He described it as when the “all-knowing” teacher indoctrinates or deposits ideas into the student’s head. The learner is forced to repeat and memorize the ideas without given the opportunity to think critically, ask questions, or pose a challenge.

5.2 Rote Learning

Rote learning (RL) is defined as the process of learning by repetition rather than by understanding (Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, 2008). Although RL students learn to repeat and memorize without the requisite to comprehend, some researchers see value in this methodology. While not endorsing RL, Xiupin Li (2004) suggests it holds benefits, especially for L2 learners. He claims they frequently use it as a type of language strategy. The mechanistic approach to repeat and memorize may help L2 learners “consolidate meaning, or commit to memory, or the form of meaning” (Li, p. 29). That may not contribute to meaningful learning. But it does seem to help EFL students lay foundational knowledge.

5.3 Critical Thinking

Experts (Learning, 2017) assert that recalling facts and memorizing multiplication tables are just the starting point. Cognitive skills must come into play, in the form of creative thinking. That’s where retention and transfer happen (Oxford, 2017). In this realm of meaningful learning, students recall and use their prior knowledge to analyze, synthesize, interpret, and problem-solve. Csapó (1999) describes the difference between RL and critical thinking (CT) as declarative knowledge (the what) versus procedural knowledge (the why) (Csapó, *Teaching And Learning Thinking Skills*).

5.4 Teaching Thinking

Creative thinking prompts inquisitive students to self-discover knowledge and “proceed” to ask the curious question why. Csapo and other thought-based researchers like (Klopfer) had long hoped for a day when thinking was taught as a subject-matter instruction. It was more than 30 years ago when Klopfer (1989) wrote his book, *Towards the Thinking Curriculum*. Back then, he reasoned that the standard of literacy should not be measured by a priority on knowledge, (the what) but on thinking, (the why). “What is needed is to emphasize the teaching of thinking and skills... because knowledge in and of itself may be of little use” (Klopfer, p. 9). The researchers, in their 1989 publication, went on to stress that it’s quite impossible to teach all the information (the what) in any person’s lifetime. However, it’s certain that students “will need to solve problems, (the why) to think creatively, and to continue to learn” (Klopfer, p. 10).

Klopfer’s (1989) and Csapo’s (1999) notion of teaching thinking as a subject-matter instruction in the classroom was later embraced by cognitive-linguistics expert Cherrie Kassem (2005). She too advocated for thinking to be taught as a separate, exclusive course. Her CRTA teaching model proposed to create, reflect, teach, and assess critical thinking skills in a systematic design (Kassem, 2005).

5.5 Learning Thinking

Today, EFL teachers might not teach thinking exclusively. But some are incorporating thought-based exercises in their regular L2 class curriculum. Using the tools of cognitive inquiry, they are helping their students develop critical thinking. This raises a student’s self-assurance and can enrich their spoken language, as they feel comfortable to speak out more often in class. Consider the testimonial case study of an EFL University professor in Puerto Rico.

5.5.1 Real-Life Example

In 2016 TED Talk, Roberto Guzman recalled being frustrated. Everytime he tried to have conversations with his L2 students, he said it created a deer-in-the-headlight moment. Guzman was worried. “These young men and women when they graduate are gonna go into the work enviroment in which they are expected to think on higher levels of cognition” (Guzman, 2016). He fretted they wouldn’t be able to. So, Guzman decided to teach his students how to think. He used lively, real-world class discussions to ignite their mental and verbal acuity. Since the topics were real, revelant and worthwhile, they made students anxious to join the conversation and eager to offer their authentic point of views. In doing so, they learned to analyze difficult ideas, formulate deeper thoughts, and improve their verbal intelligence.

5.5.2 Personal Thinking-Speaking Genesis

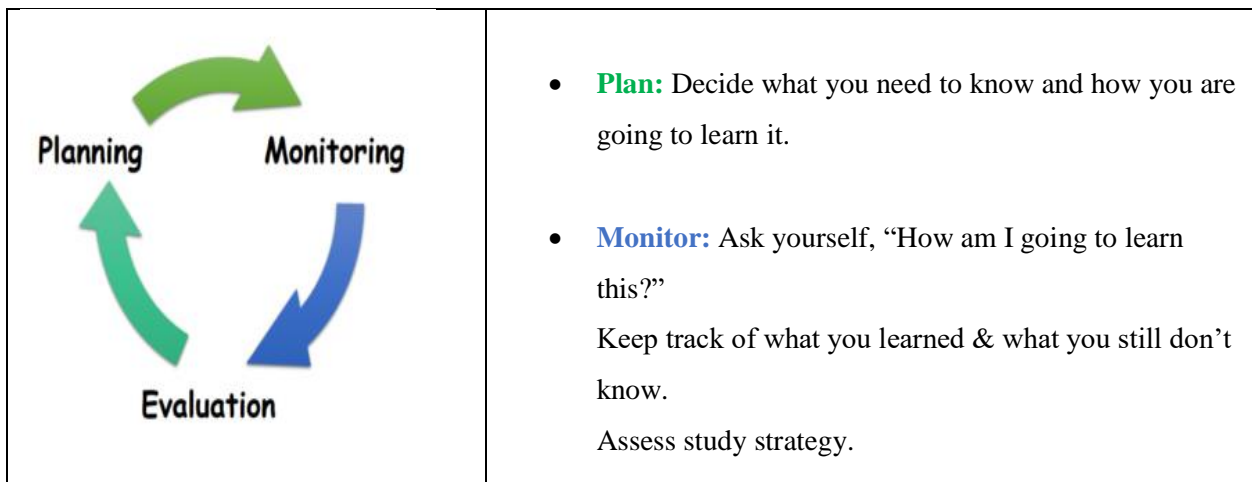
The idea to target thinking as a way of advancing superior speaking resulted from the SS course I initiated as a pilot in 2018. It came to life in the classroom as the critical thinking process was used to create the cognitive backdrop for an interactive, conversation-driven experiential course. Illustrative evidence of the student’s dynamic growth is scattered throughout this study. They serve as research tools to determine or help shed light on the study’s key question: Does higher order thinking have an effect on speaking? Linguistics experts, Ramezani, Larsari and Kiasi, (2016) might ask it this way: Are critical thinkers better language speakers? The three scholars were convinced that the variables of critical thinking and speaking are correlated and interdependent. Their earlier research study found that, “English learners who were recognized as critical thinkers performend better in their speaking” (Ramezani, Larsari, & Kiasi, p. 1). That lends credence to the hypothesis surrounding the viability of a thought based EAP course designed expressly to accelerate the speaking proficiency of L2 language learners.

5.6 Metacognitive Thinking

The third rung on the thought-based taxonomy ladder explores metacognition, the crown jewel of higher order thinking. It represents the ultimate step to transform my current SS course into a prolific EAP curriculum.

Metacognition goes far beyond rote learning and creative thinking. One expert (Chick, 2015) at Vanderbilt University's Center for Teaching describes metacognition as, "the process used to plan, monitor, and assess one's understanding and performance" (Chick, 2015, p. 1). Simply put, it is higher order thinking that puts students in charge of their own learning. Metacognitive thinking (MT) help speakers, writers, etc., become aware of their strengths and weaknesses as learners (Chick, 2015). In his 2010 investigation, Pintrich described MT as, "helping students become more knowledgeable of and responsible for their own cognition and thinking" (Pintrich, p. 2). In short, it's thinking about thinking; it's deep cognitive self reflection.

If critical thinking is the why, metacognitive thinking is the why, what, and the how. What most distinguishes metacognition is the learning autonomy and self-regulation (MT) students enjoy. They create their own processes to regularly plan, monitor, and evaluate their own performance. Kwantlen Polytechnic University scholars (University) aptly coined and defined these three pivotal stages that undergird the metacognitive learning skills cycle, as seen in Figure 5.1 below.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate: Reflect on how well you have met your learning objectives.
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Figure 5. 1 The Metacognitive Learning Cycle (Image Credit: Christina Page)

Some early-stage metacognitive instructions are already embedded in the proposed EAP program and are being appraised in my current SS course. Most notable addition is the student’s routine self-reflection and metacognitive follow-throughs. This activity has already shown to have impacted the pedagogical classroom culture. For instance, students are more strategic. They now readily select, research, plan and execute relevant, real-life class discussions and debates. Later, they use their reflection journals to record and self-evaluate.

These metacognitive activities can also drive deeper analytics. It can spark student-run discussions about their new self-awareness, or conversations on how best to thoughtfully apply their new knowledge. Chick (2015) contends that there is a noticeable need for more metacognitive thinking to make its way into regular EFL context teaching and learning.

5.7 The Might of Motivation

This study has examined how cognitive and metacognitive strategies can contextualize as well as cultivate language learning. But such pedagogical production cannot go far or fully succeed without a key predictor in the achievement equation. And that feature is Intrinsic Motivation (IM), which factors in a student’s attitude, desire, and emotion. In a 2021 conversation, Applied Linguistics expert, Jesus Toapanta, asserted that nothing happens without motivation. “You can have the brains, but if you do not have motivation, you will not get anywhere” (Toapanta, 2021). Since metacognition builds students’ skills to think about their thinking, it also bolsters their motive to learn and self-develop. Toapanta theorizes that it’s this intrinsic motive to improve that

helps learners overcome their limitations. “You act strategically because you know yourself. You plan, evaluate, monitor and engage in cognitive strategies.” (Toapanta, 2021).

Now, there needs to be a clear distinction made between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motives are ruled by external rewards. A student might work harder to win a teacher’s approval or get a good grade on a crucial exam. However, when a student finds joy and natural satisfaction in the learning process, that’s intrinsic motivation at work. The payoff is in the internal delight of discovery learning.

5.7.1. Motivation & Language Learning

Linguistics experts, Susan M. Gass and Larry Selinker point to studies that offer statistical evidence suggesting that motivation is a predictor of language learning success. (Gass & Selinker, 2000). The authors of the book “2nd Language Acquisition,” claim that interest in motivation research is enjoying a resurgence. Could it be due to an uptick of interest in task-based learning methods bent on molding motivated, self-directed, and autonomous learners? Several years ago, when Ecuador’s Ministry of Education mandated the inclusion of English in its national curriculum, it made clear that the design guidelines should be based on and motivated by the functional communicative approach, and “focused on real-life context.” (Educacion, 2012, p. 5). That way, students get the chance to be academically and functionally equipped with the needed skills to communicate outside the classroom, in everyday experiences.

5.7.2. Influencers of Second Language Acquisition

Researchers (Dwaik & Shehadeh) who studied EFL university students in Palestine cited motivation as one of the key variables influencing L2 acquisition. But the dominant motivating factor among the students was external by nature. They displayed no intrinsic drive. Why? Learning the language was compulsory. They did “not sign up for an English course out of their free will or desire but rather because they are (were) required or obliged to do so” (Dwaik &

Shehadeh, p. 336). The learner’s interest reflected “pragmatic benefits such as a better job or higher salary” (Dwaik & Shehadeh, p. 335). Figure 5.2 below shows the distinctions between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

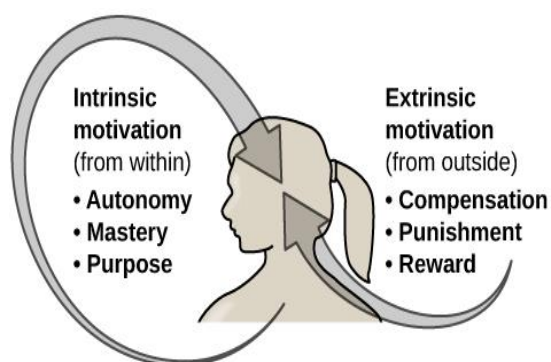


Figure 5. 2 Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation (<https://courses.lumenlearning.com>)

Notice the three intrinsic motivation descriptives in the figure: Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose. They are all super traits of metacognition.

5.7.3 A Motivating Teacher

The L2 teacher who wields the tool of motivation can inspire their students to achieve both cognitive and emotional intelligence. One can argue, this invariably leads to a corresponding growth in verbal intelligence. The convergence of mind, heart and speech lends credit to the study’s hypothesis that higher order thinking effects speaking. It is the mechanism that fosters self-efficacy and accelerates the student’s spoken language proficiency. A deeply motivated teacher is often the force that fuels this momentum in the learning process.

In a limited survey conducted among L2 public school teachers in Quito, eighty-nine percent of them agreed that motivated classroom teachers are the catalyst for success in language learning.

See Figure 5.3 below.

2. Success in language learning is based on teacher motivation in the classroom.

27 responses

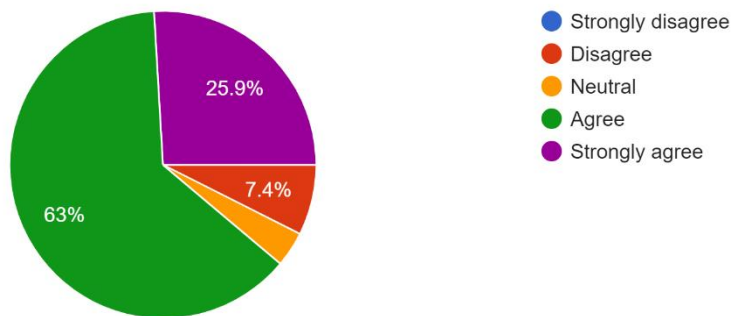


Figure 5. 3 Online Google Teacher Motivation Survey

An overwhelming ninety-six percent felt that engaging, experiential teaching methods would motivate them more and inturn, mold their students into creative, critical thinkers, as reflecetd in Figure 5.4 below.

14. Using more engaging, experiential teaching methods would motivate me more, and allow my students to be more creative, critical thinkers.

30 responses

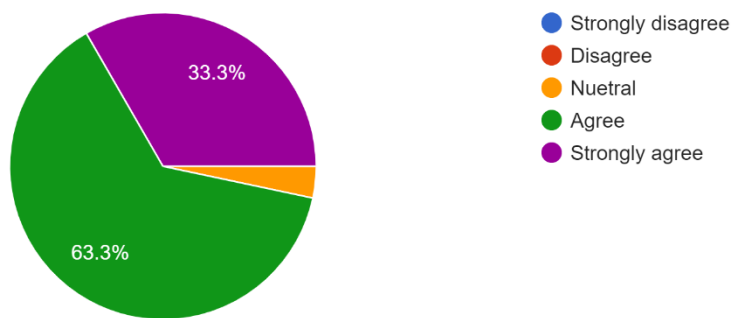


Figure 5. 4 Online Google Teacher Motivation Survey

Imagine a classroom where L2 learners are so captivated by dynamic lessons and motivated teachers, they cannot bear to be absent from class. Here are real-life testimonies from students who lived that experience in one of my Superior Speaking courses. They noted:

<p>“The class is fun, ... for that reason I never want to miss her class. I learned a lot with her motivation.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Ex. SS Student</i></p>	<p>The classroom energy is infectious. “You want to go to class because it’s not boring. And you know you are going to learn in an interact way.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Ex. SS Student</i></p>	<p>“(I) felt free and comfortable... every exam was related to real life and developed our English language for the real world.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Ex. SS Student</i></p>
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Table 5. 2 SS Students’ Testimonials on Teacher Motivation

5.7.4 Integrative Motivation

Gardner & Lambert (1972) conducted an exhaustive twelve-year study of motivation and second language learning. Among other things, their investigation involved a deeper analysis of what the researchers coined as, “integrative motive” and “instrumental motive.” The two causal factors are much like the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations mentioned earlier. L2 students with an instrumental motivation learn English for practical reasons, like getting a job promotion, which is good. However, integrative motivation drills down further for a deeper definition of verbal language interaction. At this level, it is suggested (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) that the students’ curiosity, love, and affinity for the second language, inspire them to autonomously integrate with the target language community. This aptly describes some of my SS students and EAP learners who make plans to move to an English-speaking country in order to experience the joy of studying, traveling, experiencing a new culture, or simply learning to speak like a native.

5.7.5 Motivation & Creative Inquiry

Noam Chomsky’s creative inquiry philosophy fits the integrative motivation process. Creative Inquiry also offers evidence of metacognition, for it argues that an energized student with a

motivated attitude directs his or her own knowledge acquisition. “The highest goal in life is to inquire and create.” (Chomsky, 2012; Interview). To that end, teachers should set an atmosphere that inspires students to be critical, inquisitive thinkers, and to search for their own answers. Chomsky’s notion of creative inquiry is powered by the learner’s drive, aptitude, and a high level of intrinsic as well as integrative motivation.

5.7.6 Motivation & Affective Filter

In analyzing linguist Stephen Krashen’s famous Affective Filter hypothesis, it was noted (Schütz, 2019) that motivation was listed as one of four behavioral factors in 2nd language acquisition. Low affective filters, as described by Schutz, are mental blocks that impede a student’s comprehensible input and stifle acquisition. However, he claims “learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, a low level of anxiety and extroversion are better equipped for success in second language acquisition (Schütz, 2019, p. 5). It is fitting to note that all four research variables in Krashen’s hypothesis: motivation, self-esteem, low anxiety and extroversion, are arguably causal components, or at the very least, facilitators of higher order thinking.

6. METHODOLOGY

The study’s research question asks, what are the effects of the “EAP Higher-Order thinking Course” on speaking? The project seeks to implement and evaluate such a course in order to raise the speaking proficiency level of advanced EFL students.

6.1 Population & Sample

The research is a descriptive, quasi experimental study. The population consisted of more than seventy-five CEC-EPN students in Quito, Ecuador. All are from my past and present SS classes. Their ages ranged from seventeen to sixty. Also, EAP scholars and CEC-EPN administrators

participated as stakeholders and subject matter experts. In addition, thirty school teachers were surveyed.

6.2 Research Instruments

The study utilized eight instruments to generate, then gather and analyze data. Included were online surveys, interviews, student role-play, reflection journals, classroom observation, rubric, pre/post-tests, self /peer assessments, as well as curriculum analysis.

6.2.1 Online Student Surveys

These surveys gathered quantitative data. The first featured a class of fourteen new SS students. It collected information on student understanding and/or exposure to higher order thinking, and direct, task-based learning. Responses also revealed participants’ history of rote learning versus active learning. It yielded data on students’ classroom speaking experiences as well as their feelings about class participation.

Part two of the survey collected qualitative data. Students were asked about their perception of how creative, or higher order thinking could boost speaking. Here are some responses in Table 6.1 below.

“You will be able to take (have) deep conversations.” <i>(SS student)</i>	“You could have fluent speaking. It gives ability to express your ideas more clearly.” <i>(SS student)</i>
“I will develop and organize my ideas correctly and express what I really want to deliver to people.” <i>(SS student)</i>	“When you think in the details of some topics... you have more material to speak with. You go from macro-analysis to micro-analysis.” <i>(SS student)</i>

Table 6. 1 SS Student Comments (How might higher order thinking boost speaking?)

6.2.2 One-On-One Zoom Interviews

The conversations provided background data on CEC-EPN’s inception, and the twenty-plus year history of its Superior Speaking course. Participants included CEC’S creator and past director,

Henry Guy, as well as current CEC coordinator, Ernesto Santos. They candidly discussed the program’s strengths, gaps, and weaknesses. They also suggested possible ways to elevate the SS course to an EAP curriculum and cautioned about potential obstacles.

6.2.3 Student Role Play

This activity showcased a student-run club meeting. It takes place every Monday and Wednesday for forty-five minutes. All students are assigned rotating speaking roles and responsibilities during the SupClub meeting, as it’s called. The cycle-long assignments are detailed on a Google spread sheet and distributed through the class’ student-created WhatsApp chat group. Table 6.2 below describes the Supclub meeting roles.

SupClub Meeting Roles	SupClub Role Descriptions
SubClub Master	This student serves as the “host” in charge of SupClub meeting flow. He/She is the meeting organizer. They open and run meeting, introduce all meeting participants, and close meeting.
Joke Master	This person sets a fun, relaxed environment by telling a joke. They can choose to create a fun game or exercise that gets everyone involved. They bring levity, lighten the mood, and get audience to laugh, which helps to release stress, anxiety, and fatigue. (Joke Time: 1-2 minutes. Up to 5 minutes when exercise is involved)
Quote Master	This student delivers a quote of their choice and explains why it’s significant to them. This will offer audience inspiration and motivation. It can also challenge them to follow their goals and realize that anything is possible. (Quote Time: 1-2 minutes)

Prepared Speakers	<p>These (3) participants will deliver individual speeches that are prepared and in line with instructor's Superior Speaking segment teaching.</p> <p>(Non-Exam speech Time: 2-3 minutes)</p>
Word Master	<p>An assigned student will select a word before meeting and present during the meeting, giving the definition and effectively use the word in a sentence. He or she will then encourage the scribe of the week to include word on our vocabulary word tree list.</p> <p>(Word Master Time: 1-2 minutes)</p>
Speech Evaluators	<p>These (3) participants will serve as speech evaluators to our three prepared speakers. Evaluators will give thoughtful and positive feedback to the individual speakers they are assigned to evaluate.</p> <p>Evaluators are to take notes on the bright spots in the speech and encourage the speaker early and often. Any critique should identify the weak areas in the speech and offer suggestions to improve.</p> <p>(Evaluator Time: 1-2 minutes)</p>
Grammarians	<p>During the SupClub meeting, this person takes copious notes on participants' use of grammar. They evaluate each person, also taking note of students who incorporate past word-tree vocabulary words or other impressive phrases. Later, they deliver a grammarians' report on the errors made and offer suggestions for improvement.</p> <p>(Grammarians Time: 1-2 minutes)</p>
Timekeeper	<p>This student is responsible for keeping a record of the time sequence of each participant's speech. They will also use a timecard to signal to speakers when they have 1 minute, 30 seconds and zero time left. They then give the speaker a motion to wrap up. The TM will call on the TK to deliver a timer's later in the meeting.</p> <p>(Timekeeper Time: 1-2 minutes)</p>
General Evaluator (Teacher)	<p>This participant is responsible for evaluating the entire SupClub meeting. They will identify what worked and what needs improvements. They will critique each meeting participant, also act as grammarians and timekeeper. Instructor will hold this role and later hand it over to students who have matured to the level of a General Evaluator.</p> <p>(General Evaluator Time: 2-3 minutes)</p>

Close	Club Master closes out the meeting in an uplifting way... and teases the next SupClub Meeting.

Table 6. 2 SupClub Role Description

The bi-weekly business sessions conducted by the students produced a plethora of practical exercises that taught students how to:

Engage in critical thinking	Research, evaluate, analyze, generate ideas	Brainstorm, investigate facts
Improve voice & articulation	Overcome fear, nervousness, anxiety	Develop leadership skills
Deliver powerful speeches	Skillfully debate, defend, rebut arguments	Take ownership of learning
Study current events	Evaluate classmates' speeches	Give & take peer feedback
Captivate an audience Display passion/emotion	Communicate with clarity & confidence Move learning from theory to practice	Practice metacognition Interpret, analyze quotes
Organize, host a meeting Collaborate with peers Speak under pressure Master body language Learn time-management Have fun while learning	Build advanced L2 word vocabulary Improve reading, writing, listening skills Create PowerPoint presentations Actively participate in class discussions Self-motivate, self-empower Refine note-taking, speech structuring	Incorporate new knowledge Deliver extemporaneous speeches Use posture & gestures Utilize soft skills Organize, pitch business ideas Learn the art of persuasion

Table 6. 3 Skills Learned at Bi-Weekly SupClub Meeting

6.2.4 Formative & Summative Assessments

Both of these appraisal formats were utilized during and after the Superior Speaking Job Fair. The peak performance event was the students' final exam project. And the online classroom was transformed into a dynamic mock Job Fair. But most of the nine headhunters and job interviewers

were real business professionals and native English-speaking friends of mine. I recruited these eager volunteers from California to Connecticut and also from Quito. This highly anticipated event was a chance for the SS students to put on display, their cumulative experiential knowledge amassed over the cycle. It offered me the opportunity to gauge, assess, and evaluate their thought-based verbal as well as non-verbal communication skills.

The Job Fair judges were tasked with interviewing the job hunters based on an extensive SS lesson profile I sent them, detailing interview and job-hunting skills and techniques students had learned and mastered in class. They were also sent a videotape reel of the students' elevator pitches for review.

During the interview process, judges used a customized rubric to identify a list of language proficient skills taught in class, and to scale students' performance. Here, below in Table 6.4, is the rubric.

Rubric: Superior Speaking Online Job Fair

Task Description

Students will accurately use their verbal & non-verbal speaking skills at a Mock Online Job Fair

DIMENSIONS:	Exemplary	Competent	Developing
Communicated ideas clearly & confidently	Clear, succinct answers. There are no communication errors. 2.5 pts.	Clear, succinct answers. There are 1-3 communication errors. 2 pts.	Often confusing, verbose answers. There are more than 4 structural errors. 1 pt.
Dressed professionally	Dressed professionally. There are no outfit errors. 2.5 pts.	Dressed professionally. There 1-3 outfit errors. 2 pts.	Dressed unprofessionally. There more than 4 outfit errors. 1 pt.

Used proper body language and voice tone	Used body language and voice tone effectively. There are no errors. 2.5 pts.	Used body language and voice tone effectively. There are 1-3 errors. 2 pts.	Poor use of body language and voice tone effectively. There are more than 4 errors. 1 pt.
Answered interview questions convincingly	Questions answered fully and satisfactorily. There are no errors. 2.5 pts.	Questions answered partially and adequately. There are 1-3 errors. 2 pts.	Questions answered improperly and inadequately. There are more than 4 errors. 1 pt.
Displayed good command of English pronunciation	English pronunciation was clear and understandable. There are no errors. 2.5 pts.	English pronunciation was sometimes unclear and incorrect. There are 1-3 errors. 2 pts.	English pronunciation was murky and confusing. There are more than 4 errors. 1 pt.
Utilized proper vocabulary	Used advanced Vocabulary. There are no errors. 2.5 pts.	Used average Vocabulary. There are 1-3 errors. 2 pts.	Used below-average Vocabulary. There are more than 4 errors. 1 pt.

Table 6. 4 Job Fair Rubric

Shortly after the Job Fair, students took time to evaluate their performance, using this self-assessment form below.

Student Post Job Fair Self-Assessment

1. Please describe your feelings about today's Online Job Fair experience	2. What specifically did you learn/takeaway from today's Online Job Fair?
3. How did this activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build your self-confidence • help you overcome fear • help you to practice your conversation skills • use your advanced vocabulary words 	4. What are you most proud of about your performance at the Job Fair?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve your pronunciation 	
5. What area(s) as a speaker, do you need to improve on after this job fair experience?	

Table 6. 5 Job Fair Post Self Assessment Form

This consequential activity was a real-life event most students had never witnessed nor experienced before. It provided multiple ways to assess their L2 acquisition and production, and to evaluate the instrument’s effectiveness. Here are the various types of assessments used at and shortly after the Job Fair:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Fair-Task Tool (Instrument) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post self-assessment (student audio/video testimonials)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubric (grade scoring guide) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job interviewers’ feedback (video/ written comments)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert feedback (during interview) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post self-reflection (student journaling)

Table 6. 6 Types of Job Fair Assessments

6.2.5 Reflection Journals

Reflection journals serve as a mental language tool that students use to self-evaluate. They record their thoughts, feelings, and thinking processes in weekly journal entries. This mindful and introspective journey allows students to reflect on what they learn. Then they can review how to further intergrate the new knowledge into meaningful, real life situations. Journaling thoughts consistently leads to the growth of metacognitive skills, teaching students to:

Self-reflect, critically examine their thoughts	Plan, monitor, evaluate their performance
Be autonomous learners, build on prior knowledge	Accelerate their creativity, problem-solving and critical thinkins skills
Feel empowered to self-discover, self-direct their own L2 acquisition	Evaluate new knowledge; identify and fix linguistic gaps and weaknesses

Table 6. 7 Results of Metacognition

6.2.6 Class Observation

This tool gathered analytical data from a colleague, the current Superior Writing (SW) instructor. Many of my former SS students go on to take CEC’s Level 13 Superior Writing course after passing my SS class. The SW teacher observed the language skill levels of my former students and compared them to his other students who had a different SS instructor. This inquiry was done to gather further empirical evidence that could help validate or disprove the soundness of my unique teaching methodology.

6.2.7 Curriculum Analysis

This is included to allow my current SS class curriculum to be examined. It features examples of the various instruments, tools, exercises, and projects used in the class. They indicate how students learn by thinking and doing. As asserted earlier, real-life, hands-on approach engages students to create their self-driven learning. This helps to “equip students with the necessary skills for communication in everyday contexts” (Educacion, 2012, p. 5). Here, below, is the Curriculum Analysis:

Curriculum Analysis:		
Real World Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Stakes Job Fair • Meaningful Debates • Video Evaluator Pitch • “Shark Tank” Product Pitch • Dress for Business Success • Create Online CV • Master Tech Tool • Use Soft Skills 	SupClub Speech Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run Business Meeting • Build Leadership Skills • Evaluate Peers • Take Class Notes • Structure Speeches • Speak with Passion • Speak Extemporaneously • Manage Time • Serve as Grammarian 	Assessment Tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys • Rubrics • Pre/Post Self Assessments • Peer Assessment/Feedback • Accountability Partnerships • Game Quizzes • Teacher -Student Chat • Outside expert Feedback

Student Role-Play Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murder Trial • TV Newscast • Peer Interviews • Online Interview Sessions • Student-Teach the Lesson 	Advanced Pronunciation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study of IPA • Build Vocabulary Word Trees • Yapa Word videos • Video case study • Learn Cognates 	Analysis/ Critical Thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret literature • Conduct Research • Analyze short stories • Self-Reflect in Journal • Metacognitive Study • Plan, Evaluate, Monitor to Self-Direct Learning

Table 6. 8 SS Class Curriculum Analysis

6.2.8 A Motivation Survey

The motivation survey was conducted to evaluate the possible role motivation plays in yielding optimum second language learning results. The survey examined the inspiring and infectious nature of teacher-driven motivation, its impact on students, and its influence on the L2 learning process. Figures 6.1 through 6.5 below offer an examination of the survey.

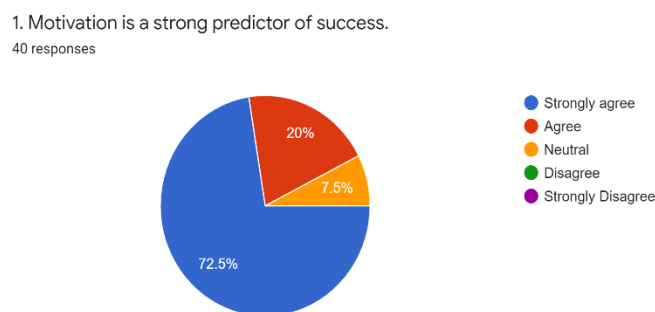


Figure 6. 1 Survey Response to the Might of Motivation

3. A motivated teacher motivates students to learn.
40 responses

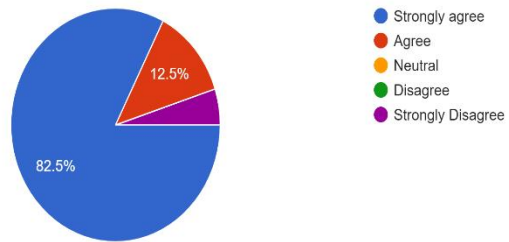


Figure 6. 2 Survey Response to Teacher Motivation

5. My English teacher's teaching style increased the level of my motivation, which increased my learning.
40 responses

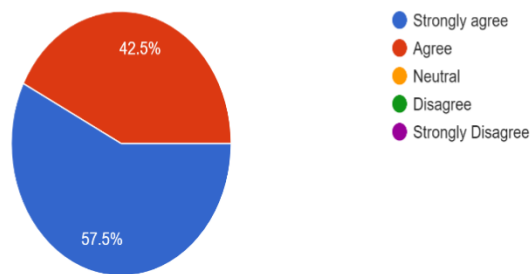


Figure 6. 3 Survey Response to Teachers' Teaching Style

9. When I am motivated to learn more, work harder, I am more creative.
40 responses

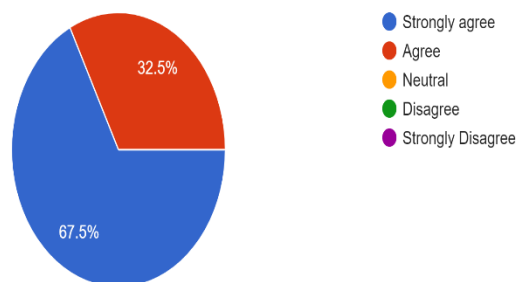


Figure 6. 4 Survey Response to Motivation & Creativity

13. My teacher's use of hands-on, interactive learning methods greatly improved my learning experience and my knowledge of English.
40 responses

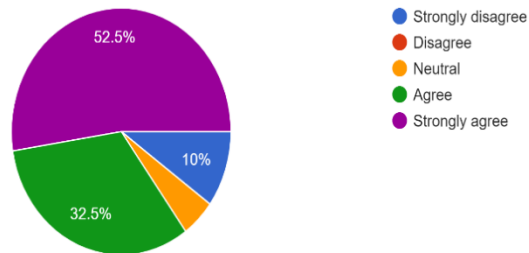


Figure 6. 5 Survey Response to Interactive Learning

7. DATA RESULTS

Data obtained from this investigative research used both quantitative and qualitative approaches to assess students' linguistic knowledge, acquired skills, and growth gaps. The results helped to answer the research question. It offered sufficient corroborating evidence of the effects of the "EAP Higher-Order thinking Course" on speaking. And it validated the feasibility of expanding upon my pioneering SS pedagogical approach to elevate it to an EAP design that can help accelerate students' spoken language proficiency.

7.1 Online Student Survey

1. The first Google survey served as a quantitative pre-assessment tool. It analyzed the incoming student's thoughts on creative thinking. The survey revealed that only 36% of students in that class were sure had previous academic knowledge of critical thinking. Yet, 93% felt it was important to possess such higher-level thinking skills, as reflected in Figures 7.1 & 7.2. That indicated a level of interest in the topic, and a confirmation that targeted focus on such skills is appropriate.

In your previous English language classes, did you learn about critical thinking?
14 responses

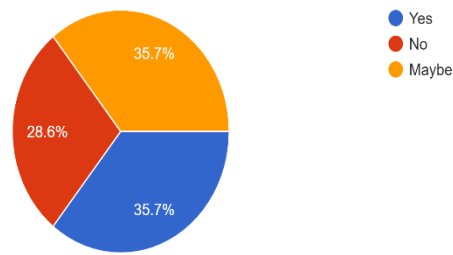


Figure 7. 1 SS Student Online Google Survey on Higher Order Thinking

How important is critical thinking to Superior Speaking?
14 responses

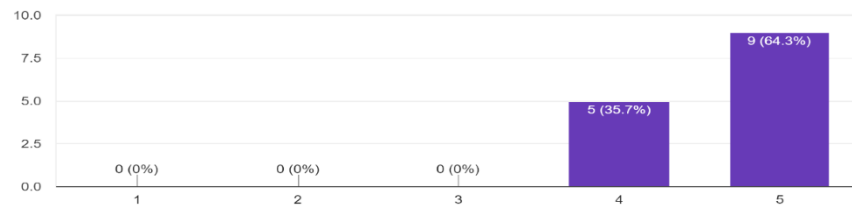


Figure 7. 2 SS Student Online Google Survey on Critical Thinking

Also, less than 30% of the respondents said they often participated in class discussions, as indicated below in Figure 7.3. This information suggested that most new SS students can be expected to be shy, nervous, or anxious about speaking in public.

How often did you participate in class discussions using English?
14 responses

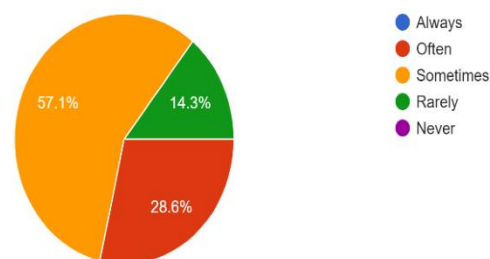


Figure 7. 3 SS Student Online Google Survey on Class Participation

This extracted data served to confirm portions of the current course content, relative to teaching students how to overcome fear when speaking in front of people. The data evidence may also suggest that low class participation in prior CEC classes could be linked to discussion topics that did not engage the students, or to teachers who may not have motivated students to participate in class.

2. The second part of the survey was qualitative. Proof was extracted from the students’ answers to ascertain whether they thought higher order thinking could potentially boost their speaking skills.

The questionnaire results were almost unanimous. Here are some of the positive responses:

“You will be able to take (have) deep conversations.” <i>(SS student)</i>	“You could have fluent speaking. It gives ability to express your ideas more clearly.” <i>(SS student)</i>
“I will develop and organize my ideas correctly and express what I really want to deliver to people.” <i>(SS student)</i>	“When you think in the details of some topics... you have more material to speak with. You go from macro-analysis to micro-analysis.” <i>(SS student)</i>

Table 7. 1 SS Student Comments -Higher Order Thinking & Speaking

The students’ answers suggest they equate higher order thinking to having organized thoughts, deeper conversations, and expressing clear ideas, all of which are promising signs.

7.2 One-On-One Zoom Interviews

The expert interviews helped to analyze and synthesize theoretical as well historical facts about both CEC-EPN and EAP. The background data on CEC’s original Superior Speaking framework helped clarify the program’s inherent strengths and weaknesses. Identifying the gaps helped to make the case for transforming the SS course into a more innovative EAP speaking curriculum. Also, the interviews revealed extensive philosophical as well as practical similarities between how my current pioneering SS course is taught and the teaching methodologies used in the EAP

teaching framework. These conversations with the experts also yielded valuable recommendations on how to better implement a thought based EAP course that will vastly improve my EFL students’ verbal intelligence. Those will be discussed in detail later in the study.

7.3 Student Role Play

Substantially useful data was derived from the student-run SupClub meeting. This task-based activity has been tested and utilized successfully over my twelve consecutive teaching cycles at CEC-EPN. The student’s enthusiastic responses provided solid, practical results of the exercise’s efficacy in using the target language in a specific situation.

In the online Google survey, twenty-eight students were questioned about the bi-weekly SupClub sessions.

1. Survey Question: In your opinion, why was the SupClub experience in class so effective?” Here is testimonial data which provided strong results:

<p>“It was effective because we practice(d) constantly and improved our pronunciation and abilities for talking in public.” <i>SS Student</i></p>	<p>“It helped us learn advanced words and how to respond and agree and disagree with others points.” <i>SS Student</i></p>	<p>“It was so effective because it forced(ed) us to think extemporaneously and put in practice what we learned (about) vocabulary & speech structure.” <i>SS Student</i></p>
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Table 7. 2 SupClub Student Survey Response-Supclub Effectiveness

<p>“SupClub Master was my favorite role because I have never done something similar. It was a brand-new experience and force (d) me to develop several soft skills like leadership, communication, teamwork. Also, it had to be extemporaneous, it developed my critical thinking and my conversation skills. I felt confident and comfortable doing it.” <i>SS Student</i></p>	<p>“The SupClub was effective because we had the opportunity to take several roles and at the same time give our comentary (commentary) from different points of view. Also, it allowed us to improve and feel confident in every new meeting.” <i>SS Student</i></p>
---	---

Table 7. 3 SupClub Student Written Testimonials: Supclub Overview

2. Survey Question: What specific communication skills did your SupClub experience improve?

Intonation /pronunciation Vocabulary building	Self-confidence /Voice tone Debate skills	Body language Time management
Listening skills / Fluency Extemporaneous thinking	Sounding conversational Organizational skills	Critical thinking Speech analysis

Table 7. 4 SupClub Student Survey Response: Communication Skills

Additionally, students offered video evidence causally linking their accelerated communication skills to the bi-weekly SubClub sessions. They particularly pointed to how learning the basic structure of a speech was a major breakthrough; how the SupClub meetings provided a functional platform which they used to frequently produce and further develop their higher order thinking and better speaking. In the video reflection below, one student compared his English learning process before and after he took my SS class. He placed strong emphasis on the teaching methodology and philosophical approaches in the classroom, which he said resulted in significant personal growth. Here is the Youtube video link: <https://youtu.be/bQLa3QNCdbg>



Figure 7. 4 SupClub Video Testimonial

The data analysis of these actionable results, evidenced in written and video form, has offered meaningful insights that further support an informed response to the research question. So, one can definitively argue that the “EAP Higher Order Thinking Course” could positively affect a student’s speaking aptitude.

7.4 Formative & Summative Assessments

Another assessment tool that furnished tangible results was the culminating Job Fair event, the student’s final course exam. It allowed them to contextualize the language in a high-stakes communicative environment. There were ample examples pointing to the validity, reliability, and authenticity of this real-world assessment tool. This instrument was shown to be valid, as the task content was successfully measured according to what the tool was designed to do. It revealed positive signs that students could turn their knowledge into practical application being interviewed for jobs under pressure by real life professionals.

The assessment tool was also reliable because it produced consistent overall results of the students’ improved thinking and speaking skills. This lent credence to the competency of the learners, as it highlighted their higher-level ability to integrate knowledge with actionable performance.

The mock Job Fair focused on the learners’ fundamental knowledge and real-life application of their speaking skills both contextually and functionally. That made it authentic. The task measured and reflected the skills students learned in class, including how to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speak with clarity, confidence, competence, and confidence at an online job expo.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Think on your feet during a series of job interviews conducted by native speaking professionals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dress appropriately for a job interview. Look professional on camera.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Utilize positive body language and voice tone. Exhibit listening comprehension.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate learned advanced vocabulary words while holding robust conversations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate proper English pronunciation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display soft skills like leadership, positive attitude, passion & persuasion

Table 7. 5 Real-life Application Skills

The students’ personal Job Fair self-assessment also produced valuable effects that were worth analyzing. Their self-documented video and written testimonials conveyed overwhelmingly positive sentiments. They revealed how students grew in self-awareness, could gauge their own speech language development, and recognized how this real-life Job Fair experience had made them better thinkers and better speakers. Watch this video testimonial at this Youtube link: <https://youtu.be/GVN6zKhJbGU>.



Figure 7. 5 Video link to Job Fair Testimonial

Data results were also gleaned from customized rubric designed for job recruiters to grade students’ individual interview performance. Some recruiters later evaluated the event, giving written and video feedback. You can read some samples in Table 7.6 right below.

<p>“You did an excellent job getting the students ready for the interviews (and) for the real world. Your setup for the online interviews was phenomenal.”</p> <p><i>Rose Bayless-Texas</i></p>	<p>“Job well done! The only problem, which you can’t really solve, is that 15 minutes is only enough time to have one in depth question and one shorter question for each participant, and then a quick wrap up.”</p> <p><i>Ellen Conis- California</i></p>
<p>“Next time create the rubric in excel, which automatically calculates student grades.”</p> <p>“Provide list with students’ name, education level and job they seek ahead of time.”</p> <p><i>Luis DeMace- New York</i></p>	<p>“The activity was dynamic and interesting. I think that it is extremely useful because normally, nobody teaches you how to act in an interview. It was a phenomenal experience (for the students).”</p> <p><i>Luis Munoz-Pabon -Quito</i></p>

Table 7. 6 Feedback from Job Fair Recruiters

In addition, several of our Job Fair recruiters shared their feedback and event evaluations on video tape. Here is what Debbie Montgomery Johnson of Florida had to say by clicking this Youtube link: <https://youtu.be/V3XSMHYzQjM>



Figure 7. 6 SS Job Fair: Recruiter’s Feedback

Through this meaningful experience my SS students are now more mentally and verbally equipped to confidently enter the job market and use their new interview skills, whether to land their first job, seek a promotion, or pursue better job opportunities outside their companies.

Because the Job Fair tool instruction focused on experiencing the language, it yielded positive impact for both the students and for me, their teacher. It offered great insight on my students' progress or missteps, as well as revealed potential gaps and weak learning areas that needed addressing. With that knowledge, I can use the feedback to plan and design new, more challenging instructional materials to ensure greater student growth.

7.5 Reflection Journal

The reflection journals yielded sound, relevant and applicable information that I used to gauge students' self-directed learning. The data retrieved lent credence to the transferability of this qualitative instructional tool. One student's thoughtfully written reflection revealed how this activity had encouraged her inquisitive spirit and open-minded tendency. Inquisitiveness and curiosity are character traits of creative, cognitive thinking, a cornerstone of the proposed EFL speaking course. Positive results from student's self-evaluation abound in their introspective writings. In addition to their weekly formative examination, their final summative self-analysis spoke volumes about their self-awareness and thoughts about their own linguistic growth. Here is an example below in Table 7.7.

A Self Reflection Journey:

When I first started this class I felt nervous, concerned because it was a different experience from the other cycles that I was used to. Now I can say I feel I am a confident, fluent speaker with body language, because now I use more organized speeches, phonetics, and expressions that I didn't use before.

The strategies that we used not only helped me to forget nervousness but also to have fun learning.

I think, additionally, that the SupClub activity made us more sociable students, playing different roles and interacting with each other and correcting our mistakes friendly, this activity helped us to be responsible too and be careful and have critical thinking whenever you are speaking, listening or writing.

This experience taught me how to use different and innovative methods of self-knowledge and because of the pandemic this experience also changed me and show me new ways of communication and also class attendance. Moreover, learning about my soft skills and use my body language in every speech for the videos we made and prepare myself for future job opportunities.

SS Student

Table 7. 7 A SS Student’s Self Reflection Journey

When asked to convert their final written self-reflection into a video chat, the students complied without hesitation. Their emotions lept off the pages and unto a camera screen, a feat they once dreaded doing. This was substantiated evidence of my students’ personal growth over their eight-week-long experiential journey to becoming superior speakers. The video simply validated the remarkable development in their storytelling, self-confidence, emotional intelligence, display of passion, conveying an engaging message, suitable use of body language, incorporation of advanced english words, conversational tone, vocal variety, properly structured speech delivery, inclusion of strategic power quotes... all functional skills they learned and used in fun, interactive class activities. Here, below, is an illustrative video of one of those final self reflections captured on Youtube at this link: <https://youtu.be/6DknsyOFI-c>

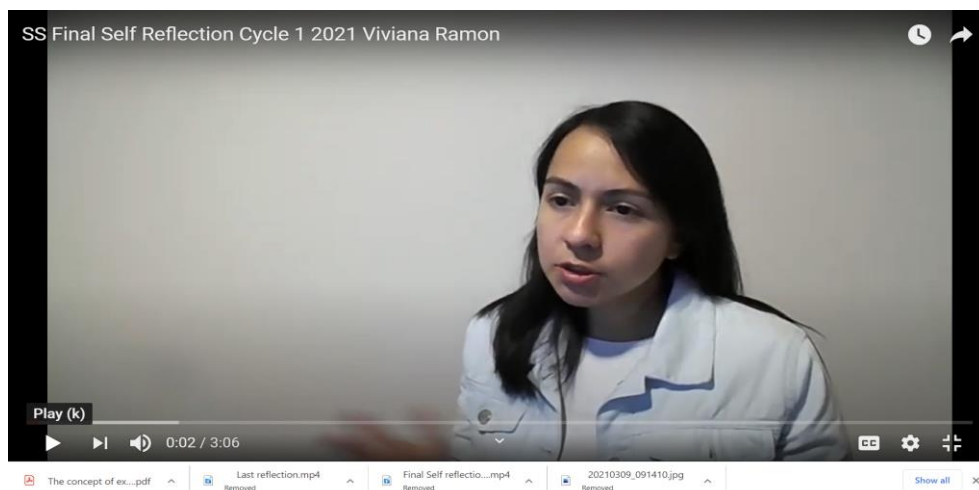


Figure 7. 7 SS Student Final Reflection

7.6 Classroom Observation Survey

More interesting results of evidential value were identified in a limited classroom observation survey. The sole respondent was a CEC-EPN colleague, Vinu Narayanan (2021) whose Superior Writing (SW) class consists of many of my previous SS students. He had noted that he could easily identify my former students in his SW class.

Survey Question:

What did you observe about Sharon Frame's former Superior Speaking students who are now in your Superior Writing class at CEC-EPN?
--

Table 7. 8 Class Observation Question #1

Survey Response:

Two things come to mind: One, they follow instructions better. Two, they demonstrate better critical thinking. They process information differently. <i>SW Teacher Vinu Narayanan</i>

Table 7. 9 Class Observation Response #1

Survey Question:

Would you attribute Sharon Frame's former SS students' superior speaking and critical thinking development to her teaching techniques? Please explain.
--

Table 7. 10 Class Observation Question #2

Survey Response:

“Since I have had about three batches of students across cycles, few from and few not from Sharon’s classes, I can conclusively comment that I have noticed a clear distinction in their approach to L2.” “They reflect deeper and think wider...Setup time is much less. I can start with more complicated exercises right away.” <i>SW Teacher Vinu Narayanan</i>
--

Table 7. 11 Class Observation Response #2

When asked how he (Narayanan, 2021) would rank my former students’ higher order thinking, the highest possible score was given, as indicated in Figure 7.8 below.

On a scale of 1 (Lowest) to 5 (Highest), how would you rank Sharon Frame's former students' creative thinking or higher order thinking skills, based on your observation?
1 response

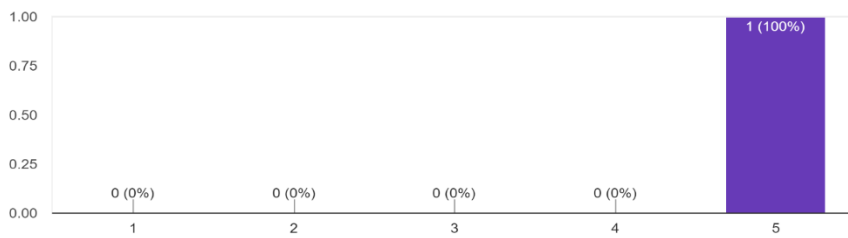


Figure 7. 8 Classroom Observstion Survey

Although this survey’s scope was restricted, the limited results do present a chance for pedagogical analysis. First, Narayanan’s (2021) observations suggested that some of my former the SS students have internalized and automatized the L2 knowledge gained in my class. Also, one could argue that they demonstrated a higher level of English competence and target language acquisition, when compared to other L2 learners with similar CEC-EPN background. Moreover, the students’ propensity to manifest higher order thinking not only boosted their superior speaking proficiency, but it also potentially supported their superior writing skills.

7.7 Motivation Survey

7.7.1 Results & Response from Teacher Motivation Survey

The survey of roughly thirty EFL public school instructors revealed mixed feelings teachers display about motivation:

Ninety-seven percent of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that motivation is a strong predictor of student success.	When asked if their motivation level needs improving, almost sixty-five percent agreed. However, roughly thirty-six percent disagreed or remained neutral.
Meantime, close to 93 percent of the teachers felt that unmotivated teachers contributed to student anxiety in the classroom.	Eighty two percent of those asked admitted that the old-fashioned teaching style of

	memorization and repetition does not motivate or excite them.
Almost ninety seventy percent agreed or strongly agreed that if they engage in new teaching strategies, their students would be more creative thinkers.	However, close to a quarter of them still say their traditional instruction styles are sufficient to teach grammar and ensure student language acquisition.

Table 7. 12 Results from Teacher Motivation Survey

The traditional public-school teachers who took part in the survey are at a critical juncture in their L2 teaching careers. They nervously await pending changes in in their system-mandated textbooks. The edits will mean less teacher-centered and mechanical teaching methods. Although most of the teachers said they were open to new changes, (like shifting their teaching methodologies to more task-based, student-centered and commicative approaches) a quarter of them remained neutral in the survey. That may suggest they doubt the merit of change. They consistently praised the value of boosting their motivation level. But the survey also reflects they are not quite ready to fully embrace the non-traditional teaching methods that could make their classrooms more dynamic.

Here is a small sample of some responses in the teachers’ own words:

“If we teachers are motivated our students will work in a better way and thus, they will like English as a whole.” <i>L2 Teacher</i>	“I am aware that I need to learn more preparation to motivate my students.” <i>L2 Teacher</i>
“It’s not correct to come to the classroom and just teach structure.” <i>L2 Teacher</i>	“I need to learn more warm-up activities and have enough support from the (school) authorities.” <i>L2 Teacher</i>
One teacher expressed frustration with the lack of opportunity to improve: “I’d improve if I had constant training in new methods of training, and if I had more flexibility in the planning chart, to be more creative.” <i>L2 Teacher</i>	“Students need to have their own reason to learn a second language.” Students have to be motivated by themselves.” <i>L2 Teacher</i>

Table 7. 13 Teacher (personal) Response in Motivation Survey

7.6.2 Results & Response from Student Motivation Survey

Some forty of my former Superior Speaking students were also asked to give their take on teacher motivation. The questionnaire results revealed very positive classroom experiences, as indicated below in Table 7.14.

Ninety-two percent of students surveyed felt that motivation is a strong predictor of success.	Ninety-two percent said their level of English speaking had greatly improved because of their motivated teacher.
Almost one hundred percent of the students attributed their consistently positive and optimistic psychology to their nontraditional learning experience. The teacher’s style, they said, motivated them and increased their learning.	Ninety-two percent said their level of English speaking had greatly improved because of their motivated teacher. When asked whether the teacher’s method inspired them to do homework and take on extra self-directed projects, ninety-two percent agree or strongly agreed.
An overwhelming majority of ninety percent agreed that motivated students learn another language faster and in a superior way.	When asked about the real-life interactive experience they had, eighty-five percent said that style greatly improved their knowledge of English.

Table 7. 14 Results from Student Motivation Survey

While the teachers vacillated, my SS students seemed steadfast. Results from their survey revealed evidence of how motivation can magnify second language learning. Since the students were exposed to both tradition and nontraditional methodologies, their answers offered unique and comparative insights.

Here is a small sample of some of their responses in their own words:

“The dynamic classroom activities forced me to participate I got immersed in the process of learning.”	The students shared how their old structure and grammar-based learning environment made them
--	--

<i>SS Student</i>	quote, “feel tired, with a headache and looking at the clock all the time.” <i>SS Student</i>
One respondent described the classroom energy as infectious. Quote: “you want to go to class because it’s not boring. And you know you are going to learn in an interact way.” <i>SS Student</i>	Another survey participant remarked that the unmotivated class “created an environment of stress and powerlessness”. <i>SS Student</i>
Another student described the class as fun, and said, “for that reason I never want to miss her class. I learned a lot with her motivation.” <i>SS Student</i>	“I felt free and comfortable... every exam was related to real life and developed our English language for the real world.” <i>SS Student</i>

Table 7. 15 Student (personal) Response in Motivation Survey

Now, watch how one student discussed what he encountered after transferring from one CEC-EPN SS Class to mine, and how the different teaching methodology changed his life. The video testimonial at this Youtube link: <https://youtu.be/m74-LoEvHa8>



Figure 7. 9 Student Video Testimonial on Teacher’s Unique SS Methodology

8. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

8.1 Create a Unique EAP Speaking Course

Analytical data indicates there is sufficient empirical evidence to support an “EAP Higher-Order Thinking Course. The current CEC-EPN Superior Speaking Course I pioneered and currently teach can be expanded upon to create such an alternative course. The study analysis signifies to a clear advantage to teaching functional, subject-based thinking as a component of public speaking. However, the research also suggests that the success of the transition, in some instances, could prove problematic. That is if students are not properly motivated to fully embrace autonomous self-directed learning.

Also, shifting CEC’s Superior Speaking classes’ General Language status to an EAP framework could run up against entrenched administrative and logistical policies and procedures. As the program’s founder said cautiously, their course enrollment system is a complex matrix that must often reconcile conflicting class schedules throughout a given cycle. This, to accommodate EPN students as well as CEC enrollees from other universities and from the community at large. This problem would make it exceedingly difficult to introduce a new and unconventional EAP curriculum into the mix. Difficult, but not impossible.

On the other hand, my trailblazing SS course is very similar to EAP’s task-based, functional language approach. So, it is not entirely new to CEC. Also, the course consistently gets rave reviews from students. That could make it seem more of an innovative add-on, and worth the trouble of making any radical operational changes.

8.2 The Need for Vigorous Validation

There is sufficient data-driven cause to believe that the proposed EAP curriculum could raise the proficiency level of advanced EFL students, especially if priority is given to include robust and

routine evaluations. The efficacy of my Superior Speaking pilot course has been proven and validated by the numerous assessment activities illustrated throughout this study. For the new EAP curriculum to thrive, multiple learner-based assessments are also mandatory. They must be built into the program's framework. That way, the methodical evaluation of the students' language acquisition is an on-going process. The study's data analytics clearly illustrated the huge benefits that properly applied assessments can generate.

Both formative and summative evaluation tools play a major role. And vigorous efforts should be applied to any modified course, to ensure that students are growing their functional knowledge, strengthening their study skills, and becoming higher order thinkers.

8.3 Metacognitive Thinking Skills Can Accelerate Speaking Skills

The proposed EAP high order thinking course can teach EFL student metacognitive skills. It is designed to scaffold students' gradual ascent: The task-based course content is designed to move students from passive thinking to active thinking, to, ultimately, metacognitive thinking. The simple three-tiered taxonomy provides a workable model to guide the students' level-up learning and higher thought processing skills.

8.3.1 Self-Reflective Journaling

The data analysis in this research study extracted sufficient evidence that indicates the students' self-reflection and thoughtful journaling contributed to deeper, metacognitive knowledge. Eventhough it took students a while to get comfortable analyzing their own thinking, they did make the gradual adjustment. Some of their journal entries offered proof that this thought-based bi-weekly classroom exercise led students to produce self-directed learning, which sparked a shift in their cognitive thinking.

8.3.2 The Great Regression

Despite the strong evidence suggesting that some students have developed an early-stage proclivity to thoughtfully self-reflect, and can see themselves as more autonomous learners, this epiphany might not last with many of them. It's been my experience that once some students complete my SS class, and despite earnest intentions, their verbal language skills tend to gradually regress. Without the consistency of daily English language use, students can lose motivation. Eventually their momentum dwindles, then, sadly, dies. More research needs to be conducted to explore new and innovative teaching strategies that will not only bridge the L2 learning gap but cement its lasting impact.

8.4 Motivation Matters

One such possible investigative effort could laser focus on student motivation. It was a noticeable factor that emerged from this study's accumulated research. Highly motivated students tended to be purpose-driven, and more eagerly engaged in the class. That resulted in improved performance. The data also uncovered a clear correlation between motivation and metacognition. Learners, particularly those who displayed intrinsic motivation, were more self-aware, more prone to change their way of thinking and behaving. This self-cognizant conduct led to academic gains, personal advancement as well as emotional satisfaction.

Also, clearly evident was the critical role a motivated teacher played in the language acquisition process. Teachers set the classroom atmosphere. Testimonials from my SS students, as noted earlier, credited their eagerness to learn and produce the target language to my uniquely engaging, energetic, and motive-driven teaching methods. Here is a final illustrative student video to further solidify that contention, as in Figure 8.1 below. <https://youtu.be/7EpiEUCaUbc>

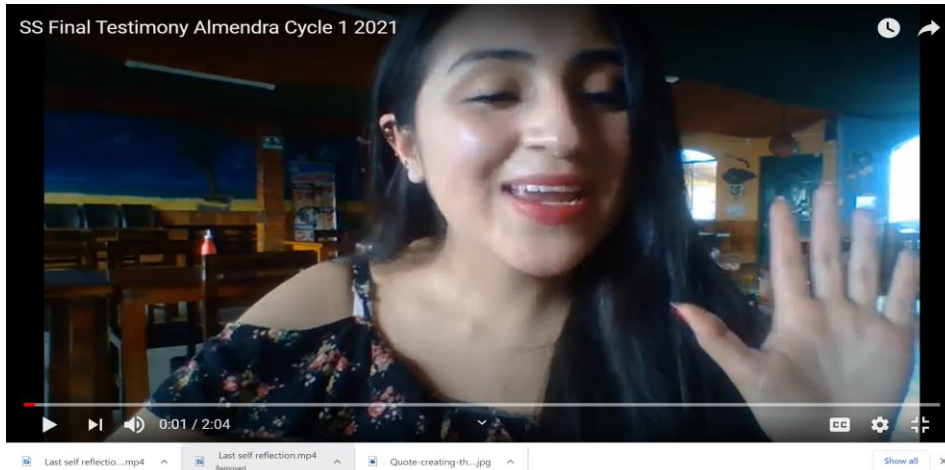


Figure 8. 1 SS Student Final Testimonial

9. SYLLABUS

Syllabus Course

Name: Superior Public Speaking

9.1 Background

This EAP course proposal is designed for the Continuing Education Center at the Escuela Politecnica Nacional (CEC-EPN) where I currently work as a Superior Speaking English teacher. It expands upon my existing curriculum I piloted in the 2018-2020 time period at CEC-EPN. The minor modifications are made to meet EAP criteria. In fine tuning the course I have incorporated the teaching of higher order thinking, which serves to expedite the English-speaking proficiency of my L2 students. Also added is a more aggressive assessments system to appraise the students' process of progressive linguistics growth. Period diagnostics will also track teacher effectiveness as well as overall course success. The average age range of the Superior Speaking students is 19-to-32. The typical class size is from 10-20 students.

9.1.2 Needs Analysis:

The curriculum is designed around the functional language and study skills needs of the SS students. It is necessary to specifically develop the learners’ verbal competencies to serve them well in their university language studies and also in other domains like the workplace. In analyzing the needs, the research revealed a host of functional skills to be taught in the EAP course to bridge potential learning growth gaps. They include developing specific and advanced skills on how to:

Think critically	Communicate clearly, confidently	Express, apply new knowledge
Solve problems	Improve listening, writing skills	Coordinate, host discussions
Analyze, synthesize ideas	Master public speaking	Teach lessons
Be creative & inventive	Investigate speech material	Manage time
Become autonomous learner	Create online video instructionals	Dress for business success
Utilize metacognition	Deliver academic presentations	Work in a team
Learn self-reflection	Learn job interview skills	Research information
Create self-learning strategies	Move theory to functional practice	Observe peers & give evaluations
Self-evaluate	Learn to lead	Take notes & brainstorm ideas
Shift thinking with metacognition	Write, produce, deliver elevator pitch	“Sell yourself” at a job fair

Table 9. 1 Syllabus’ Needs Analysis

In written pre-class self-assessments, students identified their own learning needs as they discussed personal reasons for taking my SS class. Their priorities included the need to:

Speak in public without being nervous	Develop and advance L2 language fluency
Build self-confidence	Overcome shyness and fear of speaking in public
Deliver organized speeches	Improve pronunciation, expand their vocabulary
Increase language comprehension	Secure the C-1 English certificate

Table 9. 2 Results of Pre-Class Assessment

My SS students consistently mentioned that their long-term goals were to, among other things:

Work or study abroad	Become fluent enough to sound like native English speakers
Secure a better job or promotion	Immerse themselves in an English culture and environment

Table 9. 3 SS Students' Long-Term Goals

9.2 Course Design

9.2.1 Purpose of EAP Course

This EAP course design has developed teaching materials focused on advanced public speaking, driven by metacognitive or higher order thinking. The innovative teaching concept is designed to meet the specific needs of students looking to go beyond general English language learning. It offers original linguistic instructions and interactive public speaking tools.

9.2.2 Goals and Objectives

Our B2-to-C1 level target learners need to communicate more fluently in English at their universities or in the workplace. To accomplish this, a highly proficient level of public speaking skills is required. The goal of this EAP course is to use higher order thinking to improve the students' spoken language skills. Integreting authentic, task-based activities in the course content material will develop the student's better listening and deeper thinking skills, with which better speaking skills can thrive.

9.2.3 EAP Teacher Profile

In teaching this course, I will draw on my two plus years of experience as a Superior Speaking instructor at CEC-EPN. My pioneering real-world, experiential methodology is authentic, learner-centered, and content rich. It engages students in complex thought-based tasks to accelerate their public speaking skills. As a former TV news journalist, communication specialist and public speaking coach, I am undoubtedly qualified to artfully design, develop and teach this EAP course.

9.3 Detailed Description of Syllabus

9.3.1 Course Explainer

EAP Course Syllabus Superior Public Speaking	
Teacher: Sharon Frame sf.wiredtowin@gmail.com	WhatsApp #: 1-678-602-2899 Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:30am-1pm
Course Details:	Course Name: Superior Public Speaking Course Time: Monday-Friday 7am-11am / 9am-11am Duration: 8 weeks
Course Description:	Course will develop and advance EFL students’s verbal intelligence by incorporating higher order thinking skills. Forging a symbiotic link between deeper thinking and better speaking will not only accelerate the learner’s English-speaking proficiency, but it will also encourage student autonomy. The linguistics genre will expose learners to authentic, engaging, and experiential, learner-centered activities. This methodological approach takes the subject of public speaking from theory to real-life practice and production, equipping students with proper study skills and functional knowledge to apply in their universities and in their workplace.
Course Prerequisites:	Before taking this course, the adult students must have reached at least a B-2 level of English proficiency.
Course Objective:	As a result of taking this course, students will become deeper metacognitive thinkers, equipped to speak English on an accelerated level. They will improve their verbal and intellectual exchanges by becoming more autonomous, self-driven EFL earners.
Required Texts & Resources:	EAP course materials are teacher-designed & developed.

Table 9. 4 Proposed EAP Course Syllabus

9.3.2 Weekly Course Breakdown

Samples of Weekly Course Subject Targets Superior Public Speaking	
<p>Week #1 The Art of Superior Speaking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech Structure • Body Language • Vocal Variety • Authentic Passion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Learn to construct and deliver organized & engaging speeches: Persuasive, Informative, Demonstrative, Argumentative & Extemporaneous ➤ Master the power of body language, voice tone, advanced word usage, authentic passion.
<p>Week #2 Develop Critical Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct research • Explore complex topics • Critique literature • Begin 1st phase of self-reflection journaling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Study the traits of critical & cognitive thinking through conducting research for class projects. ➤ Explore, investigate facts on authentic & complex speech topics. ➤ Review & critique literary short stories to boost critical reading comprehension. ➤ Post learning progress in bi-weekly introspective self-reflection journal.
Task-Based Exam #1	Authentic Passion Speech
<p>Week #3 Master Situational Public Speaking Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct SupClub real-life meetings • Evaluate peer speeches • Research relevant current events • Take part in meaningful debates & class discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SupClub: Learn how to conduct bi-weekly SupClub business meetings to build spoken leadership and organizational skills. ➤ Practice teamwork & collaboration to communicate more effectively in school or at work. ➤ Analyze, evaluate peer speeches. ➤ Research current events to develop & deliver lively combative debates and authentic, real-life presentations.
<p>Week #4 Overcome Fear of Speaking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just do it to build confidence • Engage your audience • Learn the Power of Passion & Story telling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Learn strategic tips on how not to get nervous when talking in public. ➤ Build self-confidence to grow self-esteem. ➤ Connect with audience on a visceral level. ➤ Use story-telling to speak from the heart

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use emotion & storytelling to engage an audience.
Task-Based Exam #2	The Great Debate
<p>Week #5 Flavor your Conversation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study Figurative Language • Practice Tongue Twisters <p>Building Accurate English Pronunciation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn the IPA • Identify and correct “ed” ending verbs errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Analyze figurative language, like similies and metaphores, in songs, movies, poetry to learn the significance of emotion in language. ➤ Clarify word pronunciation and strengthen speech muscles with fun tongue twisters. ➤ Learn the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to pronounce sounds and difficult words correctly. ➤ Overcome the fossilized pitfalls of common “ed” ending verb mistakes to pronounce difficult words.
<p>Week #6 Crafting an Elevator Pitch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market your skills • Tap into “yapa’ Youtube teaching videos • Utilize English expressions <p>Employ Vocabulary Learning Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build Advanced Word lexicon • Reap the benefits of slang • Discover the power of Cognates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop elevator pitch to engage the interest of business stake-holders & head hunters ➤ Learn to write, create & produce resume/CV for video ➤ Anaylze real-world “Yapa” videos of advanced power words and professional business expressions. ➤ Use etymology to unearth root meanings of superior English words to unlock a treasure trove of words based of prefixes and suffixes. ➤ Incorporate slang words to sound like a native, stay current and bridge generational gaps. ➤ Use cognates as to access thousands of words that are similar or identical in both English and Spanish, to rapidly multiple vocabulary acquisition and language compehension.
Task-Based Exam #3	Creating & Presenting an Elevator Pitch
<p>Week #7 Metacognitive Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Order Thinkng • Video Marketing • Build interview skills • Become the teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Self-regulate and take personal ownership of learning. ➤ Move self-reflection journal to metacognitive level. ➤ Incorporate crucial soft skills to help written and videotaped resume/ CV stand out and appear more appealing to potential employers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use “plan, evaluate, monitor” strategies for post-class autonomous learning.
<p>Week #8 Prepare to Job Hunt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress For Success • Improve interview skills • Prepare for professional online job interviews • Acquire technical skills <p>Network with social learning platforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximize computer-based interactive learning • Join a COP • Design a learning continuity platform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Learn how to “dress for success” to prepare for online Job Fair. ➤ Practice job interview skills on Zoom with class accountability partner to reduce stress and build confidence. ➤ Gain video marketing expertise to confidently and persuasively compete for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • online job interviews • foreign university scholarships • study-abroad programs ➤ Connect with English education websites to optimize post classroom learning. ➤ Join support groups like Communities of Practice (COPs) to link up with passionate, like-minded learners, and continue your language acquisition journey. ➤ Create a English discussion group or conversation club for future target-language speaking practice.
Task-Based Exam #4	“Sell Yourself” at a High-Pressure Job Fair

Table 9. 5 Weekly Course Break-Down

9.3.3 Assessments

<p>Systematic Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routinely gauge, celebrate student success • Teacher & Student identify strengths & weaknesses • Make adjustment, course correction • Improve current methodology 	<p>In addition to the four official cycle exams, I will also conduct:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pre-class assessments ➤ Midpoint appraisals (One-on-one with teacher) ➤ Self- assessments (student self-reflection journal) ➤ Peer review (supclub evaluations)
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate new EAP teaching strategies, techniques to improve language functionality and study skills success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Post assessments (student video testimonials)
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Table 9. 6 Course Assessments

9.4 Course Unit Sample Descriptions

9.4.1 Unit #1 Task Description -Elevator Pitch

Unit Title: Delivering an Elevator Pitch

General Objective: Expose students to research, write and deliver an elevator pitch to sharpen their job hunting or job interview skills. An elevator pitch is a brief persuasive speech in which a person has 30 to 90 seconds to pitch or “sell” themselves to a prospective employer. The task helps students practice how to convincingly talk about themselves, their career goals, and what skills they have to offer a company.

Specific Objective: Prepare students to persuasively sell themselves during an encounter with a potential employer during a brief, often unexpected, encounter.

Task & Desired Outcome: This experiential exercise is divided into several steps.

First, students are taught how to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoroughly research a company they desire to work for.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a thirty-to-ninety second conversational speech that describes their career passion, conveys their desire to work for the company, describes how they plan to bring their talent and skills to the company
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be assertive and proactive by persuasively appealing for a follow-up job interview.

Table 9. 7 Unit #1 Sample Class Objective (1)

Second, students are taught how to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and tape a video version of their elevator pitch.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master proper lighting, camera background, professional “dress for success” appearance, use of teleprompter to practice thier speech.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver persuasive conversational speech with passion, confidence, vocal variety, proper body language.

Table 9. 8 Unit #1 Sample Class Objective (2)

Thirdly, students are taught how to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for a potential Online job interview by using Zoom to interview each other (classroom accountable partners).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the five W’s (Who, What, Where, When, Why, How) to create and ask crucial job interview questions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record interview, convert and upload mp4 video to me (teacher) for review, grade and feedback.

Table 9. 9 Unit #1 Sample Class Objective (3)

In this task-based experience students practice thinking strategically and speaking clearly and confidently on the spot with a potential employer, or in a subsequent sit-down job interview. They learn how to dress for success, take part in professional conversations while persuasively discussing their skills and career goals. This activity prepares students to perform well during real job interviews in the future. Here is the end product of one of my student’s elevator pitch, which demonstrates the proper executional elements taught in class. <https://youtu.be/br2neOIEoDU>



Figure 9. 1 Unit #1 Sample Exercise (Elevator Pitch)

9.4.2 Unit #2 Task Description

Unit Title: Using Soft Skills to Power Superior Public Speaking.

Soft skills are personality traits or “people skills” that support hard skills, that are more academic and technical. Soft skills can equip learners with value-added linguistic tools to leverage their public speaking skills, stand out in their university or in their workplace and advance their career success. These skills are highly sought after by multinational employers hunting for proficient English-speaking workers who not only possess verbal intelligence, but emotional intelligence as well. These skills include leadership, communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, positive attitude, and teamwork.

General Objective: Lead students to identify and practice using their communication soft skills to raise their future value in the real job market.

Specific Objective: Teach students how to develop their business soft skills by integrating them in class speeches, using the bi-weekly SupClub meeting as a real-life backdrop.

Task & Desired Outcome: Students attain seamless and automatic use of crucial soft skills and learn to fine tune their verbal communication to gain emotional advantage in the job market. By

leveraging these “people” skills, students learn to interact and engage with people in a more meaningful way, as well as make themselves more employable.

Here is an expansive list of soft skills to be taught:

Passion	Problem-solving	Leadership
Communication	Positive-Attitude	Critical Thinking
Teamwork/Collaboration	Creativity	Empathy
Emotional Intelligence	Self-Derection	Self-Awareness

Table 9. 10 Soft Skills List

The lesson activity teaches students how to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop their leadership (soft) skills by planning, organizing, and executing a forty-five minute meeting using PowerPoint presentations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice thier teamwork and collaboration (soft) skills by supervising a team of up to twelve particpans who have different speaking roles.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance their creative (soft) skills by designing innovative meeting theme, introducing speakers, driving commentary throughout the meeting.

Table 9. 11 Unit #2 Sample Class Objective (1)

Students also learn to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hone their critical thinking, argumentative reasoning, and team-building skills by participating in lively, provocative debates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and usee real-life topics that are current and relevant to presuasively communicate their passion and emotional intelligence.
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Table 9. 12 Unit #2 Sample Class Objective (2)

Past lively debate topics suggested by, voted upon, researched by the SS students, and approved by me, the teacher, included:

- Online Learning Caused by The Corona Virus is Harming Education in Ecuador

- Ecuador Should Welcome and Embrace Venezuelan Refugees
- Voting Should Not be Mandatory for Ecuadorean Teenagers
- Cats are Better Pets Than Dogs

To advance their cognitive, critical thinking (soft) skills, students are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taught the seven traits of critical thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained to investigate both sides of an argument
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructed on how to follow a debate structure, think extemporaneously, offer swift rebuttals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upskilled on collaborating with team members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared to strategically conduct verbal battle to win a debate. 	

Table 9. 13 Unit #2 Sample Class Objective (3)

To grow their positive attitude and self-directed learning (soft) skills, students get to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and present fun, authentic, interactive game-oriented exercises during SupClub meetings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as teacher assistants, conducting solo or group presentations that review what they learned from previous lessons.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate classmates' bi-weekly speeches, giving constructive feedback and suggestions for improvement. This enhances their thinking, listening and speaking skills. It also helps student identify their own speech errors and mistakes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take charge of creating and managing class's WhatsApp group to post SubClub meeting directives.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out and self-discover answers to their own questions they ask in class and a challenged to investigate and report back to the class.

Table 9. 14 Unit #2 Sample Class Student Objective (4)

When students are guided to be creative thinkers and leaders, and to take ownership of their own learning, they invariably become vested in the process. This practical L2 learning experience becomes more meaningful, valuable, and applicable in the real world. See video proof of a recent student facilitated SupClub meeting by clicking this link below:

Student Facilitated SupClub Meeting	https://cec-eqn-demo.webex.com/webappng/sites/cec-eqn-demo/recording/c5ebaa86ecb34854b3fc4134f1e2e2cd/playback
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Table 9. 15 Unit #2 Sample Class Exercise (SupClub meeting)

9.4.3 Unit #3 Task Description -Metacognitive Self-Reflection

Unit Title: Making Metacognitive Thinking Work Through Self-Reflective Practice

General Objective: Develop students’ higher order thinking through deep introspection to trigger self-directed, external action, and drive the use of their functional L2 acquisition.

Specific Objective: Help SS students use their metacognitive skills to teach a lesson on the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and demonstrate how they plan, monitor, and evaluate their self-driven future progress as autonomous learners.

Task & Desired Outcome: Students are urged to thoughtfully reflect on what they learned from the teacher’s extensive task-based lesson on the IPA. They are given 15 minutes of class time to quietly analyze and journal their thoughts about their new knowledge. As a homework assignment, students are to meet with their accountability partners, discuss the complex topic and brainstorm how to teach what they now know in a 5-7-minute class presentation.

The desired outcome is for students to mobilize their developing self-reflective knowledge to grow their higher order thinking in a tangible way. The presentation must also illustrate how they will

systematically plan, monitor, and evaluate their continued self-study of English well after the SS course had ended.

The lesson activity teaches students how to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mature their metacognitive approach to L2 language acquisition
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use contemplative self-analysis to activate critical thinking
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teach a complex lesson on the IPA to illustrate thoughtful understanding of the subject

Table 9. 16 Unit #3 Sample Class Objective (1)

Students also will learn to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate how to plan, monitor and evaluate their future self-regulated learning
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Table 9. 17 Unit #3 Sample Class Objective (2)

This higher order student-teaching assignment was fulfilled by my SS students, as part of their three-part final exam. Figure 9.2 displays one of these “Teaching the IPA” presentations, which you can watch at this Youtube link: <https://youtu.be/WwfbxfHHGqc>

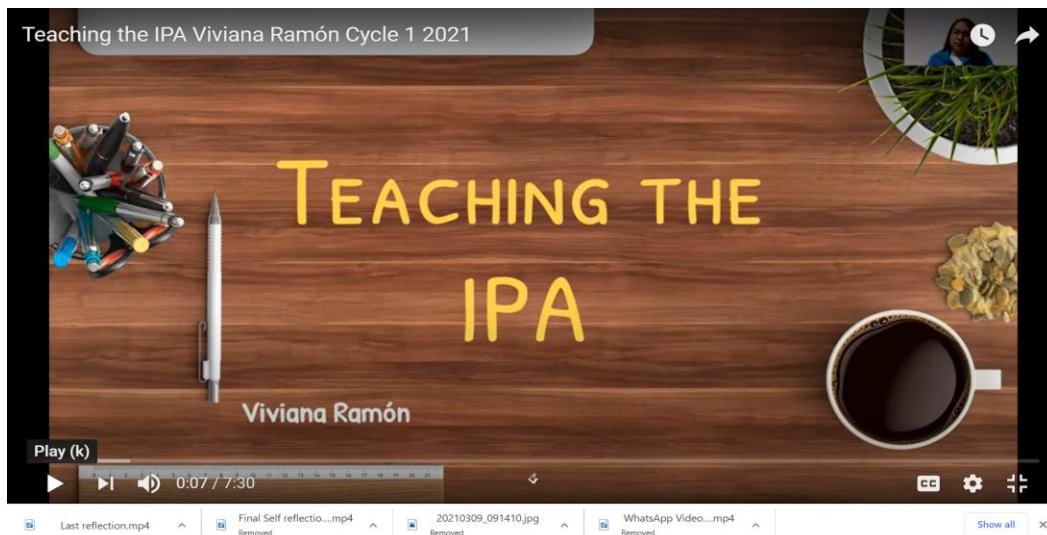


Figure 9. 2 IPA Student Teaching

It was the ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle, who said, “For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them” (Aristotle, 368 BC–348 BC). This notion of learning by doing is what SS students regularly do to gain new knowledge. And as they grow their cognitive expertise, they also accelerate their speaking skills by natural extension.

For seven weeks, my most recent SS students practiced metacognitive or higher order thinking through self-reflective journaling. In their moments of mindfulness, some remarked about being more aware of their personal growth. With their permission to share, here are a few notable journal entries:

<p>“How can I now take control of my own learning? This I have been thinking about and I have come to the conclusion that I can educate myself either by watching series, programs on YouTube, with books and other things.”</p> <p><i>SS Student</i></p>	<p>“...Also, I could realize my strengths but also be aware of my weaknesses in order to reinforce (correct) them, now I’m sure about me, and my personal improvement, I know that I can do everything, putting all my effort in creating a better version of me.</p> <p>I learned how to be a critical thinker because I can analyze and also be inquisitive when I want to know about something, it makes me think more than just the basic knowledge.”</p> <p><i>SS Student</i></p>
<p>“As I said earlier ‘learning is a constant process of discovery - a process without end’ and all those topics are awesome for me. They helped me to be able to express, to share my ideas, to get confidence at the moment to talk in front of people, to be a better listener, better thinking and better speaker.”</p> <p><i>SS Student</i></p>	<p>“Only you decide the knowledge you wish to have. This is my quote because I consider that only us, each one of us has the power to decide how much we want to know, how much we want to improve and how much we want to advance in our lives.”</p> <p><i>SS Student</i></p>

Table 9. 18 Self-Reflection Journal Share

9.5 Conclusion

The syllabus proposal is based on concrete and enriching results. Its efficacy is clearly evident from the substantial progress my SS students have achieved and have eagerly testified to. Undergirding my teaching methodology is the pedagogical push to transform theory to practice. The primary focus on accelerating an advanced students' speaking through reflective higher order thinking contains the right ingredients for a strong, functional, and authentic EAP course.

10. CONCLUSION

It is said that the primary goal of language learning is language use. The proposed EAP course speaks resoundingly to that linguistic philosophy. Now language use can interconnect proficient thinking with proficient speaking.

This study examined the need for a unique EAP public speaking curriculum to replace the current Superior Speaking course at CEC-EPN. The course is designed to cultivate the higher order, metacognitive thinking skills among EFL advanced students. The hope is, in so doing, their speaking skills will accelerate correspondingly.

Both formative and summative assessments played a crucial role. To work, this curriculum development plan also leans heavily on teaching thinking, and the power of thought.

The methodological approach currently used in my SS class already aligns with the teaching techniques used in the EAP framework. Both have strong emphasis on communicative, task-based, project-driven exercises that are functional and provide real-life English language use. Such hands-on, student-driven learning can transform the classroom culture. There exists the chance for students to think creatively, be curious, and come up with their own solutions to problems. When they learn to think, they invariably become thoughtful, conscientious partners in their own learning

process. Consequently, a robust, self-directed, higher order thinker becomes a fluent, self-confident, and articulate speaker. This should offer hope to passionate and committed teachers who want to bring out the best in their students and send them into the world as independent thinkers, productive workers, thoughtful citizens, and prolific communicators.

10.1 Limitations

Several potential limitations could impact the quality of the study and its ability to answer the research question. What should be considered are:

10.1.1 Sample Size

The sample size might pose a problem if a small number of people respond to the online survey. A low percentage of respondents could restrict the results because it may not adequately represent the student population.

10.1.2 Survey Method

Although the Likert scale is quick, easy, and efficient, its validity could be compromised. Some respondents may lie in the questionnaire. Others may fake a response to give a false impression to a personal question. That will skew survey results. Also, since the survey is online, respondents can easily skip questions they don't want to answer.

In addition, the Reflection Journal exercise poses risk of being ineffective if students are not monitored to go beyond superficial journaling. A remedy is for teacher (me) to, 1. periodically review students' journal entrances, 2. direct students to answer probing and specific questions that will prompt deep, metacognitive thoughts and answers.

10.1.3 Interview Weakness

Some portions of the interviews with the current CEC directors and top administrators may prove problematic if attempts to replace CEC's current Superior Speaking course with an EAP speaking program is interpreted as a sign of failure on their part.

11. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study's findings offer both theoretical and practical implications. First, just to consider thinking as one of the essential language learning skills is an innovative concept. This could radically redefine how language learning is taught. Also, the idea of teaching thinking as a subject matter could revolutionize classroom practices. Consider the potential impact on the traditional mind-numbing rote learning, if cognitive and metacognitive strategies were all the rage among students. The repercussions could spawn a new generation of critical thinking, autonomous learners, not to mention more confident, self-directed speakers.

The proposed EAP speaking program is based on integrating thinking and speaking by using functional, real-world, project-based activities. That could potentially lead to lively student engagement and authentic class participation. Imagine creating classroom atmospheres where students come eager to learn, and anxious to stretch their mental and verbal skills. That is what is possible when students become better thinkers and, by extension, better communicators. That's the crux the the "EAP Higher-Order Thinking Course" whose objective is to raise the speaking proficiency level of advanced EFL students. To extend the course platform, and make the experiential learning more dynamic and on-going, here are a few recommendations to consider.

11.1 Form a Speaking & Writing Alliance

Forge a strong academic partnership with CEC-EPN's existing Superior Writing course. This exchange would expose writing students to not just superior speaking skills, but also higher-level thinking skills. The EAP speaking students would benefit from writing exercises tailored for their study skills needs.

11.2 Add New SS Level

CEC-EPN should consider creating a sub-level Superior Speaking course. That would serve as a remedial dragnet to catch students who typically slip into the SS Course cracks ill-prepared. Once

they level up to the SS class experience, they will be more properly equipped to function successfully.

11.3 Create/Connect with Language Social Networks

Create a follow-up system that keeps former EAP-SS students engaged in metacognitive learning projects. This could take the form of an interactive online community. Encourage students to explore Community of Practice (COPs) for English learners. That plugs them in to global social groups where they can build relationships and further their English-speaking practice well after they leave the SS classroom.

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13. APPENDIX

To provide extra research data results, here eight additional hands-on, functional skills activities my SS students created or participated in.

Extra Activity & Results #1: In these first videos, two SS students exercised higher order thinking to self-assess their own speech communication growth over the 8-week SS course.

<https://youtu.be/dM8oPYL95wA>

<https://youtu.be/zzOp9LgrHqg>

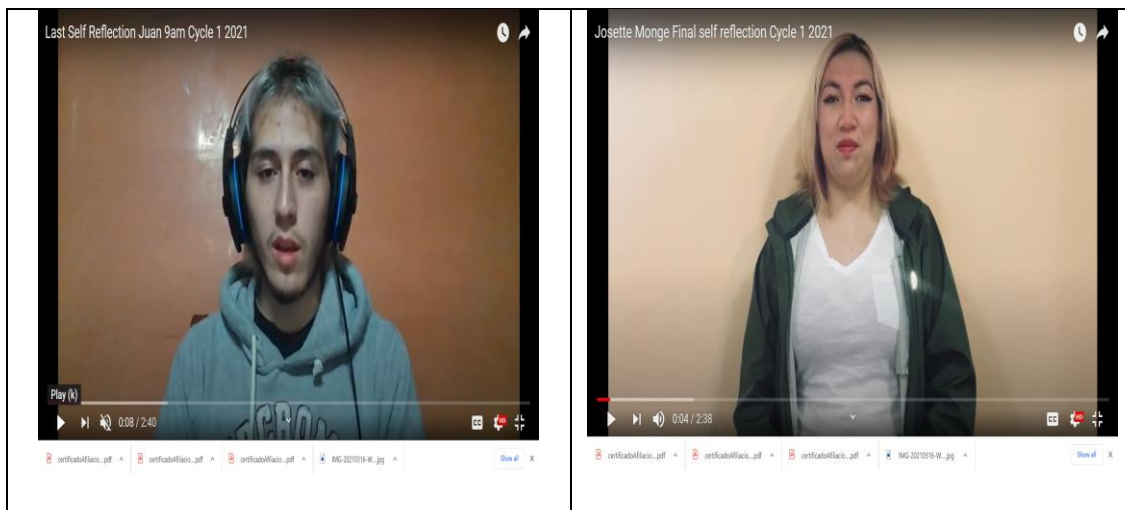


Figure 13. 1 SS Students Self-Evaluate in Summative Assessment

Extra Activity & Results #2: Students paired up with their assigned accountability partners and spent time interviewing each other on Zoom to practice their skills ahead of the big Job Fair exam. The objective was also to test each other on how well they used the research strategies taught on investigating the companies they wished to work for, and persuasively respond to extemporaneous interview questions. The assignment included taping the practice sessions for teacher review and feedback. Here, below, is the assignment from one AP team, as captured on this Youtube link: <https://youtu.be/IqEG6gOjgBc>



Figure 13. 2 SS Students Practicing Online Job Interviews

Extra Activity & Results #3: After conducting their AP practice video interviews as a homework assignment, students then took quiet class time the next day to self-reflect on the experience, journal their thoughts, and self-evaluate. They mentally tracked what they learned by asking themselves some probing personal questions. Here is an example of one student’s written introspection:

<p>Scenario: Students self-reflect on interviewing each other to prepare for Job Fair</p>	<p>What can I correct?</p> <p>Well some few things: my fluency when I’m speaking, I need to be a little bit more organized and also try to enunciate in a more professional way.</p>
<p>What was the interviewing experience like?</p> <p>The interview fills me with a lot of new knowledge since I had no idea how it was done and also for me it was a great entertaining and interesting experience.</p>	<p>How can I apply what I learned to real life?</p> <p>I’m very sure that for the future in real life I will apply these techniques since I think they can be very helpful to avoid mistakes and be very successful in my interviews.</p>
<p>What did I learn from this experience?</p> <p>First, I learned that I have to feel calm and trust in my knowledges. Then, I learned how I have to behave in an interview. Finally, and the most</p>	<p>How has this interview experience made me a critical thinker?</p> <p>This experience really helped me because I had to research a lot about a real company. Also, I</p>

important I learned how to sell myself like a good candidate for an important company.	researched how to do an elevator pitch. Thus, I did all this experience with trustful information.
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Table 13. 1 Student Self-Reflection Samples on Peer Practice Interviews

Extra Activity & Results #4: One of the most popular SS activities was the bi-weekly, student-run SupClub Meetings. Students learned, by doing, to build their speaking, leadership, and critical thinking skills. Rotating Clubmasters designed, coordinated and hosted the interactive sessions, guided by their own creative and customized PowerPoint presentations. To examine the meeting structure and the careful stylistic effort students invested, inspect this sample PowerPoint at this Youtube link: <https://youtu.be/WuJDUz8uIyA>



Figure 13. 3 SupClub Meeting PP Presentation

Extra Activity & Results #5: Concentrated work was conducted on teaching the SS students the art of higher order thinking since this is such a critical component in the EAP design proposal. Here is more qualitative evidence that students understood the concepts, expressed them in their own unique class teachings and self reflected effectively on critical and higher order thinking theories. See mini teaching sample at this Youtube link: <https://youtu.be/PzCE4pAOXRk>
Written self-reflections on critical thinking traits are on Tables 13.2 & 13.3 below.

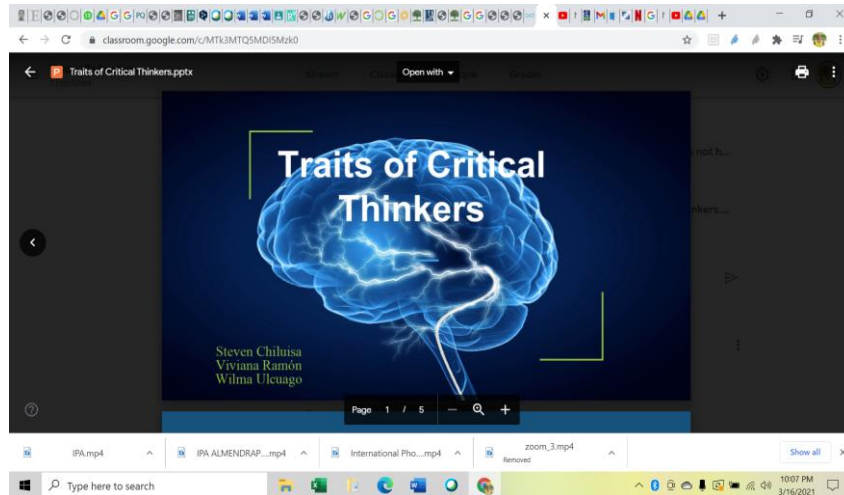


Figure 13. 4 Higher Order Thinking Student Presentation

Self-Reflection: Learning the Seven Traits of Critical Thinking and Why it Matters

1. What did I learn about critical thinking?

I learned that to be a critical thinker (it is) necessary to have some important aspects like Open-Mindedness, Analytic Nature, Systematic Method, Truth-Seeking, Confident in Reasoning, to be a judicious and inquisitive person who seeking answers and knowledge. To be a person who questions the reason, usefulness, and purpose of things.

2. Why does it matter?

This matters because knowing these relevant aspects we can work on ourselves and improve our critical thinking. Furthermore promotes knowledge and curiosity. Encourages young people to make new discoveries, in their immediate environment or about abstract ideas.

3. How can I use/apply this new knowledge in my life?

We can use it when it's necessary to make a decision or organize information to study, also in academic activities like presentations, debates, and exhibitions.

4. General Comment

Critical thinking fosters curiosity, increases creativity, and strengthens problem-solving skills. It is therefore a very important and necessary skill to develop in life.

Table 13. 2 Critical Thinking Self-Reflection #1

1. What did I learn about critical thinking?

I learned that it is important to analyze the information that I receive. First, I have to be opened to the possibility of new things. Then, I have to analyze the message and avoid making a conclusion immediately. Also, I should not stop being a curious person and always try to know more about any topic, especially the truth and be logic.

2. Why does it matter?

Critical thinking is crucial because we always receive information by reading or listening. Thus, we have to analyze it. Especially nowadays, when we use social media and read a lot about all things. Therefore, before sharing it, we have to validate its authenticity.

3. How can we use/apply this new knowledge in my life?

We can use it in all aspects of our life, from personal life with social media to professional life with investigations.

4. General Comment

I really like the topic Critical thinking because now I will think twice before believing something. Also, I can use this new knowledge in all aspects of my life.

Table 13. 3 Critical Thinking Self-Reflection #2

Extra Activity & Results #6: In their pre-class self-assessments, many students had expressed a desire to expand their English language vocabulary. So every Tuesday, they watched what I coined “Yapa Video,” a Youtube video tutorial on advanced English words. They learned ten new and relevant words each week, to build their accuracy and fluency. Students had to then incorporate the words in complex sentences, regularly use the words in class conversations, and also video-post their word usage on the class’ WhatsApp group page.

Figures 13.5 and 13.6 below, with the accompanying Youtube links, are examples of such video postings.

<https://youtu.be/uucW0-u-9Qs>

<https://youtu.be/c10FPeFfc3c>



Figure 13. 5 Advanced English Words



Figure 13. 6 Advanced English Words

Extra Activity & Results #7: One of the favorite exercises students insisted was most relevant and functional taught them how to research, write and deliver an elevator pitch. Below is a video compilation of Cycle One 2021 student elevator pitches, in which they clearly executed the tips, secrets and strategies taught in class, as evidenced at this video link:

<https://youtu.be/T4RPhIGQ510>



Figure 13. 7 Elevator Pitch: Student Video Reel

Extra Activity & Results #8: The last extra example displaying research data results depicts a student who recounted everything she learned from her SS course cycle in a ten minute teaching presentation exam. It underscores her tangible and persuasive grasp of higher order thinking, learning by doing, her accelerated speaking skills which, all combined, exhibited how she cemented her superior English language acquisition. You can watch the presentation at this Youtube link: <https://youtu.be/jLa0KxRHKwA>



Figure 13. 8 Superior Speaking Course Demonstration