

# Contending with Content: Notes on Introducing a Content-based Instruction (CBI) Approach in a Media English Course for Third/Fourth Year Elective Students in a Japanese University.

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**Key Words:** Content based instruction, critical thinking skills, ELT, media studies

## Abstract

This paper examines Japanese University English students' attitudes towards studying a content based media course that incorporates a blended approach towards analysis and discussion of critical subject matter. Following a selected examination of previous academic work pursued in this field, and a diagnostic analysis of students schematic problems in approaching critical thinking in English, a description of the pedagogic ambitions and rationale of this course are outlined. The effectiveness of the research is then assessed with reference to statistics taken from student response questionnaire data. Recommendations made in light of this data suggest that future research could focus upon a consideration of ways to scaffold and build upon existing learner methods, and on the construction of more effective course materials to compliment the teaching of a critical content based pedagogy.

## Introduction

Content-based instruction (CBI) is a methodology that aims to integrate the teaching of content with language teaching goals, i.e. to 'concurrent(ly) teach ... academic subject matter and second language skills' (Brinton et al, 1989, p. 2). Within the EFL context in Japan, with notable exceptions of Murphey (1997) and Butler, Y (2005), few papers have examined the reasons for CBI nor evaluated its effects. This paper aims to add to existing knowledge by examining the teaching of two (elective) CBI university courses in Media English through the academic year 2010-2011. After analysing what CBI entails, a discussion of reasons for creating CBI courses and a description of course content and activities in the Media English course follow. A quantitative analysis of

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student opinion is also given through results of a questionnaire distributed at the end of the first semester. As CBI courses have an element of trial and error about them (Butler, Y, 2005, p.229), analyses of student opinions will help us realise ways to improve future courses. In this way, this piece is regarded as one round in an ongoing action research project.

## 1. Content-based instruction (CBI)

Content-based instruction, a methodology that concerns the teaching of both subject content and language, was originally associated with language immersion education in Canada (Grabe and Stoller, 1997, p.6), but became increasingly associated with EFL/ESL teaching in the late 1980s. It contrasts with EFL/ESL instruction centred upon the teaching of discrete language skills (i.e. conversation classes, or listening classes). One early paper which considered CBI and EFL together was Mohan's (1979) who explored three cases of relations between language teaching and content teaching (namely: language teaching by, with and for content teaching). Since then different models of CBI have come into being, and by 2003 Davies had noted three models in usage: a 'sheltered model' where a content specialist and an ESL specialist work together, an 'adjunct model' where ESL teachers prepare classes to acclimatise students to classes with L1 learners, and a 'theme-based' model where a teacher teaches on his or her own to unlock and build upon the students' own interests. All three can bring potential advantages or disadvantages for students and teachers, several examples of which are shown in table one below.

**Table 1:** *Advantages and disadvantages of content-based teaching.*

Peachey's (2003) overview of content-based teaching:

<b>Advantages of CBI</b>	<b>Disadvantages of CBI</b>
The content adds to student interest in the subject	Students may feel confused as CBI isn't explicitly focused on language learning.
It helps students develop a wider knowledge.	Difficulties with a topic may lead to large amounts of mother tongue language being used.
It is useful when teaching ESP classes (English for Specific Purposes);	Difficulties in finding resources for low level students to understand
It can involve students taking information from multiple sources and therefore practice note-taking and integrating discrete skills.	Students may just copy from source texts without attempting any evaluation.
It can be tailored to incorporate group work.	

### **1.1. Content-based instruction (CBI) in Japan**

Within Japan, Murphey (1997) detailed the development of CBI workshop courses at Nanzang University, and outlined issues and strategies for teachers who wished to implement similar courses. Just under a decade later, Butler, Y (2005) compiled a neat overview of CBI in the East Asian context, warning us of the difficulties of effectively implementing it, noting that 'one cannot assume that language acquisition takes place incidentally as long as meaningful content is provided' (2005, p.238). In other words, she reminded us that 'meaningful content' needs to be introduced within a linguistic framework that acknowledges the requirements of a specific group of students. She noted that the effectiveness of CBI, in East Asia as well as elsewhere, is dependent upon (i) program setting and the curriculum, (ii) the characteristics of teachers involved, (iii) the characteristics of learners, and (iv) the availability of resources (Ibid, p.231).

### **1.2. Content-based instruction in Japan: the authors' first experiences.**

Without overt consideration of such research, one author taught elective Media English courses at a private university to third and fourth year students in academic years 2008 and 2009. The courses were designed around two textbooks (e.g. Shaules, Itoh and Saito, 2001; Onada and Cooker, 2008), but which saw a perceptible drift towards the use of extracurricular CBI activities. Without a mandated departmental curriculum, students were given the chance to focus on discussion based English based on their own interests.

#### **1.2.1 Content-based instruction in Japan: the authors' initial experiences – 'three problems'.**

There were three main problems encountered in these initial forays into CBI: two of them were related to the nature of elective classes, and the other to the purpose for which English is ordinarily taught in Japanese education, namely: for examinations rather than for analytical/critical thinking. Firstly, elective classes attract students of various English abilities who have different expectations about what the course is about, and secondly, they often have different linguistic strengths. This is very unlike university courses designed for students from a single department and arranged around the students' TOEIC scores. An elective class can theoretically attract advanced level students looking for challenging content to deepen their English knowledge and also less confident students who have had little chance to practice basic discussion. A course with the ambiguous title of Media English can, after all, be taught in several ways: around news items, around pop culture or, perhaps, an analysis of 'the media'. What is certain is that the course concerns the media, and that students will come from different departments.

Thirdly, there are problems in relation to the ability of students to think critically about the

material in English (or in their mother tongue). Though Japanese education and society has changed from being one of an 'authoritarian, hierarchical societ(y) in which the unthinking acceptance of the ideas of one's teachers and elders is considered a virtue (Davidson, 1996)', to one in which younger generations feel more willing to disagree with elders and to voice their opinions (Stapleton, 2002), and one in which the English university entrance examinations have changed from being 'narrow, grammar-based, discrete-item test(s)' to being tests for 'reading and listening for higher-level meanings and comprehension' (Guest, 2008, p. 102), when we consider the lack of discussion or critical engagement in many pre-tertiary EFL classrooms, there would appear to be a role for CBI courses to provide an opportunity to build critical thinking skills.

## 2. The issue of critical thinking in Japanese EFL classes.

*"I do find that many Japanese learners struggle with American-style discussion, but I do not think it is because they lack critical thinking. I find that my students will speak in class if they know in-advance when their turn will be. My students rarely will express their opinions freely and out-of-turn. I believe that this has more to do with sociolinguistic rules than it does with critical thinking."* (Kyouikuhou, 2005).

In CBI courses, the ability to think critically is often all-important, and though Japanese students often show reticence in displaying opinion, the proposition that Japanese students do not have critical thinking skills is a self-evidently ridiculous one. It would appear that the unwillingness to verbalise opinion is down to two broad factors: 'sociolinguistic' rules characteristic of Japanese (East Asian) communication and the purpose of English lessons in private and state education in Japan. An explanation given by Harris (1997, p.43), though referring to Chinese students, also appears to hold some general worth regarding Japanese students. He noted that 'many are serialist learners by acculturation' and not by 'personal inclination', and inferred that when given the opportunity to experience alternative techniques such as critical thinking, a positive response can be observed. As Widdowson (1990) noted, '(foreign language) learners have already been socialized into the schematic knowledge associated with their mother tongue: they are initiated into their culture in the very process of language learning', and that the 'natural inclination' of a foreign language learner is to interpret knowledge in accordance to the established association' (Ibid, p.110). Schemata associated with a mother tongue culture may be joined by additional schemata once students are initiated into new types of knowledge.

Aside from these 'sociolinguistic rules', we have the related matter of the pedagogies of

teaching English in Japan. Murphey, Falout, Elwood and Hood (2009, p.2) claim that there is a ‘dominant educational paradigm that stifles communication’ and ‘forces learners into silence in EFL classrooms across Japan’, which is unsurprising when we consider Nishino’s (2008) study on English secondary school teachers in Japan that showed that teachers tend to believe that ‘grammar, vocabulary and yakudoku (skills) ... are more important’ (Ibid, p.42) than communication because of their usefulness in preparing for university entrance examinations. More recently, a government survey showed that only 20% of English oral communication teachers at Japanese public high schools taught their classes in English (Only 20%, 2011). In such a situation, there is a reduced chance for students to develop the ability to think critically in their second (or third) language.

In order to become able to give critical viewpoints in CBI courses, Japanese students must integrate the discrete-level skills taught in the classroom and literally find their voice. This is something that can be achieved under careful consideration of an educational context. It is indeed a pity that many ELT courses at university rely upon oversimplified material that Hullah (Lowe, 2009) has claimed is often unsuitable for ‘their maturity and ... intellectual potential’. Hullah believes that through discussion, texts can be ‘explicate(d)’ into ‘more manageable language whilst ... not compromising or reducing the intellectual depth’. Though not underestimating the difficulty of achieving this, it is something which CBI instructors can aspire towards, by scaffolding texts and making the language manageable for students.

### **3. Creating a ‘theme-based’ content-based course.**

Because content-based courses are significantly different from standard EFL courses, especial care must be taken when planning the course to make instruction effective. Using Butler’s (2005) list of four factors that can influence the effectiveness of a course, we shall explain the background to the CBI Media English course in academic year 2010-2011. As listed in section 1.1, her four factors are: 1. the setting of a program and curriculum, 2. the characteristic of the teacher(s) who teach the course, 3 the characteristics of the learners and 4. the resources available.

#### **3.1. Program and curriculum.**

The teachers were not advised on how to choose the content of the curriculum or how to implement a teaching approach. After two years of using a textbook (see 1.2 above), we decided to use insights obtained from reflections upon the courses to create a new course: a course which focused upon discussion on aspects of the media and events in the media. In lieu of a textbook, classroom content was uploaded onto a course blog (Addison, 2011, Walker, 2011), which allowed for a blended approach that integrated delivery of materials through web pages with more traditional

classroom based teaching approaches. This approach allowed students to digest information both inside and outside of class time, which suited the requirements of senior students who are often sidetracked by the pressing issue of ‘job hunting’.

### **3.2. Characteristics of the teachers who taught the courses.**

At the time of this course, the teachers were concurrently engaged in teaching a discussion based academic speaking course, in which a blog was utilized as an instructional tool (Addison and Walker, 2011). Together with previous forays into using online material as an instructional resource, they had experience and interest in finding ways to experiment with conventional teaching models.

### **3.3. The characteristics of the learners and resources available.**

Learners were third and fourth year seniors enrolled at two private universities. Together, these students took the course for different reasons: some were interested in the course as a means for preparing to study overseas, while others were more interested in attaining a credit whilst having the chance to practice English conversation. A few other students were primarily interested in the subject matter of the mass media. Resultantly, there was no way of foreknowing the median expectation of the class. In such a situation, a flexible approach to curriculum design and classes was deemed appropriate, something which made the decision to go without a textbook a practical one; the teachers not wishing to saddle the students with a textbook too far above or below the median level of the class. Instead, the course was reliant upon handouts and the course blog. Classrooms at the university were also well-equipped with multi-media equipment and allowed for video clips to be used with ease.

## **4. Course curriculum.**

The course itself was designed around the analysis and critique of aspects of the media. It was decided that classes themselves should be theme-based with an emphasis upon stimulating in-class conversation, discussion and analysis. Within this, a focus on fluency was targeted with an expectation that students would move towards offering opinions in a more natural way. It was planned that content used in the class would be uploaded onto the course website in advance of the following week’s class, although, in practice, this was not always achievable. Online content would cover the theme to be discussed and, when appropriate, expressions and instruction that aide critical thinking. Table 2 (below) lists the topics which were used over the two semesters, which can be loosely grouped into three categories covering content on: entertainment-based media, information based media and social network systems. The teaching was distinguished by a focus upon specific

activities, tailored content and use of multimedia. Alongside in-class discussion and role play activities, level-specific handouts on content and approaches to critical thinking were handed out. In-class videos were used as a means to deepen the effect of classroom instruction. Examples of teaching approaches are given following table 2.

**Table 2:** *Topics in the curriculum.*

<b>Semester One (Spring 2010)</b>	<b>Semester Two (Autumn 2010)</b>
Stuart Hall – Re-presentation & Decoding.	Time and Media.
Marshall McLuhan: Hot and Cold Media.	Noam Chomsky: Concision & Exclusion in the News
Music and Social Awareness.	Drama and Fear In The News
What is The Global Village?	Violence on the Screen
Freud, Edward Bernays and Advertising.	War in the Media.
Brand Advertising vs. Brand Ethics.	Gossip and Disinformation
Political Advertising Campaigns	Broadsheets vs. Tabloids.
UK and US Comedy.	Internet –Nicholas Carr vs. Steven Johnson
From Wolstencraft to Naomi Wolf: Women and Gender in The Media	Social Networking: Twitter and Facebook
Isaiah Berlin & Ralph Nader: Civic Freedom & Media Freedom	Independent Media: Wikileaks and Whistle-blowers.
Aldous Huxley & Neil Postman– Is Television an Addictive Drug?	Global Warming in the Media
The Milgram Experiment– Then & Now: Public Deference To (TV) Role Models	Theodore Adorno: TV & Movie Mono-Culture
Celebrity Culture	Movie Reviews
Reality TV	Pierre Bourdieu – Habitas, Field and Cultural Capital.
Edward Said: National Stereotypes	Young Adult TV.

#### **4.1. Approach 1: Use of Role plays.**

It is well known that pre-tertiary education in Japan centres around the group, with learning frequently performed through group-based co-operation. This has also been found to be the preference of Japanese learners in university classes who see group work as a more productive use of class time (Matsuura, Chiba and Hilderbrandt, 2001). A group-based paradigm can therefore be well used to create activities, something acknowledged by Prefume (2007) through a constructivist approach in which students produced educational skits. Her belief that, 'foreign language learners must become critical thinkers who know how to apply language or convey their thoughts in a

variety of situations' is shared by the authors. The role play medium is a good way to structure this.

Example 1: 'The War is a Racket Game'.

One role play used in a class covered the issue of war reportage in broadsheets and tabloids. After analysing a speech by a decorated US soldier (Butler, S, 1933), students were requested to analyse the background to war and the role of business in it. In doing so, we used a 'War is a Racket' game whereby students took the role of characters attending an evening party thrown next to a venue where an arms fair had been held. Students played the role of arms salespeople, journalists, passers-by and members of other professions. They had to collect information from each other, after which a whole group discussion was set up and analyses upon each character were given. Ultimately, students had to consider the viewpoints of businesses who sell arms and the background reasons for wars.

Example 2: 'Gossip/disinfo on the web'.

A theme running through the whole course was that new media affects the way we absorb knowledge and that we should not believe everything we read. The Internet has given voice to opinions that might ordinarily not be heard, and there is a need to critique the worth of both mainstream and alternative viewpoints. In the class on gossip and disinformation, we collected a series of news headlines that had what were considered surprising content for the students, and by dividing groups into pairs of 'believers' and 'disbelievers', we discussed reasons why the articles might contain truth, or might not. Following this, we checked our claims and judged whether articles held truth, untruth or were examples of gossip and/or disinformation.

Example 3: 'Who Chooses The Shoes – Who Chooses The News?'

The central theme of this class was the subject of freedom in media ownership and program decision making. The students were encouraged to discuss what choice they had, as consumers, over the type of TV programs and news events that were broadcast. Before embarking on this discussion, however, the students were put into pairs and given an activity where they were told to imagine that they were shopping for shoes, with the teacher as retailer. A number of different photographs of footwear were placed on the board and students were expected to compete to choose one pair for their team, and give their reason why. After this, the students were asked to discuss in groups how much choice they felt that they had over what they had chosen. It was ultimately realized that although they had displayed a narrow personal freedom in choosing the pair they liked, the wider power to choose the selection of shoes sold, civic freedom, was enjoyed solely by the owner of the shoe shop. This activity led on to an examination of a speech by consumer activist



Ralph Nader, (2008) in which he quoted Marcus Cicero's definition of the differences between civic and personal freedom. The class then examined the philosopher Isaiah Berlin's (1958) speech in which he outlined his concept of negative liberty. After a discussion of these theories, the students were asked to apply them to the subject of media ownership and consumer choice, and to discuss and examine how much personal or civic freedom they actually enjoyed when watching a program or viewing a news event on television.

#### **4.2. Approach 2: Use of Hand-outs.**

Hand-outs served three purposes: to provide low level questions on issues covered in a particular class, to provide information on deeper themes that lay behind the lesson topic and also information on discussion strategies. The information on content matter – e.g. on ideas relating to advertising (Sigmund Freud and Edward Bernays), post modernism and mono-culture (Theodore Adorno), civic and personal freedom, (Ralph Nader and Isaiah Berlin), habitus (Pierre Bourdieu), concision and exclusion in the media (Noam Chomsky), stereotypes and prejudiced dispositions, such as Orientalism (Edward Said), public subservience to role models (Stanley Milgram) the medium being the message (Marshall McLuhan) and the complexities of media encoding and viewer decoding (Stuart Hall)– were also available on the course blogs and allowed students to pursue their interest at a deeper level if they wished.

#### **4.3. Approach 3: Use of Video Clips**

Video clips were used in each class to deepen awareness of topics, and discussion questions were used before and after viewing which allowed students to watch with purpose while being introduced to the theme or concept. For example, in the class on music as a tool for social awareness, students were given questions about social issues referenced in several music clips. After a follow-up discussion, the focus would narrow to one song (e.g. 'Strange Fruit' by Billie Holliday), which allowed us to widen the issue and, in this case, discuss racism in the past and at present. The key was to start the class with content accessible to all levels, zoom in on one topic, and then broaden it to foster discussion. The use of such clips was considered to be successful, something which was corroborated by student opinion found in the course questionnaire.

### **5. The course questionnaire:**

Questionnaires were given to a total of 19 students in the final classes of the semester. Students were asked not to write their names on the paper nor look at their classmates' paper and were instructed to place the sheets in an envelope before leaving the classroom. Questionnaire results

would be used to help judge the effectiveness of the first semester of this course. By measuring the students' attitudes towards the overall instruction of the course and the usage of the blog, a useful barometer of the effectiveness of the site could be discovered. Three broad research questions could also be answered which could help the instructors re-think their approach to future courses. The questions were:

1. How effective were the choice of topics with the students?
2. How effectively was the content taught to the students?
3. Did the students find the use of a course blog useful in their completion of the course?

### 5.1. Questionnaire Methodology

The authors opted to use a Likert-style questionnaire: a style which commonly contains five response options, but which has also been used with fewer than two and up to seven responses (Dornyei, 2010, p.28). The questions were divided into two sections: 'topics and class instruction' and 'the course website'. A Likert-type scale for the ten closed questions in the questionnaire was designed so that students would give a clear positive or negative choice from the four choices. Students could therefore answer with a strong or mild 'positive' or 'negative' response. One example question is given below:

#### Example close-ended question from the questionnaire:

5) *How easy was it to understand the instructor?*

a) *easy*   b) *comfortable*   c) *so so*   d) *difficult*

In the above example, '*easy*' was assigned a score of 4 points and '*comfortable*' a score of 3. These were the two '*positive*' responses. '*So so*' was given a score of 2, and '*difficult*' a score of 1. These were the two '*negative*' responses. The assigning of more points for a positive score was applied to nine of the ten Likert style questions: question10 had neither positive nor negative responses. Participants who chose a 4 point response for each question would score a maximum of 40 points. With 19 participants, the maximum score for each question was 76 points. Seven of the ten questions concerned the effectiveness of course content and instruction; three concerned student use of the website. The results of the questionnaire are given in table three (below). They highlight the 'mean' score, the 'standard deviation' score (SD) and the 'range' of each answer.

Table 3: *Final Mean Ratings of Students' Attitudes towards the Course and the Website.*

<b>Topics and Class Instruction Questions:</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Range</b>
1. How interesting were the lesson topics? Answer: <i>interesting.</i>	3.58	0.72	1
2. How did videos help you understand lesson topics? Answer: <i>very useful</i>	3.74	1.35	2
3. How did the use of handouts help you understand lesson topics? Answer: <i>useful</i>	3.05	1	2
4. How useful were the role plays to help understand topics? Answer: <i>very useful.</i>	3.32	1.07	2
5. How easy was it to understand the instructor? Answer: <i>comfortable.</i>	2.89	1.37	3
6. How clear was the instructor in making complex ideas comprehensible? Answer: <i>comfortable</i>	3.05	0.89	2
7. How often did the instructor engage you? Answer: <i>always.</i>	3.21	1.53	3
<b>Web Blog Questions:</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Range</b>
8. How clear and easy was it to understand? Answer: <i>quite clear</i>	3.05	0.89	2
9. How useful was the website in helping you to complete the course? Answer: <i>useful.</i>	2.84	1.02	2
10. Why did you usually use the website? Answer: <i>to revise/learn about the topics.</i>	1.95	1.44	3

## 5.2. Findings

The results of the questionnaire showed a positive response to the content, to the instruction and to the website. The first seven questions on topic content and class instruction were given a more positive response than the final three questions concerning the website. In particular, question one (on course content/topics) and question two (on the use of videos) showed that students were overwhelmingly happy with those parts of the course: Q1 scored a mean score of 3.58 and Q2 a mean score of 3.74. It can therefore be concluded that content taught in the course, i.e. the choice of topics and the use of video clips, met with unanimous approval. The following five questions were also reacted to favourably: the use of role plays in class time (Q4) scored a mean score of

3.32, teacher ability to engage students (Q7) scored 3.21, the use of handouts (Q3) scored 3.05, and teacher instruction of complex ideas (Q6) scored 3.05. Less favourably, but far from unfavourable was the mean score for the question regarding student comprehension of teacher instruction (Q4) which scored 2.89. We can conclude then that, despite the course having students from different departments and of mixed levels, the instruction can be said to have been stimulating and was comprehensible across the spectrum of the class. However, the slight fall in score for questions 3 -7 might suggest that the teachers have room to improve both the accessibility of course materials and in giving classroom instruction.

The final three questions covered questions about the website. Students again reacted positively, if less unanimously. A mean score of 3.05 suggested that the website was easy to understand (Q8), but a mean score of 2.84 was given for the Q9 on how the website helped them complete the course (Q9) This comparatively lukewarm response may be partly explained by the final question (Q10) regarding website use: it appears that students used the website mainly for revision and examination purposes.

### 5.3. Discussion

The overall student response to this CBI course was positive. Regarding the three research questions, the instructors have been left with much to consider in relation to the creation of future courses. Research question one concerned the effectiveness of the choice of topic content in the course and results reveal that the choice of topics met with unanimous approval. This suggests that the analytical and discussion-based approach to teaching Media English was a popular one. Research question two considered the effectiveness of the way content was taught to students. This too met with overall approval, but there is definite room for improvement with regard to the delivery of content. Though the instructors engaged the students, they were slightly less effective in helping students attain a higher level of understanding of content. One way in which this might be improved is by tailoring pre-teaching vocabulary worksheets for students and to make them available on the website before each class. When considering the differing levels of students who potentially take this elective course, this might best be done by providing translations in Japanese while continuing to have the classroom medium as English. Research question three looked at student use of the blog, and because it appears that students see it mainly as a resource for examination and revision purposes, it might be worthwhile to seek ways to make the blog more useful to students during the course itself.

The results of this small piece of research showed that this CBI course was successful, but that there is much room for improvement. Despite the stated importance of students developing critical thinking skills, the questionnaire didn't probe student opinion about the teaching of critical

thinking in the course. Indeed, future courses (and future questionnaires) may be taught with closer consideration to the active development of critical thought in class time. With this in mind, an approach such as Chamot and O'Malley's (1996) Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) might be a guideline and a signpost. CALLA has three inter-related components that can act as a guideline when writing courses for EFL students, with a focus upon 1. high-priority topics (for students in a particular context), 2. a focus upon academic development through the teaching of content, and 3. explicit instruction in learning strategies that help foster a better understanding of content. It is believed that the latter two components hold more immediate importance. Future research will therefore focus upon a consideration of ways to build upon existing student learner strategies, and on the creation of materials that better integrate CBI with activities that act to scaffold language development.

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# **Media English questionnaire:**

*Please choose one answer from the questions below*

## **Topics and Class Videos**

**1) *How interesting were the lesson topics?***

- a) interesting      b) okay      c) uninteresting      d) boring

**2) *How did the use of videos in class help your understanding of the lesson topic?***

- a) very useful      b) useful      c) a little useful      d) not useful

**3) *How did the use of handouts in class help your understanding of the lesson topic?***

- a) very useful      b) useful      c) a little useful      d) not useful

**4) *How useful were the teacher/ student role plays to understand topics in the lesson?***

- a) very useful      b) useful      c) a little useful      d) not useful

**5) *How easy was it to understand the instructor?***

- a) easy      b) comfortable      c) so so      d) difficult

**6) *How clear was the instructor in making complex ideas comprehensible?***

- a) easy      b) comfortable      c) so so      d) difficult

**7) *How did the instructor engage you? How often did he/she ask you questions and encourage you to give your opinions?***

- a) always      b) often      c) sometimes      d) rarely

## **The Course Website**

**8) *How clear and easy was it to understand?***

- a) very clear      b) quite clear      c) not very clear      d) very difficult to understand

**9) *How useful was the website in helping you to complete the course?***

- a) very useful      b) useful      c) a little useful      d) not useful

**10) *Why did you usually use the website? Choose one answer:***

- a) To revise the topics    b) To learn more about the topics  
c) To prepare for next class      d) To prepare for the assignments/examination