

Cognitive Reflection (CoRe) Activities: Developing and Tracking Critical Thinking for Interpreting

Dr. Betsy Winston, Director

TIEM (*Teaching Interpreting Educators & Mentors*) Center, USA

Foundations

Effective interpreters require highly developed critical thinking skills and advanced communicative competence, which must include both language and pragmatic competence in each working language. As educators, we actively shape the future of interpreting and of our students as we guide them toward mastery of these skills and competencies. Assessing their progress is both essential and extremely challenging! Cognitive Reflection (CoRe) activities like Think Aloud Protocols, Stimulated Recalls, and Directed Reflections are valuable assessment and self-assessment tools that support student learning and development (Kiraly, 2000; Russell and Winston, 2014).

CoRe Activities Offer Glimpses

Into-the-moment (Concurrent)

- Think Aloud Protocols (TAP): participants' comments produced while they watch a source video prior to interpreting it, as a type of preparation
- Stimulated Recalls (SR): participants' comments produced while they watch their interpretation, analyzing the efficacy of the interpretation

Into the past (Recalls)

- Stimulated Recalls (SR): participants' comments produced while they watch their interpretation, reflecting on specific choices and strategies
- Directed Reflections (DR): participants' brief written commentary reflecting upon their original TAPs/SRs immediately on completion of each one (English and ASL).
- Synthesis Reflections: participants' brief written commentary (similar to Directed Reflection (DR) but with a broader scope) reflecting upon the entire CoRe process, starting with the TAPs and ending with the coding and categorization of their TAPs and SR comments.

Previous Findings: TAPs & Effective Interpretations

Interpreters TAPs & SRs comments (Russell & Winston 2014):

- typically fall into 5 categories.
- categories reflect increasing levels of critical thinking (e.g. Bloom 1956, Anderson and Krathwohl 2001, Brookhart 2010, Marzano 2001).

Presenter Intent: presenter's intent, goals, instructional style/approach, relationship with the audience (e.g. announcement overlapping teacher's lecture)

Audience Needs: ways that audience needs and preferences will influence the interpretation. For instance, does the interpreter recognize the need for consulting with the audience on certain issues (preferred sign choices, placement, turn-taking, etc.)

Interpreting Process: various interpreting aspects, such as the interpreting process, interpreters' role, classroom logistics, preparation; how interpreter will decide how to match presenter's or audience's assumed needs; focus in on interpreter rather than finding out what the participants might need/prefer/choose.

Linguistic Issue: specific linguistic issues in working between English and ASL (e.g. sign choices for new vocabulary, use of name signs, use of signing vs, fingerspelling, etc.)

Other: other topics, often related to presentation of self, e.g. physical comfort, feelings about the presenter, etc.

(Not included in Complexity analysis in original study)

For More Information

You can access a video presentation and download handouts about this topic using this QR code →

Or enter this URL into your browser:

<https://tiemcenter.org/core-activities-interpreters-interpreting-education/>

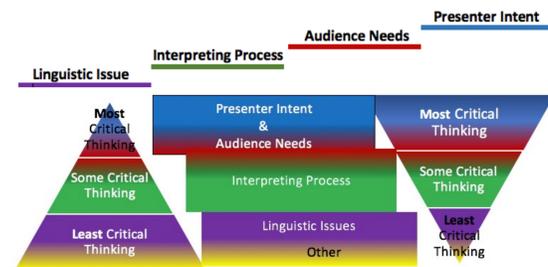
Or contact: BetsyWinston@TIEMCenter.org

THANK YOU for your interest!

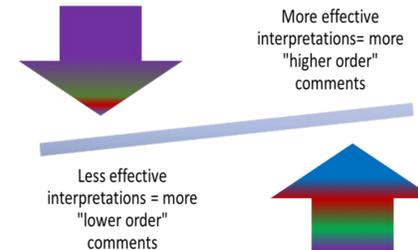


Previous Findings continued

Mapping Categories onto Critical Thinking Levels



Interpreters with more Effective Interpretations produced more complex comments



Current Study: Expanded Findings

Students CoRe comments also fall into the same categories, with 2 expansions:

- Comments within each category also range from basic, simple statements to rich reflections of reflective thinking → Overall Critical Thinking Ranking (CTR) Scale
- Other category is broader, with a range of conclusions about learning, first and second languages, interpreting education, and experiences. Winston (Pending)

Comments & Reflection Examples with Representative CTRs

Comment Categories	CTR 1	CTR 2	CTR 3	CTR 4	CTR 5
Presenter Intent	Oh, she's doing a slide show	I would need to find out how the teacher wants me to manage that type of conflicting input.		The teacher is emphasizing this point so that they know it is important for the test. I'll need to be sure the interpretation reflects that goal.	
Audience Needs	It may difficult to see the interpreter... if the student doesn't have... good vision...	I need to find out how the student wants me to manage turn-taking here.		So I hear some back and forth between the teacher and the student so I would think about how to make it clear to the student that this is an opportunity to participate	
Interpreting Process	I would need to decide where I would stand for this setting.	Should I indicate that the audience is laughing?		So it seems like the turn-taking is pretty rapid so I would think the interpreter would get behind or lost in the shuffle	
Linguistic Issue	I don't know the sign for testimonial	I wonder what the going sign is for "peer" I think usually it's like EQUAL but I don't know if that's right		To tell a good story need to remember body language and facial expression, using role shifts to show who is talking or whose doing the action.	
Other (samples)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Her finger nails are very distracting Glad I'm taking fingerspelling this term! That is actually a pretty good video. I actually enjoyed it. It doesn't really matter to me if I can understand the message or remember anything that was even spoken about as long as the consumer can understand and that they get the message. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was focused on petty things and not the actual interpreting process.....The more we worked with TAPs the more I could see improvement in my reflections I'm suddenly getting tired. This is a rather draining task when I sit here and produce all these thoughts. At first glance I noticed my English TAPs tended to have more comments overall. I'm not surprised because English is my first language... 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I notice that I begin to transition from commenting about "how to say this and that" to "....."Is that really what the presenter means?" Eventually, I begin to think outside the box and make observations outside of the linguistics of the texts. When I first started reviewing my TAPs comments and reflections I noticed one thing the setting.... This makes me realize I was focused on petty things and not the actual interpreting process. I rarely mentioned the reasoning behind what I actually said in my TAPs. 	

Critical Thinking Ranking Scale

The Critical Thinking Ranking Scale was developed to compare individual coding results to the rater's "overall sense" of the depth and breadth of critical thinking demonstrated in the activity. Examples of comments that occurred, either as TAPs or within longer DRs and Syntheses are provided.

CTR 1 = basic comments/ words/signs/logistics/minimal reflection demonstrated inconsistently; brief reporting on actions or process

CTR 2 = basic comments with some more complex terminology; occasional reflection appears inconsistently; reports process with some detail but does not reflect on it in depth

CTR 3 = emerging demonstration of reflection; more complex comments appear periodically; reports process with minimal/some detail applied to learning

CTR 4 = reflective comments with complex terminology applied appear somewhat consistently throughout; complex reflection demonstrated often

CTR 5 = reflective comments with complex terminology applied to learning appear consistently throughout; complex reflection demonstrated consistently

Added Benefits of CoRe Activities

Analyzing the cognitive reports produced by interpreters at many levels, from student to novice to professional also provides insights into our own teaching and assessment strategies, helping us:

- identify more specific criteria for choosing source materials for interpreting practice and assessment;
- understand more clearly how our discourse impacts (intentionally or otherwise) student understanding of the interpreting process;
- increase opportunities for developing critical thinking skills;
- streamline assessment activities
- identify thresholds of mastery as students develop from basic to advanced critical analysis skills in translation and interpreting.

Understanding how we can use CoRe activities to stimulate and track learning is an essential skill for every interpreter, mentor & educator!

Participants

Initial Project: Interpreters N=2150+ Cognitive Reports	Current Project: Students N=19.000+ Cognitive Reports
Snapshot	Longitudinal (2013; 2014; 2015; 2016, 2017)
7-8 participants: professional interpreters	85 participants (3 US universities; traditional & online; graduate & undergraduate; within 1-2 terms of interpreting internships)
2-3 Source Texts in English	8-10 Source texts (½ English; ½ ASL)
1 TAP for each	1-4 TAPs for each text by each participant
Few follow-up interviews	Reflections about CoRe activities (TAPs, DRs, & Synthesis Reflections)

Selected References

- Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (Eds.). (2001). *Taxonomy of learning, teaching, and assessment*. New York: Longman.
- Bloom, B.S. (Ed.). (1956). *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I: The Cognitive Domain*. New York: Longman.
- Brookhart, Susan (2010). *How to assess higher-ordered thinking skills in your classroom*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Kiraly, D. (2000). *A social constructivist approach to translator education: Empowerment from theory to practice*. Northampton, MA: St. Jerome Publishing.
- Llewellyn-Jones, P. and Lee, R. G. (2014) *Redefining the role of the community interpreter: The concept of role-space*. UK: SLI Press.
- Marzano, R. J. (2001). *Designing a new taxonomy of educational objectives*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Russell, D. and Winston, B. 2014. TAPPING into the interpreting process: Using participant reports to inform the interpreting process in educational settings. In *Translation and Interpreting*, 6 (1), 102-127.
- Winston, E. A. (Pending). Reflecting to Learn-Learning to Reflect. Colorado: TIEM Center.