



# Chapter 1

## Purpose of University Education and an Introduction to the English Major Curriculum

### Learning Objectives

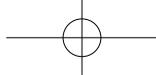


To be able to think about university education in relation to personal growth, national development and the cultivation of a civil society



To develop a good understanding of the competence desired of an English major on the basis of a close study on the curriculum for English majors





## I Quotable Quotes

### ① Study the following quotes<sup>1</sup> and tick ONE that rings especially true to you.

- The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education. —*Martin Luther King, Jr.*
- Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. —*Nelson Mandela*
- The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet. —*Aristotle*
- Education is the movement from darkness to light. —*Allan Bloom*
- Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire. —*William Butler Yeats*
- To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society. —*Theodore Roosevelt*
- Develop a passion for learning. If you do, you will never cease to grow. —*Anthony J. D'Angelo*
- Education is the best friend. An educated person is respected everywhere. Education beats the beauty and the youth. —*Chanakya*
- Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one. —*Malcolm Forbes*
- The foundation of every state is the education of its youth. —*Diogenes*

### ② Get into groups and tell each other why it rings especially true to you.

1 Retrieved from the website of “Brainy Quote” on Aug. 1, 2018.



## II Lead-In

The following is a post that went viral on moments of WeChat in 2017. It goes like this:

北京的一个煎饼摊大妈火了。一名顾客拿到煎饼之后，坚持认为大妈少给自己打了一个鸡蛋。大妈辩解不过，脱口而出：“我月入3万怎么会少你一个鸡蛋！”<sup>1</sup>



### ***Role-play Time!***

Pair up and role-play the incident in English.

### ***Time to Discuss!***

Work in groups and discuss the following questions.

- This post has caused quite a stir among university students. If one can make 30,000 RMB a month by selling pancakes at a street food stand, what is the point of getting a higher education and “wasting” four years?
- Do you agree with this line of thinking? How do you comment? Share your comments in groups.

<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from the website of “ifeng” on Aug. 15, 2018.



## III Understanding Key Concepts

### ① Education and national development

#### (1) Human Capital Theory

Theodore William Schultz was a Nobel Prize winner in Economics in 1979. One of his major contributions to economics is his research work in Human Capital Theory. While he was Chair of the Department of Economics at The University of Chicago, he led a team researching the reason why Germany and Japan recovered rapidly from the aftermath of post WWII. His conclusion was that they invested heavily in educating their population, turning their highly educated people into valuable human capital.

#### *Time to Think!*

Why are talents an important capital to the development of a nation?

#### (2) The correlation of higher education and national development

According to QS World University Rankings of 2020, 21% of the Top 100 universities in the world are from the US, and 18% from the UK. Among the Top 10, 5 universities are from the US, 4 from the UK and 1 from Switzerland. Tsinghua University is ranked 17th.

The QS World University Rankings, along with the Times Higher Education World University Rankings and the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU)—commonly known as the Shanghai Ranking, is regarded as the most well-known university rankings in the world. It assesses universities on the basis of six indicators, namely, academic reputation (40%), employer reputation (10%), student-to-faculty ratio (20%), research citations per faculty member (20%), proportion of international faculty (5%) and proportion of international students (5%).

***Time to Think!***

How important is higher education to the development of a nation?

Top 20 Universities in the QS World University Rankings of 2020<sup>1</sup>

1	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	United States
2	Stanford University	United States
3	Harvard University	United States
4	University of Oxford	United Kingdom
5	California Institute of Technology	United States
6	ETH Zurich — Swiss Federal Institute of Technology	Switzerland
7	University of Cambridge	United Kingdom
8	University London College	United Kingdom
9	Imperial College London	United Kingdom
10	The University of Chicago	United States
11	National University of Singapore	Singapore
12	Nanyang Technological University	Singapore
13	Princeton University	United States
14	Cornell University	United States
15	Yale University	United States
16	Columbia University	United States
17	Tsinghua University	China
18	The University of Edinburgh	United Kingdom
19	University of Pennsylvania	United States
20	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor	United States

<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from the website of “Topuniversities” on Aug. 15, 2019.



### (3) Education in Singapore

For lack of natural resources, Singapore is determined to develop its economy into a knowledge-based economy. Its education system is world-leading and its strong economy has earned it the name of “Asian Tiger”. Singapore hosts two best universities in Asia, with The National University of Singapore ranked 11th and Nanyang Technological University ranked 12th in the QS World University Rankings of 2020. In recent years, it has set a new goal of developing its education into “Global Schoolhouse”, aiming to attract international students as a new source of government revenue.

#### ***Time to Think!***

What can we learn from the success story of Singapore?

## ② ***Education and personal growth***

### (1) Whole person education

Whole person education advocates that a person should not only be academically sound, but also morally and physically healthy, as well as psychologically and emotionally balanced.

#### ***Time to Think!***

In terms of the whole person education, what plan do you have to further develop yourself?

### (2) *Five Minds for the Future*

Howard Gardner (2007) describes in his book *Five Minds for the Future*, five kinds of mind, or ways of thinking and acting that lead to future success. Three minds are related to academic skills while two minds are related to character and ethics.

What are the five minds?



## Five Kinds of Mind

Disciplined Mind (专业学术之智)	Students should master information within their major disciplines.
Synthesizing Mind (综合分析之智)	Students must be able to sort out what is important and what is not from the massive amount of available information.
Creative Mind (开拓创新之智)	Students must be able to think outside the box of that discipline.
Respectful Mind (尊重包容之心)	Students should learn to respect differences among human beings.
Ethical Mind (责任道德之心)	Students should develop reflective thinking about their behavior and act with responsibilities.

[Adapted from Gardner's *Five Minds for the Future* (2007)]

**Time to Think!**

In terms of the “five minds for the future”, what plan do you have to develop yourself?

**(3) Critical thinking**

- 2017 Word of the Year

*Collins English Dictionary* has chosen “fake news” as its 2017 Word of the Year. As defined by Collins, “fake news” means “false, often sensational, information disseminated under the guise of news reporting”. “The word saw an unprecedented usage increase 365% since 2016”, according to Collins online dictionary.<sup>1</sup>

**Time to Think!**

Living in an age of fake news, what can we do?

- Definition of critical thinking

Reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do. (Ennis, 1987)

<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from the website of “Collins On-line Dictionary” on Aug. 15, 2018.

- A critical thinker
  - a. judges well the credibility of information;
  - b. develops reasonable and logical arguments for a belief or an action;
  - c. is reflective of one's conduct;
  - d. draws conclusions based on good evidence.

***Time to Think!***

How good are you as a critical thinker?

**(4) Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives**

Ever since Benjamin Bloom and his collaborators developed their taxonomy of educational objectives in 1956, it has become one of the most cited taxonomies in the field of education. There are six levels of thinking in this taxonomy. The three levels at the bottom are lower order thinking while the three at the top higher order thinking. At the very bottom is the knowledge level, which means you are able to memorize the knowledge you are taught. The second level is comprehension, which involves understanding the information you have heard or read. The third is application, which means you try to apply the theory you have learned to a practical, concrete situation. Moving up to the next level is analysis. At this level you break down a complex idea into small components and figure out the relationship between them. The fifth level is synthesis. You show creativity by integrating information from various sources, reaching a new and higher level of understanding. The highest level is evaluation. It means you judge and decide how good or bad something is by developing criteria and measuring information against them.

Taxonomy of Educational Objectives

Higher Order Thinking (高层次思维)	Evaluation	using criteria and evidence to make a judgment
	Synthesis	integrating information from multiple sources to create new concepts
	Analysis	understanding the logic and the relationship between the parts

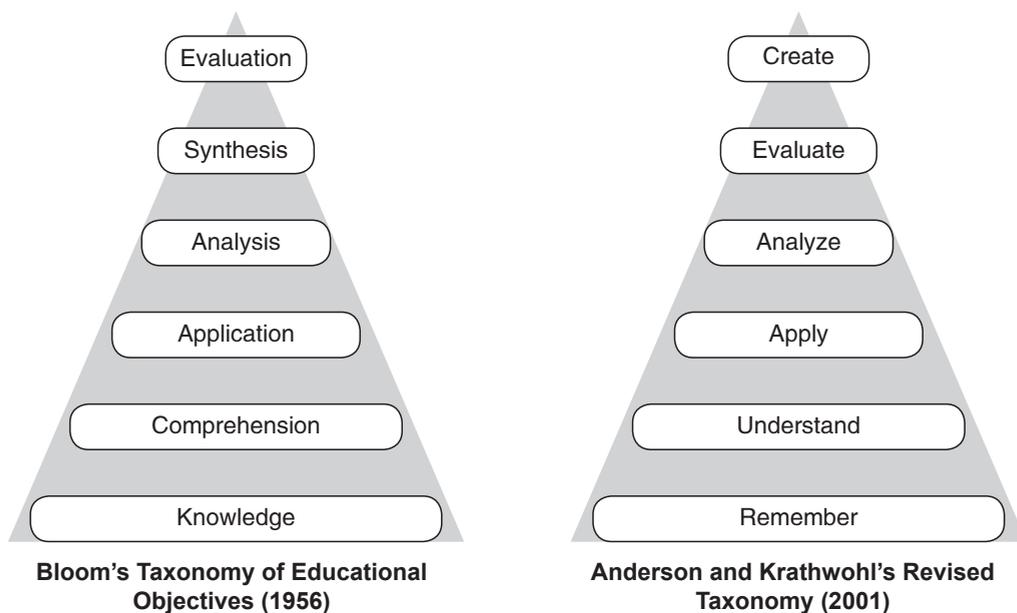
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Lower Order Thinking (低层次思维)	Application	using theories to solve problems
	Comprehension	understanding information
	Knowledge	memorizing information

[Adapted from Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (1956)]

In 2001, Anderson and Krathwohl revised Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. The following graphs are a comparison between the two taxonomies.

**Time to Think!**

- What changes did Anderson and Krathwohl make to Bloom's taxonomy?
- Why do you think they made such changes?



### ③ *Education and civil society*

Education has the responsibility of promoting values of responsible citizenship. A good citizen comprises both intellectual skills and participatory skills. Among others, critical thinking, and good decision making are examples of intellectual skills. Participatory skills include staying up-to-date on news, voting in elections, giving your voice in community issues, volunteering, donating, protecting the environment, conducting yourself in a respectable manner in public places, staying healthy, etc.

#### *Time to Think!*

How would you like to contribute to the civilization of our society?

### ④ *Curriculum, general education and specialized education*

#### (1) Curriculum

A curriculum is all the different courses of study that are taught in a school, college or university.

#### (2) University curriculum

University curriculum is often composed of general education curriculum and specialized education curriculum. In American higher education, general education composes about 40% of the curriculum while specialized education about 60%.

#### (3) General education

It develops students' understanding of the ethical dimensions of what they say and do, and prepares them to be civilized members of society.

#### (4) Specialized education

It enables students to pursue a disciplinary interest in depth.