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# Critical Thinking in English Language Teaching

**John Hughes**

*Teacher, Teacher Trainer, Author*

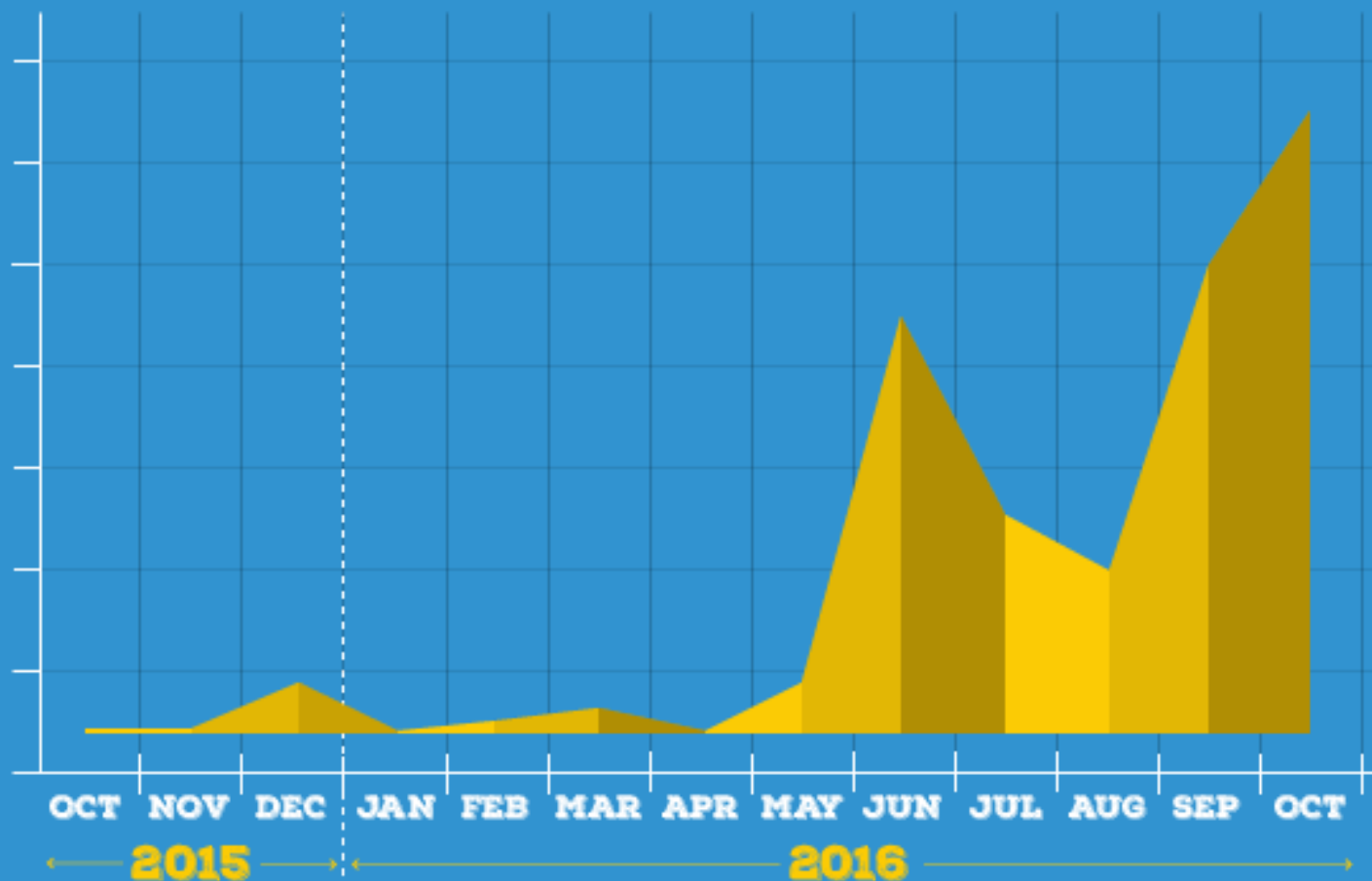


**In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, why do I need  
a teacher when I've got \_\_\_\_\_?**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, why do I need  
a teacher when I've got Google?

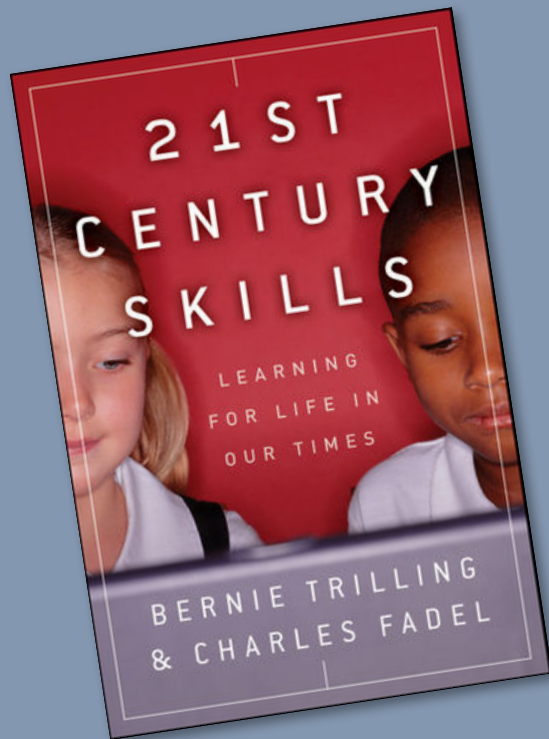
# "POST-TRUTH" FREQUENCY

FREQUENCY OF  
WORD USE



“Are students graduating from school really ready to work?”

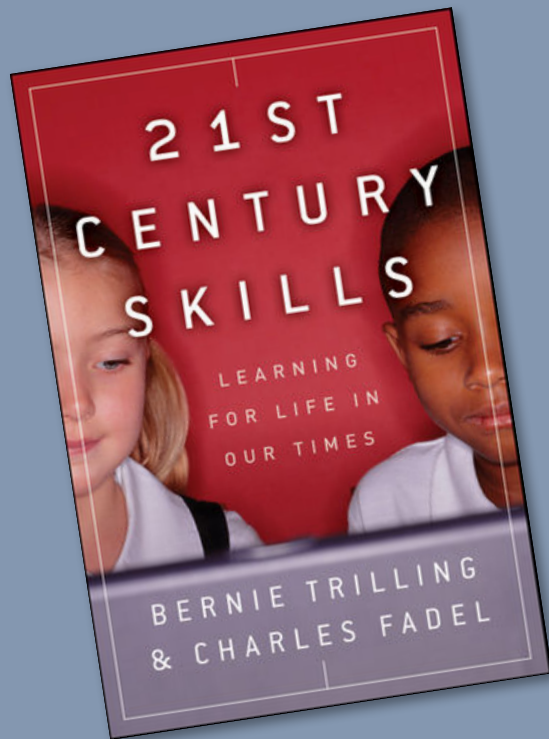
“No, not really.”



Survey of 400 HR Managers

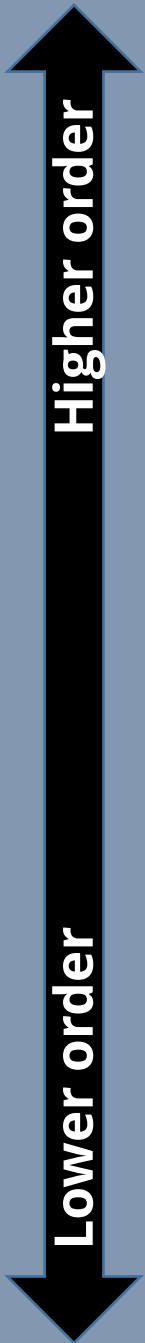
# “Are students graduating from school really ready to work?”

## “No, not really.”



- Oral and written communication
- Professionalism and work ethic
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Working in diverse teams
- Applying technology
- Leadership and project management
- **Critical thinking and problem solving**

Survey of 400 HR Managers



Create

Evaluate

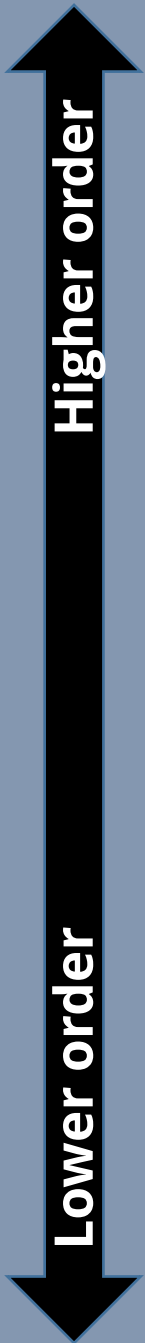
Analyze

Apply

Understand

Remember





Create

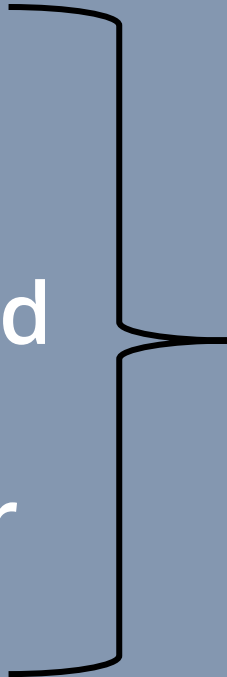
Evaluate

Analyze

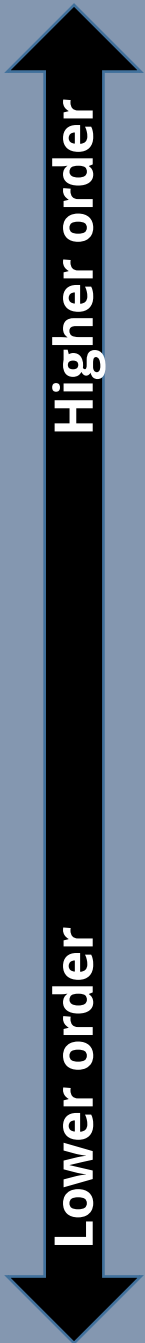
Apply

Understand

Remember



Comprehension  
and use



Create

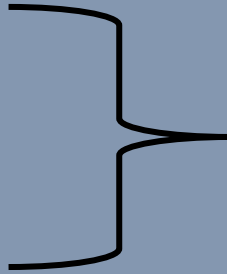
Evaluate

Analyze

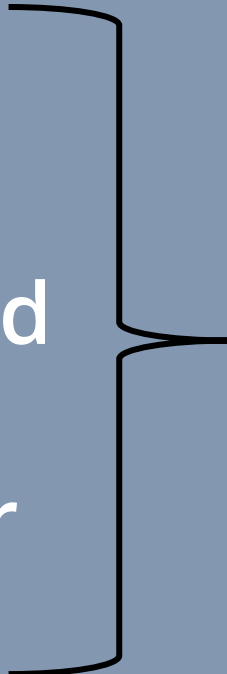
Apply

Understand

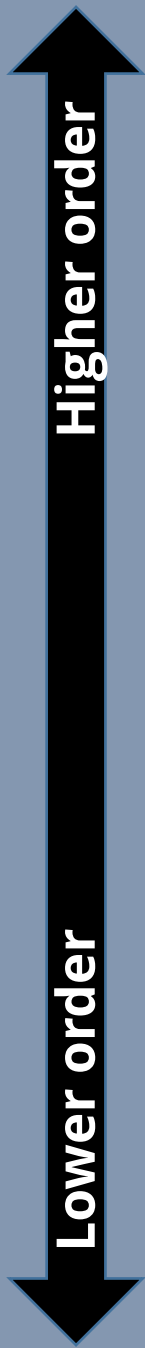
Remember



Creative thinking



Comprehension  
and use



Create

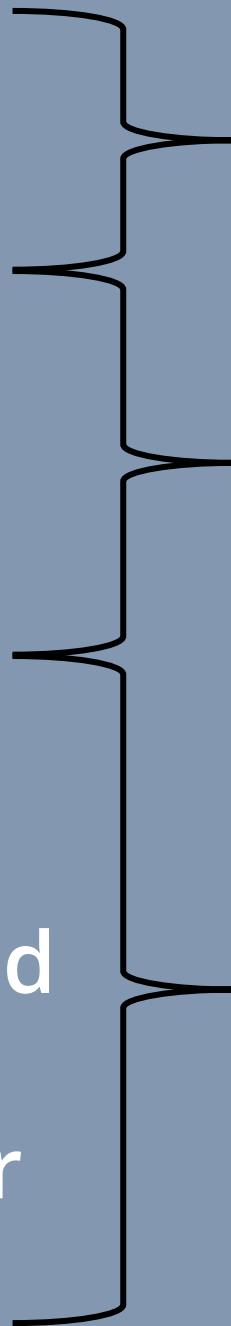
Evaluate

Analyze

Apply

Understand

Remember



Creative thinking

Critical thinking

Comprehension  
and use

boots camera compass  
first-aid kit gloves hat  
knife map mobile phone  
pens torch



boots camera compass  
first-aid kit gloves hat  
knife map mobile phone  
pens torch



## Complete these sentences with a word.

1. I wear this \_\_\_\_\_ on my head.
2. Put these \_\_\_\_\_ on your hands.
3. It's too dark. Switch the \_\_\_\_\_ on.

boots camera compass  
first-aid kit gloves hat  
knife map mobile phone  
pens torch



# Tell your partner which of these objects...

- are in your bag today?
- do you have at home?

boots camera compass  
first-aid kit gloves hat  
knife map mobile phone  
pens torch



## Work in groups.

Imagine you have to survive for one night on the side of a Himalayan mountain.

Rank these objects in order of importance from 1 to 11.

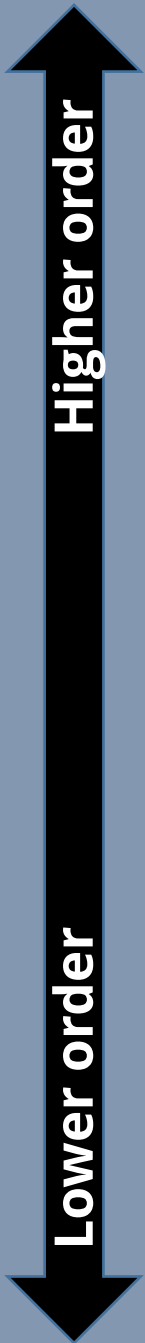
boots camera compass  
first-aid kit gloves hat  
knife map mobile phone  
pens torch



**Write a short story that begins with this sentence:**

“When we left our camp the sun was shining. But as we started to climb, the sky filled with dark clouds.”





Create

Evaluate

Analyze

Apply

Understand

Remember

Creative thinking

Critical thinking

Comprehension  
and use

## Critical thinking in the ELT classroom leads to...

- questioning and independent thinking skills
- deeper processing of language
- motivational classroom activities





Ira Bloch, National Geographic Image Collection

## 1. Description

- What can you see?
- What does the picture show?
- What is happening?
- Say three adjectives that describe this picture.

## 2. People

- Where are the people in this picture?
- What are they saying/thinking?
- How do they feel?
- How well do the people know each other?

## 3. Activity

- What are they doing?
- Do they like doing this?
- How often do you think they do this?

## 4. Imagine you are in the picture

- What would you be doing?
- What would you say to the other person/people?
- Would you enjoy being here? Why? Why not?
- What question would you like to ask the person/people in the picture?

## 5. Time

- When do you think the picture was taken?
- What year is it?
- What time of day/year is it?

## 6. Personalisation

- What does it remind you of?
- Have you ever been in a similar situation?

## 7. Comparison

- How is the place in the picture similar to or different from where you live?
- Compare the people in the picture. Find three similarities and three differences.

## 8. Predicting and speculating

- What do you think will happen next?
- What do you think the person is going to say/do next?
- What do you think is to the right-hand side of the picture?

## 9. Picture with a text

- Look at the picture with this text. What is the text going to be about?
- Which part of the text is about the action or place in the picture?

## 10. Re-using the image

- Imagine this picture is from a film poster. What is the title of the film? What kind of film is it?
- Imagine this picture is the cover of a book. What is the title of the book? What kind of book is it?
- Imagine this picture is the cover of a computer game. What is the title of the game? What kind of game is it?

## Choose the correct word in each question.

1. Where *do/does* you live?
2. What *is/are* your favourite sport?
3. Why *do/does* she study medicine?

## Choose the correct word in each question.

1. Where *do/does* you live?
2. What *is/are* your favourite sport?
3. Why *do/does* she study medicine?

## Write questions for the answers.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ breakfast?  
At eight o'clock every morning.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ in the evening?  
She likes watching TV.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ history?  
She wants to become an archaeologist.

## Choose the correct word in each question.

1. Where *do/does* you live?
2. What *is/are* your favourite sport?
3. Why *do/does* she study medicine?

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She wants to become an archaeologist.

## Write three more questions and ask your partner.

1. What...
2. Where..
3. Why...



exercise is good for you

I think that

travel broadens the mind

I agree that

our grandparents' lives were easier

I don't agree  
that

living in the country is better than the  
city

I'm not sure  
that

the internet has improved  
communication

people spend too much time on  
Facebook

	exercise is good for you	
I think that	travel broadens the mind	
I agree that	our grandparents' lives were easier	
I don't agree that	living in the country is better than the city	because
I'm not sure that	the internet has improved communication	
	people spend too much time on Facebook	



## Reliability

1 = Not a reliable source

2 = It might be credible but I'd have to check the information in another source as well

3 = It's usually a very credible source of information

- An article in a newspaper
- A post on Facebook
- A video on YouTube
- A published book by a qualified specialist on the subject
- An entry on Wikipedia
- A documentary on TV with interviews with real people

1. Read the article. Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?
2. Find the sentence in paragraph 2 which summarises the writer's main argument.
3. Underline adjectives in the text. What do they tell us about the author's attitude?
4. Read the short biography and write the main facts of the person's life next to these dates: 1966, 1979, 1991, 2000, 2009.
5. Match these definitions to words in the article.
6. The article lists both advantages and disadvantages of foreign travel. Find and underline adjectives that give a positive view of it and adjectives that are more negative.

# Critical thinking fact or opinion?

**6** Look at the sentences (1–6) from the article.  
Which sentences:

- a give facts?
  - b give the author's opinion?
  - c report other people's opinion?
- 1 The email inbox shows 243 unread emails.
  - 2 The good news is that now there is an excellent website to help people like me.
  - 3 When Ryan Nicodemus and Joshua Fields Millburn set up this website, they had 52 visitors in the first month.
  - 4 Some people also think that there is a problem with having lots of stuff in our heads.
  - 5 People said they were bored of watching TV.
  - 6 We also should have less stuff in our heads.



Once upon a time \_\_\_\_\_

Every day \_\_\_\_\_

One day \_\_\_\_\_

Because of that, \_\_\_\_\_

Because of that, \_\_\_\_\_

Until finally \_\_\_\_\_



**Write a for and against essay  
(240 words) on the following title:**

Sport in schools should be more competitive so that children learn about real life. Do you agree?

*There are various arguments for and against ....*

*Firstly, ....*

*In addition to that....*

*On final view in favour of this is ....*

*On the other hand ....*

*Another argument against ....*

*Finally ....*

*To sum up ...*

*Overall, ....*

Choose an  
image of  
very bad  
traffic.

**Use this image in an advertisement  
and write a slogan. You are either...**

- a bicycle manufacturer
- an environmental organisation
- a company specialising in nature holidays
- a manufacturer of electric cars

# Unit 3 Water

Women in Kenya spend up to five hours a day fetching water.  
Photograph by Lynn Johnson



## FEATURES

### 34 Behind the photo

When things go wrong in the water

### 36 Return to *Titanic*

The truth about a famous underwater discovery

### 38 Love and death in the sea

An article by marine ecologist Enric Sala

### 42 One village makes a difference

A video about solving a water problem in India

1 Work as a class. Look at the photo and answer the questions.

- 1 Where do you think the women are going?
- 2 How often do you think they make this trip?
- 3 What do they do with the water they collect?

2 Work in pairs. Complete the sentences with five of these numbers.

$\frac{1}{5}$   $\frac{2}{5}$  3 17 10 46 70 200

- 1 About \_\_\_\_\_ per cent of the Earth's surface is covered in water.
- 2 Only \_\_\_\_\_ per cent of the Earth's water is fresh water.
- 3 Around \_\_\_\_\_ per cent of people don't have running water in their homes.
- 4 A person in the developing world uses about \_\_\_\_\_ litres of water each day.
- 5 In Europe, the average is \_\_\_\_\_ litres a day.

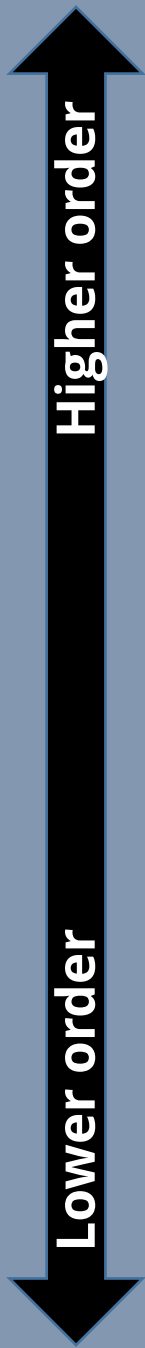
3  1.13 Listen to a radio clip about World Water Day. Check your answers from Exercise 2.

4 Work in groups. Discuss the questions.

- 1 Do you know how much water you use every day?
- 2 Do you try to save water at home? How? Why?







Create

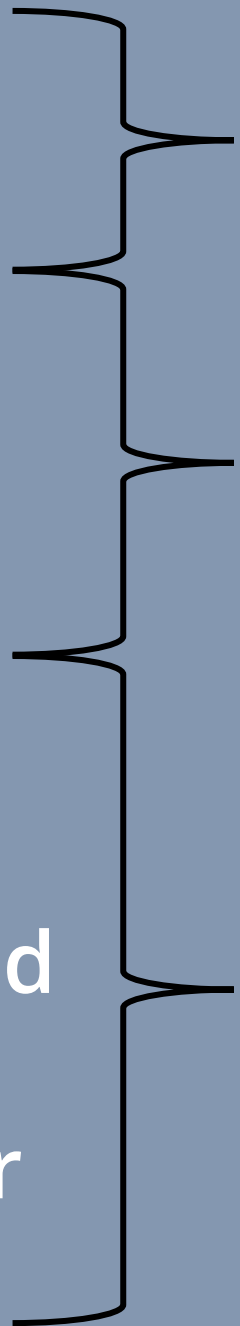
Evaluate

Analyze

Apply

Understand

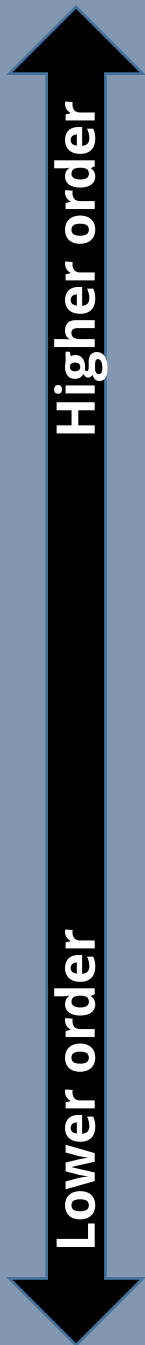
Remember



Creative thinking

Critical thinking

Comprehension  
and use



Create

*write a story, make a video,  
present your views*

Evaluate

*ask your own questions,  
identifying arguments,*

Analyze

*perspective and bias,  
giving reasons and opinions,  
problem-solving*

Apply

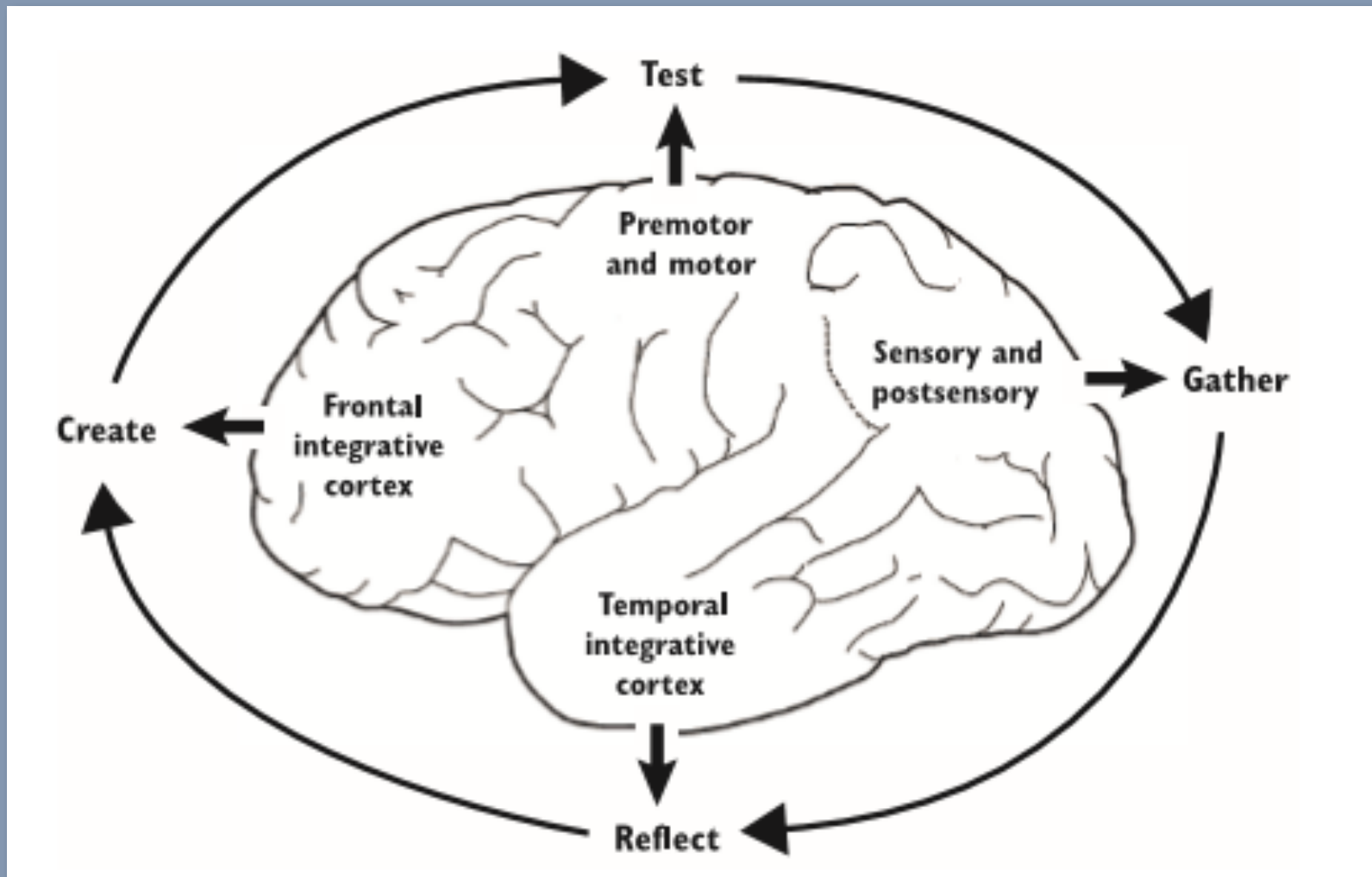
*drills, gapfills, multiple  
choice, fill in a table,*

Understand

*comprehension questions,  
translation, copying from*

Remember

*the board, match to pictures*



James E Zull (2006) *Key Aspects of How the Brain Learns, Chapter 1 in New Directions for adult and continuing Education, no 110, Wiley Periodicals Summer* (Free to download)



In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, why do I need  
a teacher when I've got Google?

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, I need  
a teacher more than ever  
as a result of Google.

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# Critical Thinking in English Language Teaching

**John Hughes**

*Teacher, Teacher Trainer, Author*





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# in focus

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