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Professional English
New Opportunities





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Developing Critical Thinking and Analytical Skills for Government Service

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English Enhancement LEARN Workshop

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PROGRAM AND PARTICIPANTS

Program Fundamentals, 1

- ▶ Origin: Legislation authored by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence in FY2005
- ▶ Purpose:
 - To provide English instruction to U.S. citizens who are native speakers of critical languages
 - To prepare participants for federal service
- ▶ Program Partners:
 - Coordination and funding: DoD National Security Education Program
 - Management: Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL)
 - Curriculum and instruction: Georgetown University

Program Fundamentals, 2

- ▶ Nature:
 - Scholarship program – tuition and living stipend
 - Instruction at an institution of higher education
 - One year federal service requirement
- ▶ One program iteration per year, 2006-present
- ▶ Cohort sizes have ranged from 16 to 45 per year; currently at 15-20 per year

Scholar Demographics, 2006-2014

- ▶ Recruited from across the United States; U.S. citizens
- ▶ Age range 24-66; average age 42
- ▶ Average time in U.S.: 16 years
- ▶ 68% have a Master's degree
- ▶ 66% have received at least one degree taught primarily in English
- ▶ 58% have received at least one degree from a university in the U.S.

Graduates by Language Background

Amharic	1	Pashto	3
Arabic	87	Persian Farsi	21
Balochi	1	Punjabi	0
Bambara	1	Russian	11
Chinese - Cantonese	2	Somali	3
Chinese - Mandarin	61	Swahili	8
Dari	13	Tajik	0
Hausa	3	Tamashek	0
Hindi	1	Turkish	6
Igbo	9	Urdu	8
Indonesian	4	Uzbek	2
Kazakh	0	Yoruba	3
Kyrgyz	1	TOTAL	249

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY OUTCOMES

Entry Requirements and Exit Goals

▶ Entry Requirements

- ILR Level 3 in the native language
 - Only speaking proficiency is tested (OPI)
- ILR Level 2 in English
 - Listening and reading tests: ELPT from DLI-ELC
 - Speaking test: OPI
 - Writing test: modified DLI-ELC writing test

▶ Exit Goals

- ILR Level 3 in four English modalities

Cumulative Entry/Exit Scores, 2009-2014

All Modalities (*percents*)

	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014	
	28 scholars		37 scholars		35 scholars		29 scholars		20 scholars		18 scholars	
	Entry	Exit	Entry	Exit	Entry	Exit	Entry	Exit	Entry	Exit	Entry	Exit
TOTAL – ALL MODALITIES												
ILR 3	19.6	28.6	31.1	28.4	34.3	41.0	39.1	58.3	60.0	76.0	61.1	
ILR 2+ or higher	50.0	61.6	63.5	68.9	63.6	72.7	71.3	81.7	94.0	99.0	91.7	
ILR 2 or higher	92.9	91.1	95.9	98.6	93.6	98.6	100	100	100	100	100	100
ILR 1+ or lower	7.1	8.9	4.1	1.4	6.4	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

ILR 3 : General Professional Proficiency

- ▶ Can discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with reasonable ease.
- ▶ Can express abstract concepts and hypotheses.
- ▶ Can answer objections, clarify points, justify decisions, state and defend policy, conduct meetings, and deliver briefings.
- ▶ Can reliably elicit information and informed opinion from native speakers and understand the essence of challenges.
- ▶ Can use structural devices in flexible and sophisticated ways.
- ▶ Can use the language clearly and relatively naturally to elaborate concepts freely and make ideas easily understandable.

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Instructional Program

6-month Intensive Component:

- Reading and Writing for Professionals
- Professional Oral Communication
- News Analysis
- Writing Lab
- Career Skills

2-month Online Component:

- Reading and Writing for Professionals
- Career Skills

Instructional Approach

- ▶ Combined CLT approach with task-based language teaching methodology
- ▶ Class size is limited: No more than 16
- ▶ Weekly individualized feedback: career counseling, oral communications tutorial, and writing lab
- ▶ Participants work in teams, in pairs, and individually depending on the nature of the activity
- ▶ Topics, activities, feedback focus and assignments are closely coordinated among the courses
- ▶ Instructional texts, tasks and activities are matched to ILR Levels 2-4 skill descriptors
- ▶ Professional capstone performance activity

Capstone: Open Source Analytical Research Project

- ▶ Topics provided by federal agencies and matched to scholars' backgrounds and expertise
- ▶ Scholars research and analyze topic using native language and cultural knowledge (as well as English)
- ▶ Many topics require analyzing/addressing messaging, narrative, propaganda and underlying ideology
- ▶ Each scholar works with a federal agency mentor
- ▶ Scholars present their intelligence briefing style analyses at a formal symposium and in a written paper

Initial Instructional Findings

- ▶ Consistent ILR 3 performance requires reliably “spiking’ to ILR 3+/4, and the ability to eloquently present points of view not one’s own
- ▶ Student background and related assumptions about topics led to overtly biased research source selection and research conclusions
- ▶ Hasty generalizations made on limited/anecdotal evidence, including personal traumatic experience, made discussion of insufficiency and/or bias of anecdotal evidence “fraught”
- ▶ Overstatement of cause/effect relationships, especially in terms of missing “third variable” analysis (i.e., correlation does not imply causation)

Skill Development: Critical Thinking & Language

- ▶ Explicit work on critical thinking skills development in News Analysis Course
- ▶ “Unpacked” ILR and critical thinking descriptors to identifying critical thinking sub-skills and targeted language-focused work

Critical thinking rubric from American Association of Colleges and Universities:
<http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/pdf/CriticalThinking.pdf>

- ▶ Applied to “hard” (vs. “soft”) news content – all “hard” news coverage

Critical Thinking Skills Development

- ▶ Identifying and analyzing bias
- ▶ Identifying and analyzing informal logical fallacies:
 - Post hoc fallacy
 - Cum hoc fallacy
 - Hasty generalization
 - Red herrings, strawman
- ▶ Cause/correlation problems in headlines
- ▶ Content/Frame Analysis
- ▶ Analysis of Competing Hypothesis (ACH)

Language Focus

- ▶ **Headline analysis:** Identify lexical and syntactic choices in treatment of same news content across sources
 - Connotations, denotations
 - Active vs. passive constructions
 - Presuppositions
- ▶ **Content/Frame Analysis:** Analyzing how news content is framed through
 - Lexical choice: “naming” entities, descriptive language, frequency of key phrases
 - Syntactic choices: repeated subject/object positioning of entities
 - Content: placement on news site, placement within stories (lead or non-lead), omission/inclusion of information, discrepancies in information
 - Visual framing and juxtaposition of images and text

Instructional Tools

- ▶ *The Thinker's Guide for Conscientious Citizens on How to Detect Media Bias & Propaganda.* Richard Paul and Linda Elder. Foundation for Critical Thinking, 2008
- ▶ Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>
- ▶ http://jfmueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/100/correlation_or_causation.htm
- ▶ *Analytic Thinking and Presentation for Intelligence Producers – Analysis Training Handbook*, PDF of an IC-produced manual Heuer, Richards , *The Psychology of Intelligence Analysis* <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/psychology-of-intelligence-analysis>
- ▶ *A Tradecraft Primer: Structured Analytic Techniques for Improving Intelligence Analysis* <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/Tradecraft%20Primer-apr09.pdf>
- ▶ IC directives on analytic and writing standards

Instructional Activities Overview

- ▶ **Assigned Readings:** Each week, you will read authentic news content that will be the basis for **reading comprehension** activities and **analytical** discussion. Weekly readings will also form the basis for explicit work on **vocabulary building** and **language analysis** activities, including vocabulary worksheets and quizzes.
- ▶ **Writing:** You will write weekly summaries of news content to improve the **accuracy and logical organization** of your written English. You will also write short **analytical** reports on news and social media content using **frame, content and sentiment analysis** tools. You will receive weekly feedback on the accuracy, content, organization and style of these summaries and reports.
- ▶ **Speaking:** You will deliver short oral **news summaries** and give **analytical briefings** on the **framing of news content in different sources**. These summaries and briefings will be based on your written work.

Periodic Performance Assessment

Language Skills Assessment

- ▶ ILR Levels 2-4 skill descriptors matched to instructional activities for each course
- ▶ Multiple data sources

Professionalism Report

- ▶ Participants are evaluated on timeliness, assignment completion, and ability to work on a team

General Observations

- ▶ Ongoing improvement in using labels to refer to pitfalls in Critical Thinking and analysis
- ▶ Labels and skill sets more closely aligned with Intelligence Community technical style guides and terminology
- ▶ Extensive modeling and practice using and applying these tools at a deeper level
- ▶ Greater focus and detail in identifying and improving weaknesses in analytical thinking and writing
- ▶ Activities and practice even more relevant to OSAP work and the real-life tasks students will be expected to do
- ▶ Generally positive learner reception
- ▶ Substantial uptake in applying Critical Thinking skills to
 - the media
 - OSAP source materials
 - student generated written products

References and Resources

- ▶ Heuer, R., *Analytic Thinking and Presentation for Intelligence Producers – Analysis Training Handbook*, PDF of an IC-produced manual, *The Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, 1999
<https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/psychology-of-intelligence-analysis>
- ▶ Paul R. and L. Elder, *How to Detect Media Bias & Propaganda*, in Thinker's Guide series, Foundation for Critical Thinking, 2008.
- ▶ Cause/Correlation problems in headlines
http://jfmuller.faculty.noctrl.edu/100/correlation_or_causation.htm
- ▶ *A Tradecraft Primer: Structured Analytic Techniques for Improving Intelligence Analysis*
<https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/Tradecraft%20Primer-apr09.pdf>
- ▶ Critical thinking rubric from the American Association of Colleges and Universities:
<http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/pdf/CriticalThinking.pdf>
- ▶ Rhetorica website <http://rhetorica.net/bias.htm>
- ▶ Fallacy Files: <http://www.fallacyfiles.org/>
- ▶ Online text analyzers <http://viewer.opencalais.com/>



Thank You!

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