外国教育における批判的リテラシーの活用：

powerful conceptsの導入と共に

SILVA, Cecilia

【要旨】

　本論文は外国語の授業で適用されたcritical literacyを活用したケースである。この論文の目的は外国語としてスペイン語を勉強している82人の日本人の学生がアルゼンチンの歴史を学んでいった際に、プリントやビデオや自分達の経験をとおして知識を構築していき、又再構築していく過程を明確にすることである。

　学生はアルゼンチンのロサス知事について説明を受けてから、ロサス独裁の時に起こった悲しいラブストーリのビデオを視聴した。学生は先に受けた説明にも映画の中にも明治されていなかったpowerful conceptsを作りあげた。

　授業中に議論したことについての記録と学生のレポートに基づいてその授業を分析した。授業はInterpretation Construction (ICON) Design Modelというモデルに基づいて段階的に発展させた。また、学生はいくつかの興味のある概念を選んでその概念をSocial Inquiry Methodによりディベートを行った。

Introduction

　　　　The issues raised in this article aim to describe an active classroom experience and suggest some reasons that may have caused students' deep engagement. Data were taken from classes of Argentine History in Kansai Gaikokugo University, and 82 advanced students of Spanish as a second language participated in such classes during the second semester of 1999.

　　　　The article contains two parts: the first part presents a brief explanation about knowledge acquisition and mental association of ideas, social constructionism, code and content of the classes. This article deals with knowledge acquisition and not with language acquisition due to the fact that students had already acquired the basic skills for communication and attended classes of Culture in order to enlarge vocabulary and cultural aspects regarding Spanish-speaking countries. The second part explains how knowledge acquisition and social constructionism were applied in the classes, and there is also a detailed reference to classroom work with powerful concepts using the Interpretation Construction Design Model and the Method of Social Inquiry.

1．First part

1.1. Knowledge acquisition

　　　　When we speak of "knowledge acquisition" we refer to propositions -"basic forms of representation of declarative knowledge -generalizations, facts, theories"- becoming part of our knowledge network. That network is formed by nodes -memory units- connected among each other by links. Nodes and links are inactive, and those which become active, correspond to what we think about at a certain moment (Gagne 1993, pp.117-150). In the knowledge network, the circles represent ideas (for example, the Government of Rosas), images (for example, representation of a cat and its characteristics), linear orderings (for example, the days of the week).

　　　　Thus, how are nodes and links activated? The key concept to explain the activity of nodes and links is called "spread of activation" and it is defined by Gagne as "the process whereby a given active node-link structure passes activation along to related node-link structures". In other words, when a person thinks of something, the corresponding propositions are active, and activation spread along the links of these propositions to the related ones.

Since working memory is limited, propositions that are active at a certain point will no longer be active at the next moment, and some of the propositions that were inactive will become active.

However, what happens when we want to add new propositions to the network? New propositions that are acquired are stored with related units in the knowledge network. While thinking or learning, those parts of the knowledge network that are activated make room for the related new propositions that are acquired. So that, another key concept necessary to analyze the acquisition of knowledge is "meaningfulness", i.e., the connection between prior knowledge and new propositions is a requisite for learning.

Knowledge acquisition is a topic of utmost importance for educators. Now well, if knowledge acquisition were just a mechanical process like the one above described, the image of knowledge transmission through a pipeline from teacher to student would still be in force. In fact, other process like elaboration, organization and also construction occur at the time of learning. This article deals with "social construction" of knowledge and considers specifically the viewpoints of Seymour Papert and Kenneth Gergen.

1.2. Social constructionism

One of the main tenets of constructionism is that learners do not just acquire knowledge but are actively engaged in the construction and reconstruction of knowledge out of their experiences in the world (Kafai et al 1996, p.2).

Constructionism considers an important role for affect: learning is a fruitful experience if learners are personally engaged in activities and projects. Also, constructionism accentuates the importance of diversity: learners can make multiple connections when learning.

Social constructionism confers a great importance to social relations and social activities, i.e. the "social setting": "When learners are in an environment in which they construct their own relationships with the objects of knowledge, these relationships can become deeply meaningful and profound" (Shaw 1996, p.180). For that reason, the social setting is viewed not just as a neutral ground where activities take place, but environment is also involved in the production of knowledge.

Another important concept proposed by social constructionism is "connectionism": learning consists of making connections between the world and mental entities that already exist, and those connections sometimes even escape conscious control.

To explain two of the main concepts of social constructionism -social setting and connectionism- I take Papert's image of "cultivation" (Papert 1996, p.23) and propose a similar one: facilitators waters plants (gives ideas, comments, provisional answers to students) within the frame of a suitable environment. Plants and their roots will develop freely and so profusely that branches and ramifications will become intertwined, share nutritious substances and produce fruits. Branches and roots becoming intertwined, sharing sap and constructing something may be a good image for students' interaction.

Therefore, which are the characteristics of a learning environment where students can construct and reconstruct objects of knowledge? An open democratic class can be an optimum setting for knowledge connectionism and human interaction.

1.3. Open democratic class

In a few words, which are the main characteristics of an open democratic class? (Lynch 1989, pp.67-131). The facilitator proposes topics and accepts multiple points of views.
Objectives are negotiated.
Participation level is high, students exchange opinions in a climate of collaborative learning.
Pace, sequence and time are determined in accordance to students.
Methods are varied and cooperative: the facilitator sometimes may be in front of the class so as to make clear some

points, and in other times the facilitator may sit among the students.

Motivation: students' motivation is intrinsic, and enlarged by materials and debates.

Answers are provisional.

Relations: there is a high level of interpersonal communication, students express their opinions, and also express agreement and disagreement among them.

Feelings are essential. In an open and relaxed climate students feel free to express feelings, sensations, opinions and all those aspects are highly respected by everybody.

1.4. Code and content of the classes

In 1960 the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire developed a pedagogical approach called "problem posing" and to that approach belongs the concept of "code". Problem posing approach states that education is deeply rooted in people's lives and, by means of dialogue, students are encouraged to develop a critical view and look for solutions in order to improve their lives (Wallerstein 1983, in Bayley 1996, pp.265-268).

In problem posing, once the problem has been identified, the teacher produces a physical representation, which is called "code". This code represents or contains the groups' problem. Codes are "emotionally laden devices", such as songs, stories, photographs, plays, films and so on.

The problem of the three classes to which I refer in this paper was represented by the powerful concept "dictatorship" and the code chosen to visualize it was the film "Camila" (Argentina, 1984) which depicts a romantic story inside the frame of Rosas' dictatorship (1829-32, 1835-52).

Content: plot of the film. A wealthy young lady falls in love with a Jesuit priest, who attempts to fight his feelings, but ultimately succumbs. The two flee to a small village and set up a rural school. After several months of relative happiness, Camila becomes pregnant, and the   couple's identity is discovered by a local priest. Under moralistic pressure from abroad and from the church, the authorities apprehend the lovers and put them to death. This was one of the most controversial stories in Argentina, also proved to be one of its most embarrassing episodes. Authorities have suppressed the telling of this story since the first attempt to put the story on screen, in 1912.

Students became profoundly engaged, watched it completely, paid attention to many details and made a quite detailed analysis. In that way, students wrote quite interesting reports, we debated about human rights, minorities, individual freedom, intolerance, and made some comparisons with Japanese society.

Thus, I thought, this is probably how social constructionism of knowledge takes place in an open democratic class: negotiation with students, debate, respect to all opinions, respect to multiple connections, and an open mind towards students' feelings, sensibility and interests.

2. Second part.

2.1. Classroom work: While-watching and post-watching activities

The second part of the present chapter refers to the concepts of knowledge acquisition and social constructionism in an open democratic class, applied to the content and development of three classes along which students dealt with Rosas' dictatorship and watched the film "Camila".

2.2. Knowledge acquisition

During 40 minutes of the first class students and I read and discussed a two-page synthesis referred to Juan Manuel de Rosas' government. In those two pages students gathered in their minds characteristics that they associated with the powerful concept "dictatorship". I made sure that students understood the main words such as politics, espionage, freedom, and other difficult words that appeared in the printed material.

After reading the material, the association of ideas and acquisition of propositions in students' minds may have been as follows:
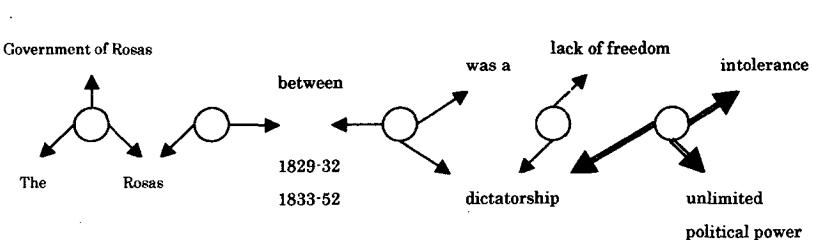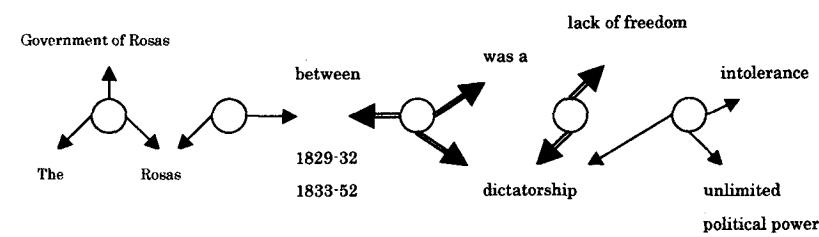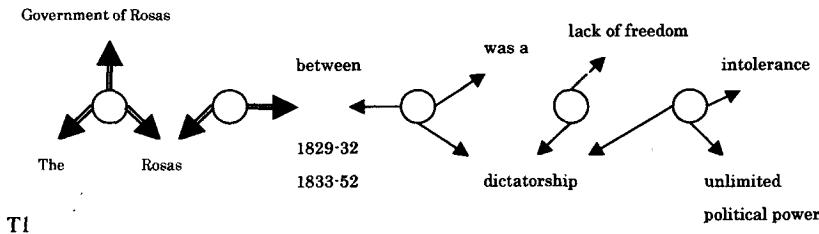

Fig. 1 Spread of activation (a)

Double lines linking nodes indicate active propositions.

T1 the propositions [The Government of Rosas] and [Rosas, between 1829-32 and 1833-52] are active.

Activation spreads to related propositions at T2: [Rosas Government was a dictatorship] and [Dictatorship implies lack of freedom] are the active propositions.

Activation spreads at T3, so [Dictatorship implies unlimited political power and intolerance] is the active proposition.

However, along while-watching and post-watching tasks, having considered debates in class and reports written by students, it is possible to say that they made further associations.

Students considered that in a dictatorial regime, the dictator is like God, and God was also associated with the Church. The network produced in their minds was probably the following:
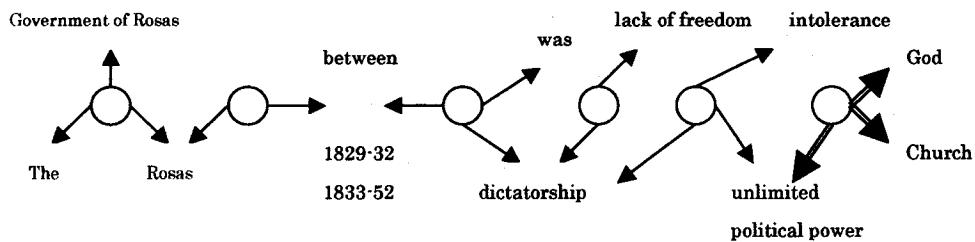

Fig. 2 Spread of activation (b)

Students made a great deal of connections, for the sake of presenting an example, only one was considered. Others can be observed in the Table 1 of powerful concepts, herein included.

2.3.Social constructionism

Along "while-watching" and "post watching activities", students discussed, asked questions, agreed, disagreed, defined problems, proposed solutions, used imagination, and confessed feelings in a highly collaborative climate. I sometimes stopped the film to make sure students had understood a controversial situation or to make them elaborate predictions by asking "What do you think it is going to happen?", or to make them become authors by asking "What do you think it should happen?". By means of questions, students were encouraged to discuss, express opinions and make their own questions. For example:

Do you think Camila is in favor of Rosas' dictatorship?

Do you think the priest's sermon is in favor of Rosas' dictatorship?

Why do you think the owner of the bookshop was killed?

Which is the opposite of "free-press" ?

Which characteristics of a dictatorial government can you identify in the film?

Can you point to certain scenes and express the words that come to your mind?

Can you point to remarkable aspects you found in the film? Why you consider those aspects remarkable?

Why do you think Rosas applied the capital punishment?

I dare to affirm that those classes can be considered within the frames of social constructionism of knowledge due to the following reasons:

- there was a high level of interaction,
- students strongly engaged in an intellectual work,
- made multiple connections,
- students produced concepts: this point is quite important due to the fact that in many cases students did not know the exact words in Spanish. So, the experience was also a language-centered one.

Some educational concepts favored by the constructionists (Gergen 1999, pp.179-184) are worth considering, since they were reflected in the classes to which this paper refers:

In reflexivity. Social constructionism in Education aims to increase reflexive deliberation: far from stuffing students with lots of data, students are encouraged to create alternative interpretations, look for alternative

sources, challenge authoritative discourses and relate classroom material to their own experiences and personal situation. Students who are educated for the "maintenance and defense of the principles and traditions necessary for a democratic society" should be encouraged to define a problem, analyze it, build hypotheses, define concepts, search for solutions, analyze different interpretations. Certainly, students do not remember exactly when Rosas was in power; they can barely remember that it was in the 19th century. However, students can define a "dictatorship" as a negative situation for any country.

Collaboration. To promote dialogue inside the classroom means in some way linking the classroom to the world. Work in a classroom is like a puzzle: comments, opinions of each student contribute to assemble the piece of knowledge students are dealing with. Besides, as opinions may be in discrepancy, students learn how to live in a world of multiple voices and realities.

Aiming to ensure the full participation of all the students in a course, it is necessary to create an environment of respect. Many students are shy or reluctant to speak in front of other students. Voice is a key element in debates and, in order to make students feel that their voices are respected, three aspects are to be considered (Bailey, 1996, p.163-265):

Gaining the floor: it refers to turn-taking. Some students are eager to speak; others are shy to do so. Facilitators have the task of leading students into a fair participation.

Speaking acceptably: students should speak in such a way to demonstrate that she or he has something worth paying attention to. However, some students of foreign languages may feel they cannot express properly what they want to say. Again it is facilitators' tasks to empower students into expressing their opinions, by uttering expressions such as "it is really interesting", so as to enforce the importance of what the student is saying and lead all the others into listening to her or him.

Being heard by others: students should feel that their participation is being valued and that other students are willing to listen to what she or he says. Facilitators can increase the level of "hearing" in the class, in terms of evaluation (That is really an original opinion!), personal reference (Hiroyuki's idea is great), negotiation (What do you mean by ...?).

Polyvocality. Constructionists educators encourage students to develop multiple voices, to express themselves, to seek for critical views, in other words, to reconstruct a piece of knowledge (a text, a film, etc) and to construct another object of their own. Students are encouraged to be innovative and free from expressive constraints. The students' reports can be an example of multiple views, expressions and creativity.

2.4. Powerful concepts and knowledge components

On trying to define the causes that led students to actively engage in the construction of knowledge, one of the reasons I propose refers to "Working with powerful concepts" (Banks 1994, pp.59-79). Powerful concepts are strong, high-level, organizing concepts that may be specific for a discipline, such as "cultural change" for anthropology, or interdisciplinary, such as "differences". In other words, working with powerful concepts refers to the choice of emotionally laden concepts like "revolution", "culture", "freedom", and others that can lead students to recall, organize, elaborate, explain, question.

As we were dealing with Culture of Latin America, specifically History of Argentina, the elicited concepts were "dictatorship", "censorship", "exile", "intolerance", "oligarchy", and many others of that sort.

Along learning experiences, students produced a list of concepts and discussed about them while and after watching the film. The acquisition of those concepts is not an end in itself: those concepts are situated inside knowledge components.

Knowledge components are "essential preconditions to the application of knowledge in daily life in a diversity of role, problem-solving and decision-making situations." (Lynch 1989, pp.49-59) Knowledge components also make reference to the proper understanding of concepts that are particularly important because they emphasize

the interconnection between learning experiences in class and the application of knowledge in daily life.

The main characteristics of powerful concepts are:

Authenticity: organizing information by means of concepts allow students to relate what they are experiencing in the classroom with real situations.

Interactivity: elicitation of powerful concepts leads to collaborative learning as students work together along the process of extracting and conceptualizing concepts.

Learner-centered: extracting powerful concepts requires students' exploration and discovery. The development and the content of the classes will depend ﹩up to a high level- on students' interests, experiences and strengths. Students will certainly connect their own experiences to those represented by the concepts in the message.

Inclusive: along learning experiences with powerful concepts all students have equal access to learning opportunities. It means that although some students may be shy to express themselves orally, they can express beautifully revealing ideas in reports.

Continuous learning: working with powerful concepts leads students to make multiple connections among different areas and previous learning experiences. Therefore, students can perceive knowledge in a more holistic manner.

Components of knowledge	Concept	Situation in the film. Comments by students
Human and social domain	Oligarchy	The view of a rich house and a landowner, the garments of the people.
Social justice	Minorities	Black people are servants.
Human and social domain	Cultural awareness	The custom of having a bath only once a week.
Spiritual domain	Confession	Students considered that the practice of confession in Catholicism is an invasion of privacy.
Social and political domain	Censorship	Books, which dealt with topics related to freedom, were banned. "Books may become gunpowder". French novels belonging to the Romantic period were considered inappropriate.
Social and political domain	Immigration	"Immigration is like death" Students asked the meaning of the expression and they learned the meaning of "exile".
Social and political domain	Dictatorship	The red emblem as a sign of submission to Rosas' power. The picture of Rosas in houses and at the Church. The salute "Long live the Holy Federation!"
Social and political domain	Minorities	Black servants are well treated.
Social and political domain	Dictatorship Intolerance Human rights	At night, groups of soldiers spread terror by killing those people who are opponents to Rosas. Anybody who dares to express his thoughts against the government is killed: no free expression.

Table Number 1 Some of the powerful concepts produced by students

Table 1 indicates 9 out of the 32 powerful concepts considered and discussed by the students along while-watching and post-watching activities, in debates and reports. Students produced concepts in two ways: from particular aspects into a general concept and from a general concepts they extracted particular aspects.

From particular aspects students derived a general concept:

Example 1:
Image: two people hiding a book
Text: a book may become gunpowder
Sound: (shouts in the night) Long lives the Saint Federation!
Image: the librarian has been beheaded
Text: What was the librarian's guilt? Just to sell books!

From those five scenes students inferred the concept **"Censorship"**

Example 2:
Images:
A dirty and cold prison
No toilet
The priest is chained
Both Camila and the priest have no chance of having a bath

From those aspects students inferred the concept **"human dignity"**

Students also made the reverse road: from a general concept they derived particular aspects. Example 3 indicates that students recognized the characteristics of **"dictatorship"** in the film:
the red emblem indicating submission to a Governor
the picture of Rosas in houses and in the church
censorship of books
the salute: Long live the Saint Federation!
the Dictator is above the law
the Dictator can administer capital punishment
espionage and persecution
assassination of political opponents

2.5 The general development of the classes responds to the steps of the Interpretation Construction (ICON) Design Model.

Students worked with each concept (the main ones or the most interesting ones in their opinion) using the Model of Social Inquiry. (Later on they carried on an integral work with concepts using strategies of media literacy, mainly advanced skills, rudimentary skills and schemata, these issues are processed in another article).

2.5.1. Interpretation Construction (ICON) Design Model

The Interpretation Construction (ICON) Design Model (Black, 1995) is a useful tool to analyze how the whole class worked in the three classes along which we studied Rosas Government and watched a film:

1.Observation:

Students read printed material and I made sure that students understood the meaning of some difficult words such as espionage, opposition, and anarchy. Later on, we watched a film located during Rosas Government and it unchained the following steps of elaboration.

2.Interpretation Construction:

Students interpreted the situations they observed and also constructed arguments to support the validity of their arguments.

Example: situation of minorities. Students saw that black people were servants and recalled what we had studied about black people introduced as slaves in Latin America. Students commented that black servants were well treated and some of them even commented that perhaps due to the fact that in Argentina there were no large plantations as in Brazil, slavery was not so cruel.

3.Contextualization:

Students accessed background and several materials in order to construct a suitable context for their interpretations and arguments.

Students understood that Rosas was a strong Governor, so they looked for material in order to discover why Rosas was able to maintain his power during such a long time and with so cruel measures. Students interpreted that, after several years of anarchy, people wanted a strong Governor who could set the territory in order. Besides, they realized that owners of large estates (members of the oligarchy) supported Rosas in name of commercial interests.

4.Cognitive apprenticeship:

I proposed information and interpretations but gradually gave more room for students' efforts. I supplied information about power groups in those times (Church, the press, Unitary Party, Federal Party, etc) and students gradually understood which was the interest of each group.

5.Collaboration:

Students exchanged their interpretations. This was one of the most fruitful moments: I just controlled that everybody had the same opportunity to speak, confirmed that they exchanged correct pieces of information and allowed students to debate freely. It was an excellent activity for practicing speaking skill.

6.Multiple interpretations:

Students could learn to be flexible and open-minded as they were exposed to multiple interpretations and reactions. As students debated freely they made relations between social aspects depicted in the film and their personal situations. All students respected their classmates' opinions.

2.5.2. Model of Social Inquiry

Along debates, students chose the main concepts and worked with them following the steps of the Model of Social Inquiry (Banks 1994, pp.59-79). One example with the concept "intolerance" is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Steps of the Model of Social Inquiry. Concept: intolerance

Doubt - concern	The priest is in love, which is a quite natural and pure feeling and has to fight his feelings.
Problem formulation	Why cannot the priest get married?
Formulation of hypotheses	The priest and the lady belong to different social classes. The Church does not allow the priest being married.
Definition of terms Conceptualization	In the frame of Catholic Church, priests make three bows: Celibacy: priests cannot get married Chastity: priests should not have sex Poverty: priests should not have money Students took those concepts out of the frame of Catholicism and tried them within the context of Buddhism.
Collection of data	Students collected data about the Catholic Church. Some students compared Catholicism and Buddhism.
Evaluation and analysis of data	Students evaluated data related to the Church along the film
Testing hypotheses: deriving generalizations and theories	The Catholic Church states "confession", which is an invasion of privacy. The Catholic Church may turn a person violent against himself: flagellation The Catholic Church forbids priests to get marry. The Catholic Church asks the Governor to punish the priest and his lover, Camila. The Catholic Church allows killing two people and a baby, to defend its name and to be in good terms with the Dictator. Thus, the Catholic Church is intolerant
Beginning inquiry anew	This process can start again with another concept

3.Evaluation of the classes and Conclusions

Two aspects should be pointed to:

- students produced concepts out of observation, collaboration and interaction,
- students could take concepts out of the frame of the film and use them in other contexts. For example:

when dealing with the concept "dictatorship" students referred to Hitler's totalitarianism,

when dealing with the concept "censorship" students referred to an epoch in Japan when certain books were forbidden,

when dealing with the concept "intolerance" applied to Catholic Church, students referred to Buddhism Religion and commented points to indicate that Buddhism is more permissive than Catholicism,

when dealing with the concept "human rights" students recalled the International Human Rights Declaration,

when dealing with the concepts "intolerance" and "unlimited political power" one student even referred to the case of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn,

when dealing with the concept "confession" (as a practice in Catholicism) students commented that, in their opinion, it was an invasion of privacy and related to their personal situation indicating that they could never confess their sins and sufferings to an unknown person,

in some cases, we also worked with Japanese language, when dealing with the concept "oligarchy" I asked students to write the corresponding Japanese characters and to explain them. This kind of work has a double positive effect: students feel self-assured when resorting to their own language and feel more encouraged to talk, and I make sure that they had understood properly.

The critical reading of texts strongly grounded in the social and cultural context results in the development of a critical literacy. Basically, critical literacy makes reference to an experience wherein students and facilitators are aware of the fact that messages are not "innocent", that they are rooted in ideological, political, social, economical positions. Discovering the history of the text, i.e. the circumstances under which it was produced, or the particular situation it represents, or identifying the links between the textual and visual symbols and reality, makes the work with powerful concepts inside the frame of social constructionism an effective instrument for the study of language, for it explores the social context of social practices.

* Along interaction and collaborative work, students observe that there are many interpretations of a message. Thus, multiple connections, opposite opinions, and diverse conclusions are to be respected.

* The development of a critical literacy is reached as a result of thinking, reading, speaking, discussing and writing in such a way that goes beyond mere opinions.

* In a few words, students were exposed to an aesthetic situation: they expected a positive and pleasant message ïa romantic film- and instead they faced a negative one, a dictatorship with tragic consequences for society. That discrepancy between what students expected and what they encountered meant a problem for them. Throughout the resolution of that problem, students analyzed the content of the film and extracted powerful concepts. Therefore, classroom work tended to the development of a critical literacy, which is highly suitable for the study of language due to the fact that it explores the strong and profound link between language practices and social context. Using a romantic film to clarify and complement printed material was really successful: "Mere information has a limited impact, but presented in the form of art strikes our feelings deeply and requires us to think. We cannot soon forget it" (Arnstine 1995, pp.67-82).

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Strategies of critical literacy in the field of foreign language teaching: Work with powerful concepts.

SILVA, Cecilia

The present text is part of a series of classroom activities wherein the author tried to apply strategies of critical of literacy in foreign language learning.

This paper aims to describe a classroom experience along which 82 Japanese students of Spanish as a Foreign Language, in classes of Argentine History, constructed and reconstructed knowledge out of printed material, visual material and personal experiences.

Students received a brief explanation about Juan Manuel de Rosas Government (1829-32, 1835-52) and watched a film depicting a real love story during that period. Students elaborated powerful concepts that were in many cases, neither specifically indicated to them in the previous explanation nor verbally supplied by the film.

Those classes were analyzed based on notes taken during debates and on students' reports and exercises. The development of classroom activity responded to the structure of the Interpretation Construction (ICON) Design Model and students chose some powerful concepts and analyzed them following the steps of the Model of Social Inquiry.