



## Improving Critical Thinking by Using the Right Strategies and Techniques

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### Abstract

Teaching is a concept that in different disciplines can be conveyed in different forms and with different techniques. English is important because in addition to the fact that it acquires knowledge, the fact that it is a subject that also requires vocabulary study. One of the rubrics of thinking about a foreign language is reading. Reading is an activity with benefits. Reading is part of critical thinking, on the other hand, it includes a multitude of complex skills. The purpose of this study is to encourage guided reading by stimulating critical thinking and to determine some teaching methods and techniques focused on guided reading and the stimulation of critical thinking in comprehension and writing that affects intellectual development of students forming social and cooperative individuals. The research method that was used is the quantitative and qualitative research method such as interview and observation. The questionnaires were taken from students and teachers from different schools with different achievements. A contribution in this study are the suggestions regarding the methods and techniques that encourage critical thinking and, in particular, guided reading will have a result and the various recommendations from teachers who succeeded in teaching in classes with difficulties in reading.

**Keywords:** Teaching, Critical Thinking, direct reading, technique, method

### 1. Introduction

Nowadays teaching as a concept in intertwined with the concept of "teaching" and "teacher" that are connected with the schooling and the institution that is school. When we want to define what is teaching, we focus on the question what really teaching is and what teacher are expected to do. Teacher's focus is on activities and qualities they express in order to realize their teaching and make them discern from others. All these things are interrelated and have a considerable effect on what is called teaching. There are different definitions and one of them is: Imparting knowledge to or instruct someone as to how to do something; or cause someone to learn or understand something by example or experience. This definition means that we are all somehow teachers in some way at some time. Another definition by Oxford dictionaries is that the origin of word teaches lies in the old English means 'show, present, point out' with Greek origin meaning.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A definition and discussion, What is teaching? <https://infed.org/mobi/what-is-teaching/>

Teaching is process that is scientific with some components like content, communication and feedback. It can have positive feedback in learning. The teaching strategy has a positive effect in learning, helping in improvement and development by integrating new activities, techniques and new methods of teaching knowledge incorporating even technology. Another definition for teaching is as " an interactive process, primarily involving classroom talk which takes place between teacher and pupil and occurs during certain definable activities"- by Edmund Amidon. Teaching is a structure with some components such as planning of teaching, organization of teaching, identification of suitable teaching and managing teaching.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is an ability. This ability helps analyze information and to come to a conclusion. Pupils being able to think critically makes them able not only give a solution to different problems in every day lessons but also in different social situations that may appear in the future. Being a critical thinker is important in every possible situation pupil may be in the present and future jobs. It isn't subject specific but it's the ability to dwell in information, data, statistics, and other details in order to identify the right solution. By developing critical thinking skills it will develop pupil's solving skills, boosts data-driven decision-making ability and makes the learner equipped with the right equipment to solve complex problems. They won't fear ambiguity in the future and are prepared to come to best solutions.<sup>3</sup>

Another definition about critical thinking is that it is a process disciplined consisting on actively appointing concepts and applying, analyzing, synthesizing and then evaluating that information that was collected by different sources such as observation, reflection, reasoning and communication in order to make it possible for future action and guide to belief. It is based on universal values and that goes beyond main principal values such as clarity, precision, consistency, relevance, evidence, breadth, fairness and breath.<sup>4</sup>

## 3. Strategies and Techniques

In order to make teaching effective teachers use different strategies and techniques to use during lesson hour. Teaching strategies refer to methods also techniques and procedures that are used during teaching process. These teaching methods are multidimensional and the effectiveness is affected by the context it is applied. These strategies are applied used more than one during the lesson hour. These strategies are affected by the way how the teacher applies the right strategies to deal with to deal with the target group.<sup>5</sup>

Like other skills, critical thinking isn't that easy. It consists on diverse interpersonal and analytical skills. This skill is more about learning to embrace open-mindedness and bringing analytical thinking to your process of analysis. Eight most important critical thinking skills are: Analytical thinking- It consists on evaluating data from diverse sources in order to come to the right decisions. It helps avoiding data and come to the correct conclusions. Another is open-mindedness- that helps analyzing information and processing it to come to unbiased decision. The third is problem solving that has to do with giving a solution, it helps you solve any problem. The fourth is self-regulation that refers to the ability to regulate your thoughts and avoid biases. The fifth is observation that helps look for things beyond face value and the solution can be given by observing to identify possible problems. The sixth is interpretation that means that not all data are equal. It is important to identify the correct information in all these situations. The seventh is evaluation that has to do with your attempt to answer a hard question based on data you actually possess. The last one is communication that corresponds with the fact of evaluating and supporting the conclusion.<sup>6</sup>

## 4. Metodology

The research methodology for gathering information in this research consists in the study of literature and different

<sup>2</sup>International journal of Education, Concept of Teaching, Isola Rajagopalan, March 2019, vol 2. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1245288.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Martins, Julia, How to build your critical thinking skills in 7 steps (with examples), What is critical thinking? February 17th, 2023, <https://asana.com/resources/critical-thinking-skills>

<sup>4</sup> Elder Linda, Defining Critical Thinking, September, 2007 <https://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/defining-critical-thinking/766>

<sup>5</sup>1 Teaching Strategies, <https://intranet.ecu.edu.au/learning/curriculum-design/teaching-strategies>

<sup>6</sup> Martins, Julia, How to build your critical thinking skills in 7 steps (with examples), What is critical thinking?, February 17th, 2023, <https://asana.com/resources/critical-thinking-skills>

teaching practices in classes as well as in interviews with teachers and assistants and psychologists who have worked in classes with students with different abilities and of different races. Teachers were asked about what strategies and techniques do they use in order to develop critical thinking skill during lessons with the aim of engaging students and improve their grades. The study focuses on the current situation as a current analysis to understand what techniques and strategies are used and how they help develop critical thinking in classrooms and how teachers think about the successful implementation of teaching with different students.

In this study are used observations and interviews with the teacher of Biology. One of the questions to be given an answer is whether pupils evaluate critical thinking as a skill and how do they demonstrate that they are learning critically.

According to different observations done in a period of time a semester different results are given. One of the conclusions is that they happened to have different ways of learning new theory, based on the way the theory was presented they had learned different strategies. Mainly the main way that they used to learn better is by asking questions and making exercises. Whenever they had difficulties, they asked one-another or asked their teacher.

Another question to be focused is whether they use methods like skimming and scanning in order to facilitate their learning. During the observations pupils used these methods to get the main idea of the text. Even though they didn't know the words, new words they had they managed to get the main idea just looking at the main sentences of the paragraph.

Another question to be addressed was whether pupils knew how to ask the right questions in the right time and in this aspect, they were a little unclear how to ask the proper questions in the right time and they always asked when they didn't know how to answer them. This makes us think that they are not critical thinkers at all.

Based on interviews done by teachers most of the answers, almost 80% answered that pupils used different techniques in learning but only a small percentage knew how to analyze information and evaluate what's important and what's not.

## **5. Strategies of Critical Thinking**

There are some activities that help develop critical thinking skills. They are different and efficient. We can mention the first that is "worst case scenario" where pupils are given two possible situations and they have to discuss about them and choose what's better for them. Another one is "if you build it" where pupils are asked to be creative and create as many objects like building as possible based on their information and knowledge. Another activity is "zoom" where pupils have to print a picture and talk about it. The picture has to be interpreted even by other pupils and they give their opinion on these pictures. Another creative activity is by starting a debate on a certain topic and they will give their opinion on that topic.<sup>7</sup>

## **6. Research Model**

The purpose of this study is to show how teaching can get improved by using different techniques and different strategies during classes with different pupils. Implementing different strategies and techniques during teaching lessons has proven to be effective for a number of reasons. Pupils are observed about the strategies they use during their lesson hours and the difficulties they may have as they make exercises. They are tested previously about their ability to answer questions according to a text B1 level, class 9 with 30 pupils. Then they will be asked to use as many questions as possible. They will be asked to participate in different activities in order to learn better and understand better texts such as questions, role play etc. The implementation of good strategies (methods, techniques) during teaching lessons makes learning easier and funnier. In these cases, the teacher is the person who organizes and evaluates the different pupils based on their abilities and helps them develop these abilities better and make them more effective. During the process of observation pupils will be observed by being given different exercises of diverse grade of difficulty. During the process of observation pupils will be helped in different hours in different intervals and different questions will be done meanwhile. After some periods they will again be asked to work independently and will be assessed by being asked as they answer. They will be observed in activities they will work on.

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<sup>7</sup> Shabbir, Raffia, *Educationise ,11 Activities That Promote Critical Thinking In The Class, , no.d.*  
<https://educationise.com/post/11-activities-that-promote-critical-thinking-in-the-class/>

## 7. Conclusions and Discussions

Critical thinking is a very important skill that makes pupils more prepared and more effective in their learning lessons. It makes it easier for them to give a solution to exercises and be original in their responses. It makes them collect more information and collect information from different resources in order to get as much information as possible. They get accustomed to this way of learning and use it even in every day life and become more confident and evaluative on what they get from resources. Teachers use activities that help develop critical thinking and make pupils more knowledgeable about various fields. Teachers try to give them simple exercises in order to get different opinions and develop their creative ways of thinking.

During the observation pupils at first didn't have it easy to use techniques and strategies even though they had it easy. They began to use these techniques more after they got used to them and they got improved then a little bit based on their responses that were clearer and well structured. These techniques had helped them get better and improve with time.

From the completed questionnaires, it was seen that teachers use different techniques and different strategies adopted to pupils' development and their desires. The teachers chose different strategies to enable the students to develop their learning process. Different techniques such as skimming, scanning etc. are broadly used by pupils and teachers. This way we can create an environment that creates different perspectives and ways of thinking that will be evaluated in the end.

From the conducted observations and interviews, it was concluded that pupils used critical thinking techniques often and knew that it is a skill that need to develop time after time and teachers use different activities questions and answers, making a discussion etc. By using different structures, they became more critical as they answered different questions. As a conclusion teachers try their best to develop creative and critical thinking during lesson hours by using activities that help develop these skills. A suggestion for future research would be to investigate the effects that has the development of critical thinking improvements of grades.

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