

## **Chapter 59: Teaching Critical Thinking Skills CTS Preparing Students for Future**

Zainab Fallatah

Missouri State University, USA.

### **Chapter One:**

#### **Introduction**

"We are currently preparing students for jobs that don't yet exist, using technologies that haven't been invented, in order to solve problems we don't even know are problems yet." (Riley, 2014, P 51). In this quote Riley suggest that students should be prepared to have life skills that they need for their future. As educators we have the greatest responsibility to teach these skills. Critical thinking is one of these important skills and it contains many skills that are important because they enable students "to solve their problems effectively. But why do people consider critical thinking as one of the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills? Critical thinking skills (CTS) are important for many reasons. First, They are life skills not only classroom skills. Second, they enhance creativity, curiosity, and innovation. Third, they enforce students to use the high order thinking skills . Last but not least, life is changing quickly and it is hard to make any prediction about the future and critical thinking gives wa22sastudents the ability to solve any problem and make decisions. Good!

#### **Annotated Bibliography**

Gashan, A. K. (2015). Exploring Saudi Pre-service Teachers' Knowledge of Critical Thinking Skills and their Teaching Perceptions. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 3(1). doi:10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.3n.1p.26.

This is one of the articles that deal with critical thinking in education, the author here examined pre-existing knowledge of critical thinking in Saudi teachers. Her study found that those teachers do not have the enough knowledge about critical thinking skills. She also reasoned that teachers have the desire to teach critical thinking but they do not have the complete knowledge or training to do so.

Snyder, L. (2008). *Teaching Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills* (Volume L, No. 2, Spring/Summer, 2008. 91). the Delta Pi Epsilon Journal.

The author summarizes four barriers that might make it hard to teach critical thinking. One of these four barriers is directly related to the teachers. What is it? Explain. She also emphasizes two main kinds of Techniques to teach critical thinking skills: questioning and problem solving. These techniques make students analyze and evaluate the information to make decisions.

### **Chapter Two:**

#### **Research Methods**

I interviewed my site mentor as she was an ELL teacher at Wilder Elementary School. She gave me a brief picture of the challenges that she had while trying to teach CTS to a second language student. I also made a questionnaire among the Saudi English teachers all over the Kingdom. This was to measure the general knowledge of the teachers about critical thinking. It also included a question to show the practical methods that are used to teach CTS.

## Data Collection

### Instrument.

In the interviewed I ask the following questions:

1. What are some examples of activities for using critical thinking that you do in your classroom?
2. What are some challenges to evoking critical thinking in language learning?
3. What are some successes you have had in CT activities?

And then made a survey among the Saudi teachers for English language and the questions were the following Google forms.

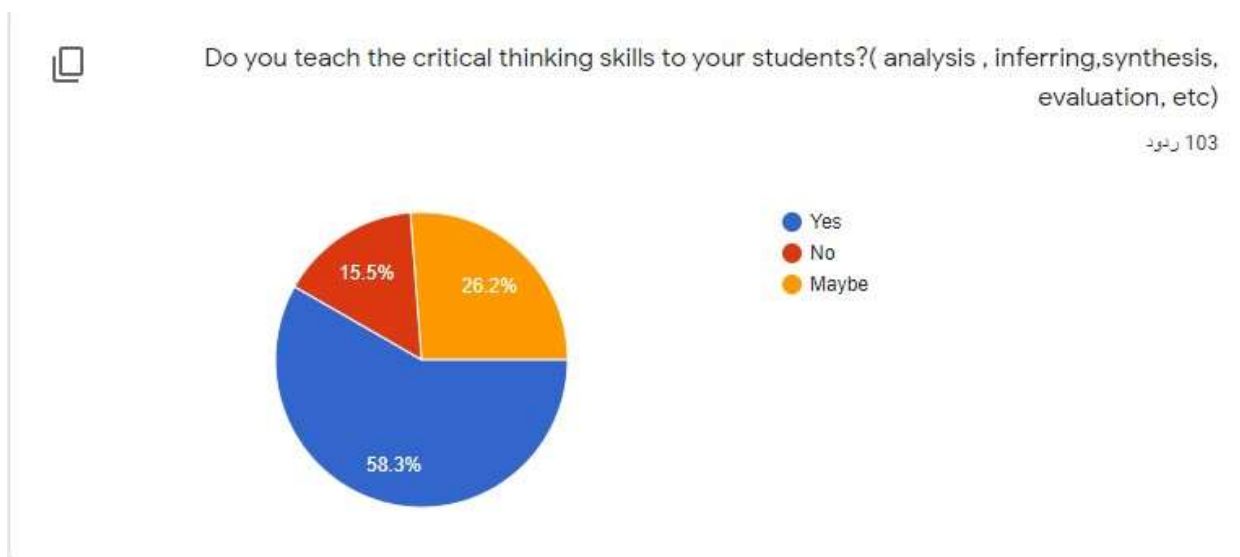
1. Do you teach the critical thinking skills to your students (analysis, inferring, synthesis, evaluation, etc.)?
2. If yes, could you please give an example or explain how?

### Procedures.

I interviewed the ELL teacher about her experience in this field. Then I've send a survey to some English teachers in Saudi Arabia through social media

### Data Analysis

I received 103 responds from different parts of Saudi Arabia. Most of them said yes they are teaching the critical thinking skills. Where is the data from your second question?



## Discussion

This study showed many points. First about 26% of the answers showed an inaccurate awareness of CTS. It also showed some difficulties that prevent teaching CTS to students such as the students level of thinking, the curriculum, or time problems. Most Saudi teachers who affirmed that they are teaching the CTS seem to be in need of more special training in CTS. As is seen in the data collected, most Saudi teachers believe they are teaching CTS. However, when they give their examples of teaching CTS, it was apparent that many may not know all the different ways teachers can teach CTS. Ninety percent of the respondents said they used types of analyzing skills to teach CTS. However, only....said something different. Therefore, this study would suggest the teachers need more training to understand how to effectively teach CTS. This was obvious through their answers as the majority are only asking students to analyze the information or to compare while no body mentioned anything about inferng and only two teachers used the correct technique of problem solving .. All these skills are essential in CT. The study have also found that sometimes the teachers are ready to teach the CT skills but the students do not . Some teachers talked about the reasons of not teaching the CT .



Some examples of the answers on question 3

## Summary

To make sure that Saudi students are taking the accurate CT skills we have to train the teachers on how to apply them in the classroom and in the same way we have to find solutions for the problems or the challenges that the teachers might face while teaching critical thinking skills. This study will introduce a guidance for Saudi teachers to apply teaching critical thinking skills.

## The practical methods of providing critical thinking skills within the language skills

### 1.The art of questioning

Teacher need to use interpretive questions rather than literal questions when teaching. For Example, How would you compare? How would you improve? What if? Could you predict ? These questions force the students to evaluate or analyze the information, They also should not answer students' questions directly because the main goal is to force the students to use their high level thinking skills such as evaluation. Teachers also are encouraged to use the open ended questions more.

## 2. Problem solving

The second major way to provide critical thinking in the classroom is the problem solving technique. The teacher should plan to provide a problem then students should work in groups to solve the problem. The goal here for the students to use their previous experiences to find out the reasons that cause the problem before they find the solution. In order to make sure they are doing the right way, the best model to follow is the six steps ( IDEALS) model : **I - Identify** the Problem, **D - Define** the Context to find the reasons, **E - Enumerate** the Choices. **A - Analyze** Options to choose the best choice. **L - List** Reasons for the best choice, and **S - Self-Correction**. By following the these steps , students will be analyzing , reasoning, connecting their lives with the situation, and evaluating the given information to solve the problem .

### Chapter Three:

#### Recommendations

This study aims to investigate the practical ways of teaching the critical thinking skills for the English teachers in Saudi Arabia. Because of the importance of the critical thinking skills for the students, it is one of the 21st century skills that are essential to students as the leaders of tomorrow. To apply the critical thinking skills , students need to use the higher thinking skills of the Blom Taxonomy. Besides all the above reasons , teachers ,including me , need to have a guidance on how to teach the critical thinking skills.

#### School Implementation Plan

##### Participants / Audience.

At first the English teachers for the intermediate and high school on the east district of Madinah city. Then after a while , I would have some feedback from my colleagues about applying the best methods . Then the other districts teachers would use this study

##### Key players / support needed.

Professional Development Workshops. The district supervisors and the English Department Training office..

##### Timeline.

During the second semester of the next year.

##### Materials.

A projector and a printer for the activities

##### Estimated cost

500.0 SR

##### Location and scope

The training office

##### Presentations / visuals.

Handout activities and presentation with a poster also.

**References**

- [1] Gashan, A. K. (2015). Exploring Saudi Pre-service Teachers' Knowledge of Critical Thinking Skills and their Teaching Perceptions. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 3(1). doi:10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.3n.1p.26.
- [2] Snyder, L. (2008). Teaching Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills (Volume L, No. 2, Spring/Summer, 2008. 91). *The Delta Pi Epsilon Journal*.
- [3] <https://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/planning-critical-thinking-5-step-model/>
- [4] <https://zety.com/blog/critical-thinking-skills>.
- [5] [https://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2018/04/04/teaching-critical thinking](https://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2018/04/04/teaching-critical-thinking)•[www.nctm.org/publications/article.aspx?id=34758](http://www.nctm.org/publications/article.aspx?id=34758).