

**Student's Attitude Towards the Use of Critical Thinking Methods in Teaching
English Literature – A Case Study of Khartoum State, Khartoum North
Locality**

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Abstract

The study has been made to measure a student's attitude towards using critical thinking methodologies in teaching English literature. This is a descriptive study. Three of the critical thinking methodologies and strategies will be used in this study: 1. Know, want to know, Learn (KWL) 2. Mix, Freeze, Pair 3. What? So What? Now What? The tool used in this study is a questionnaire. The questionnaire has been designed to measure Student's attitude towards the use of critical thinking in teaching literature. The population of this study are students in the third-year secondary school who choose Literature section in the Sudanese Certificate Examination. The sample of the study is students in the third-year secondary school, Hamad Modern School for girls, Khartoum State, Khartoum North Locality. The main finding is if critical thinking methodologies used properly; students will give a positive attitude towards learning English literature and they will be able to deal with high-order thinking skills, i.e. they will be able to analyze and emphasize the story, besides, students can create their own style to enjoy the story.

Keywords: *Methodologies, literature, critical thinking*

1. Introduction

One of the main outputs of education in the 21st century is to think critically. The researcher through investigating the effect of using critical thinking as a tool in teaching English literature notices that critical thinking methods give a positive attitude rather than using traditional methods of teaching literature.

Antonacci (1991) mentions four basic variables that students should follow to understand literature; one of them is the strategies and activities that teacher use.

Teachers misuse or neglect the right way of using critical thinking as a tool to teach English literature. Grammar Translation Method is used in the literature classroom. Reading comprehension strategies are applied instead of literature methodologies. The

outputs of this process give negative effects. Students will practice reading skills instead of literary skills.

2. Literature review

It's difficult to consider one definition of the term critical thinking in the educational field. Scholars define critical thinking according to the line that they work on, and each definition represents the point of view of the scholar.

Nieto (2010) confesses about the difficulties that you may face if you want to set a single definition to understand the term critical thinking, therefore, to understand the using of critical thinking as a tool in teaching literature in high schools, we must have a look for some definitions that may help to understand how to use these tools in teaching English Literature.

Encarta (2009) defines critical thinking as the ability to think critically. According to Scriven (2010), critical thinking may be defined as an intellectually disciplined process. This definition focuses mainly on the skillful conceptualization through applying, observing, experiencing, reflecting, reasoning and communicating and take all these processes as a guide in applying his definition.

3. Aims of the study

This study aims to measure student`s attitude when critical thinking methods used as a tool in teaching English literature in Sudanese high schools. This study aims also to stop using Grammar Translation Method in teaching English literature.

Using critical thinking in teaching literature will lead to enhance EFL learners' general understanding of the story and make it easy to be professional readers.

4. CT Strategies in Teaching Literature

Although scholars show many critical thinking methods and strategies to teach literature, any strategy can help to achieve the goals of the text. Nunan (1991) argues that "there never was and probably never will a strategy for all". So, teachers can use any one of the given strategies to teach literature.

4.1 Know/Want to know/ Learn (K-W-L)

As Schumm (2006), this strategy started as a reading method to help students reading content area text. To apply this strategy, teachers should start with brainstorming and ask learners to share ideas then ask learners to fill the form of KWL within groups. According to Tri (2013), this strategy makes both teaching and learning process interesting, fun and worthwhile.

4.2 Mix/Freeze/Pair

Mix-Freeze-Pair or Sticky-High Five is a suitable strategy that Sudanese teachers can apply in their literature classroom cause of the high number of students in one class. To apply this strategy teacher asks learners to move all around the class (mix), then stop (freeze) to choose a partner (pair) to discuss and share information and ideas.

Sujariati (2018) mentions 4 advantages about it: 1) The strategy is interested in reading text, story and dialogue, 2) The strategy involves mind responds, 3) Materials used involve interaction and communication, 4) The strategy expresses student's self and thinking.

4.3 What? So what? Now what?

Questioning is very important while critical thinking methods used in teaching English literature. Although this strategy can't exist in the first lesson, it considers as one of the best strategies of critical thinking. This strategy measures the student's understanding of the chapter or the unit before moving to the next one. The teacher will use the (what?) questions (what? so what? Now what?) after each paragraph or idea in the story.

5. The objective of the study

This study aims to achieve the followings:

1. To measure a student's attitude in using critical thinking as a method in teaching English literature.
2. To compare using critical thinking methods and the current method of teaching English literature.
3. To impulse teachers to use critical thinking methods as a tool in teaching English literature for a positive attitude.

6. Questions of the study

This study addresses the following questions and sets out to answer them:

1. To what extent do critical thinking methods in teaching English literature improve student's attitude?
2. To what extent do critical thinking method is better than the current method of teaching?
3. How using critical thinking methods offer a positive attitude?

7. Methodology and Data collection

The descriptive method will be used to analyze the collected data. SPSS will be used to analyze the collected data.

7.1 Participant:

The participant of this study consists of the third-year secondary school students, Hamad Modern School for girls, Khartoum State, Khartoum North Locality. The total number of 105.

7.2 Tool:

A questionnaire was designed to measure students' attitude towards using critical thinking as a tool in teaching English literature. The questionnaire consists of 10 statements. Students have to tick on one of the two options (Yes and No).

7.3 Process:

The researcher will divide students into two groups. The control group will be taught using the current method of teaching literature - reading methodology – the experimental group will be taught using the following critical thinking methodologies: 1. Know, want to know, Learn (KWL) 2. Mix, Freeze, Pair 3. What? So What? Now What? Things Fall Apart short story will be taught to the two groups. A questionnaire will be distributed to the two groups. Obtained results will be analyzed using SPSS.

8. Results

Results will be compared according to Bloom's Taxonomy, the following are the result of the questionnaire.

8.1 I can connect the relationship between the title and the content

According to Bloom Taxonomy; this statement measures the knowledge section. Student through teaching literature using critical thinking methodologies will be able to recall, connect and recognize information, ideas, and principles between the story and the title of the story. KWL strategy is used to help students create a relationship between the title and subtitles of the story.

Table 1: Connecting relation with the content of the story

Groups	No	Yes	Total
Control group	85	20	105
Experimental group	72	33	105

8.2 I can remember events that I have read.

This statement measures recalling skills. Students through KWL strategy will be able to remember all the events of the story.

Table 2: Remembering the events of the story

Groups	No	Yes	Total
Control group	99	7	105
Experimental group	30	75	105

8.3 I can remember the names of the characters and places

Same like statement 1 and 2. Students will be able to remember all the name of the character, places they went to. What? So what? Now what? and KWL Strategy is used to achieve remembering skill.

Table 3: Remember the names of the characters and places

Groups	No	Yes	Total
Control group	83	22	105
Experimental group	50	55	105

8.4 I can use my own words to summarize major events.

a is one of the comprehension skills. Through sharing information using Mix, Freeze, Pair strategy; students will share ideas to summarize events, situations, chapters or even the whole story.

Table 4: I can summarize using my own words

Groups	No	Yes	Total
Control group	82	23	105
Experimental group	33	72	105

8.5 I can insight about life or human behavior that a story reveal.

Insight human behavior and connect it with real-life will be achieved through using KWL strategy. Students will write down in the L column everything they learn about the character/s.

Table 5: I can insight behaviors of the characters in the story

Groups	No	Yes	Total
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Control group	101	4	105
Experimental group	77	28	105

8.6 I can explain the character behaviour

Explain is one of the comprehension skills, students through using the KWL strategy of teaching English literature will be able to explain the reasons for the character's behavior.

Table 6: I can explain the character behaviour

	No	Yes	Total
Control group	43	62	105
Experimental group	19	86	105

8.7 I can connect the story to real life.

Connecting and comparing events of the story to a real-life situation is one of the demands of the 21st century. What? So what? Now what? a strategy is used to achieve this skill.

Table 7: I can connect the story to real life

Groups	No	Yes	Total
Control group	102	3	105
Experimental group	80	25	105

8.8 I can point the central idea.

Showing the central idea of each chapter is one of the application levels that students must reach. Mix, Freeze, Pair critical thinking strategy is used in this stage.

Table 8:

Groups	No	Yes	Total
Control group	40	65	105
Experimental group	7	98	105

**I can
point
central
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idea**

8.9 I can analyze the important characters and events in the story

Through comparing and contrasting; students will be able to analyze characters and the events of the story. KWL critical thinking strategy is used to make students understand how to analyze characters and events.

Groups	No	Yes	Total
Control group	85	20	105
Experimental group	42	63	105

Table 9: I can analyze the important characters and events

8.10 I can find excuses for the character`s behaviors.

Discussing behaviors to find excuses is one of the comprehension levels in Bloom taxonomy. Mix, Freeze, Pair critical thinking strategy is used to help students discuss behaviors.

Table 10: I can find excuses for the character`s behaviors

Groups	No	Yes	Total
Control group	88	17	105
Experimental group	13	92	105

9. Discussion

The questionnaire is designed to measure students' attitude towards the use of critical thinking methods in teaching English literature. according to the results, students in the control group give a negative attitude while in the experimental group students give a positive attitude.

Trabulsi (2018) in King Saud University conducted similar research, she finds that students' attitudes toward both traditional and modern teaching methodologies are

positive, but the attitude of the modern teaching methodologies more than traditional methodologies.

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

Students give positive attitudes towards using critical thinking methodologies in teaching English literature.

This study gives the followings recommendation to both English language teachers and Ministry of Education:

1. Teachers must stop using traditional methods of teaching English language literature.
2. Teachers should be updated with the new methodologies of teaching language so as to be able to differentiate between teaching language methodologies and teaching English language literature methodologies.
3. Students must be encouraged to think critically and supported with differentiated worksheets.
4. Although most of the schools can't offer Critical thinking methodologies could be applied in Sudanese secondary schools.

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