

Investigating the Efficacy of Developing Critical Thinking through Literature Reading

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Abstract : Due to the continuous change in workforce and the demands of the global workplace, many employers had lamented that the majority of university graduates were not prepared in the key areas of employment such as critical thinking, writing, self-direction and global knowledge which are most needed for the purposes of promotion. Further, critical thinking skills are deemed as integral parts of transformational pedagogy which aims at having a more informed society. To add to this, literature teaching has recently been advocated for enhancing students' critical thinking and reasoning. Thus this study explored the effects of incorporating a few strategies in teaching literature, namely a Shakespeare play, into a course design to enhance these skills. An experiment involving a pretest and posttest using the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) were administered on 80 first-year students enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts programme who were randomly assigned into the control group and experimental group. For the next 12 weeks, the experimental group was given intervention which included guided in-class discussion with Socratic questioning skills, learning log to detect their weaknesses in logical reasoning; presentations and quizzes. The results of CCTST which included paired T-test using SPSS version 22 indicated significant differences between the two groups. Findings have significant implications on the course design as well as pedagogical practice in using literature to enhance students' critical thinking skills.

Keywords : literature teaching, critical thinking, California critical thinking skills test (CCTST), course design

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