

AN EVALUATION OF CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS:
A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to evaluate a critical thinking skills course which had been taught as part of the World Studies Component of the MPIK – UK link programme. On a broader perspective, the study aims to find out to what extent the critical thinking course has contributed to the development of critical thinking among the students.

The respondents were first year Matriculation students of the MPIK – UK link programme. These students had been exposed to critical thinking skills through the World Studies Component. The approach used in this study is both qualitative and quantitative. The research is based on two sets of questionnaires, the World Studies examination results and document evidence. As for the document evidence, the past four years, that is, from 1995 to 1998, World Studies Final Examination questions were analysed.

The data was analysed through SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and the score of the students' examination results were correlated with the data from the students' perceptions of critical thinking skills. The analysis of data reveals answers to the four research questions.

The World Studies course was structured so as to achieve one of its objectives, that is, to develop analytical and critical thinking. The World Studies examination questions were written to challenge the students to think critically. These examination questions were analysed using Marzano's framework on critical thinking skills.

The study on the whole would provide an insight to teachers and educators who wish to include critical thinking skills in their teaching. The inclusion of critical thinking skills in teaching students in primary and secondary schools would prepare them for tertiary education. At tertiary level, students are trained to be independent learners. Therefore, at this stage of education, students need to be careful in selecting appropriate and meaningful information.

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