Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of Foreign Languages

MASTER THESIS

Letters and Foreign Languages
English Language
Applied linguistics

Submitted and Defended by:

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On: June 2019

Investigating the Role of Critical Thinking and Collaborative Learning Skills in Enhancing EFL Students' Learning Performance

A Case of Master One Students of English at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

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Declaration

I, Kadri Samira, do hereby solemnly declare that the work I am going to present in this dissertation is my own, and has not been submitted before to any other institution or university for a degree.

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Dedication

In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most MercifulAll Praise is due

to Allah alone, the Sustainer of the entire world

I dedicate this work:

To my dear parents

To my beloved sister and my dearest brother

To my fiancé for his continual support and encouragement

To my best friends Selsabil Baza, Latra Kassoussi

My deepest graduate for all who support me.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to express my deep recognition to Allah for giving me ambition and strength to finish my thesis. Special thanks and sincere gratitude would go to my dear supervisor **Dr. REZIG Nadia** for her continuous guidance and support.

I would extend my thanks to the members of the jury **Mr.BOUHITEMTayeb** and Mme. **BENZIDA Yasmina** for their valuable effort to improve this work. Finally, I thank all the teachers and students who participated in this research.

Abstract

This research investigates the effect of soft skills namely "critical thinking and collaboration skills" on the EFL students' learning performance. Teachers are not satisfied about their students thinking skills and they find difficulties in evaluating and analyzing information, also EFL students are not aware of the importance of collaborative learning through sharing ideas and experiences in enhancing their learning performance. For that reason our research attempts to shed light on the importance of both skills in enhancing students learning performance. We hypothesized that critical thinking and collaboration skills are necessary to enhance EFL students' learning performance. This research is based on qualitative research approach, investigating a case study at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra taking master one students as a sample for our study, during the academic year 2018/2019. For the reason of collecting data for this descriptive study, questionnaires have been distributed for both master one students(a sample of 43 chosen randomly) and 10 teachers of different modules. After the analysis and interpretation of data, the given result proved that both skills critical and collaborative learning help learners to improve their learning performance. Thus, critical thinking and collaborative learning affect positively the EFL students' learning performance and are important skills in the learning process.

Key words: Critical thinking, Collaborative learning, Students' performance, EFL students.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

EFL: English as a foreign language

ACTFL: The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

Dr : Doctor

Q: Question

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General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

The academic environment has been changing during the last decades, students are required to achieve ambitious goals and the market has become more and more selective when choosing the right talent.

Soft skills are personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance prospects and hard skills which tend to be specific to a certain type of task or activity. We could say that soft skills refer to personality traits, social gracefulness, fluency in language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism that mark to varying degrees .During the last decades in many societies the opinion of soft skills has changed considerably whereas; in the past the mastering of hard skills was rated first and soft skills were considered as " nice to have ".

Teaching soft skills namely critical thinking and collaborative learning is ignored in the Algerian educational system The EFL learners are not taught how to use the soft skills in different contexts, they need to understand the importance of team work because, they are prepared to future life career. The development of soft skills such as teamwork and critical thinking , aligned with specific hard skills, will help students to perform more effectively and build positive relations with their colleagues. During their academic path, it is essential that students find opportunities to develop employability skills that prepare them for their professional careers, and this should happen through specific and appropriate training.

Critical thinking and collaboration skills are important tools to deal with the advancement of modern technology and to meet challenges and demands of modern education and career.

Besides that, they are useful to communicate effectively, to handle interpersonal relations and to relate with others empathetically.

2. Statement of The Problem

Educational institutions are seen to play a crucial role in developing the human social life, and that is done by mastering the soft skills such, as collaboration and critical thinking skills. In order to enable learners to face the real working environment. The use of both skills can help learners positively in their life career with good qualifications.

Teaching critical thinking and collaborative skills and make students use them in their learning process is the focal point of this study. In addition they make students aware of what is the importance of team work and sharing ideas with others, which they strongly need in their future career.

We are aiming to make students of the English department at Biskra University aware of the importance of collaborative learning and critical thinking since they are engaged to master it after graduation and help them to use the appropriate skill according to context they are exposed to.

In the present study we are going to focus on the importance of both critical thinking and collaboration skills among EFL students and its benefit in improving their learning performance. The main question of this study is what benefits do training students collaboration and critical thinking skills have in their outcomes?

3. Research Questions

Our study intends to answer the following questions:

1. Do critical thinking and collaboration affect positively or negatively the learning performance?

2. What kinds of soft skills a student of EFL needs?

4. Research Hypotheses

From the previous questions we hypothesized that:

The ability to work in groups, sharing ideas and thinking critically affect positively the EFL student's learning performance.

5. Methodology

In order to work on this research study, a qualitative research approach has been adopted. We opt for descriptive method because, it is appropriate to investigate student's perspectives about the importance of collaboration and critical thinking skills.

5.1. Data Gathering Tools

In order to collect data and confirm hypothesis we have based our data on the questionnaire, one for students and one for teachers.

5.2 The Sample of the Study

From a population of 142 students, a sample of 50 students of English, Master one (Science of the Language and literature and civilization) at Mohamed Kheider Biskra University were selected to participate in our research and checkout their perspectives about critical thinking and collaboration skills.

6. Significance of The Study

The purpose of this study is to spot the light on the importance of the insertion collaboration and critical thinking skills on the educational programs, in order to have a more qualified students, ready to be engaged with the working environment, and aims at proving

the importance of critical thinking skills and collaboration trainings in EFL classrooms and foster future implementations of it.

7. Limitations of the Study

We find some difficulties at the beginning of the research, but we overcome all these challenges due to the supervisor' advice. Also it was difficult to gather data since the absence of students.

8. Structure of the Dissertation

The current research work is divided into three main chapters, the two initial chapters constitute the theoretical frame work; the first chapter deals with critical thinking and collaborative learning and their importance, and also the chapter presents the main strategies for both skills that help both teachers and students in the learning process. The second chapter presents the main elements that are related to learning performance. The last chapter is the fieldwork, which is the description of the questionnaire of both teachers and students.

CHAPTER ONE : CRITICAL THINKING AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Introduction

In the present time the student's learning performance is based on the combination of both soft and hard skills . The development of soft skills for instance , critical thinking and collaboration will certainly help students to perform effectively and create positive relations with their colleagues within the academic environment. Teaching students how to think critically and work in team is a great step to ameliorate the academic path for better outcomes. In this chapter we are going to discuss the importance of both critical thinking and collaboration on the learning performance of the EFL student, starting with their definition, then; we have mentioned the strategies for infusing both skills and their approaches.

1.1 Definition of Thinking?

Thinking is the manipulation or transformation of some internal representation (Halpern. 2003, p.84).(as cited in Murat Karakoç2016) In this sense thinking is the primary case in the life of each human being to achieve some objectives.

1.2 Thinking in Education

One of the aims of education should be developing students' thinking skills as well as motor skills, which is basic goal of contemporary approaches in education. According to Elder & Paul (2008) students are not passive but active while they are realizing critical thinking.).(as cited in Murat Karakoç2016), hence the role of education is to develop critical thinking for students.

1.3 Definitions of Critical Thinking

when dealing with the notion of critical thinking, different points of view were made to clarify its meaning, scholars and researchers provided a set of definitions to critical thinking:

1. Richard Paul explains critical thinking by describing who is critical thinker, the critical thinker according to Paul is the person who does not accept ideas without arguing, without reasoning, the critical thinker has to analyze deeply and evaluate reasons, also critical thinker has to doubt evidences not swallowing facts as they are.(1989,p.2)

2. According to Stella Cottrell, Critical thinking is a cognitive activity, associated with using the mind. Learning to think in critically analytical and evaluative ways means using mental processes such as attention, categorisation, selection, and judgment.(2005,p.1). Critical thinking is a an active, mental, analytical and reasonable attitude of thinking toward life problems.

3. According to Chance (1986, p. 6) critical thinking is the ability to analyze facts, generate and organize ideas, defend opinions, make comparisons, draw inferences, evaluate arguments and solve problems. As cited in International journal of instruction(2018)

4.According to Lipman (1988,p.38-34), critical thinking involves:

• careful argumentation which avoids guessing

• making logical conclusions based on criteria

• providing opinions substantiated by proof

• moving away from believing to assuming

• moving away from assumptions to hypotheses

1.4 Historical Background

The roots of critical thinking came from Socrates teaching methods and perceptions about 2500 years ago, who proposed a model of probing questioning that people could not rationally justify their confident claims to knowledge, He established the importance of asking deep

questions before accepting ideas as valuable to belief, now his method of questioning is known as " Socratic Questioning" and it is the most used as a critical thinking teaching strategy, in this method of thinking Socrates spot the light on the need of thinking for clarity and logical consistency.

After Socrates belief many other philosophers and scholars such as: Aristotle, Plato and the Greek skeptics who claimed that people have to train their minds to look-up what is down the surface. During the period of Middle ages the idea of Systematic critical thinking was presented by some thinkers who insisted on the need for reasoning to be systematically cultivated.

In the 20th century the belief of thinking about thinking appeared by the name of metacognition and the appreciation of critical thinking increased.

Presently, critical thinking becomes more important especially in the educational field. (Paul, et al.1997).

2. The importance of critical thinking

Critical thinking has become a high priority in almost every institution and educational system around the world. Pedagogically speaking critical thinking is highly needed to be implemented in the language classroom, because the teaching methods, procedure and techniques related to information processing, that is to say learning a language is closely related to learn how to think critically in particular subject matters. As a result, language classroom it is the most appropriate context to develop critical thinking skills. The methods and techniques used in classroom require students to use critical thinking skills to perform different language tasks such as communicative language teaching encourages active learning, in addition to achieve good results in language learning, learners need to be critical thinkers which should be reflected in the way they manage their learning.(El Fatihi,2017,p.28)

Critical Thinking also:

- Enables readers to evaluate evidence in what they are reading and recognize illogical reasoning

- Assists students to understand clearly the course content with deep evaluation and analysis.

- Allows to develop more arguable claims, thus students use evidence to justify their arguments and ideas.

University student needs to use certain thinking skills according to the subject matter he is dealing with for example; analysis and manipulation of information.

In the 1950s, Benjamin Bloom identified a set of important study and thinking skills for university students, which he called it the 'thinking triangle'

Evaluate
make judgements about the value of information
Synthesise
combine information and ideas into something new
Analyse
make a methodical and detailed explanation
Apply
use knowledge
Comprehend
have understanding
know
Be aware,remember information
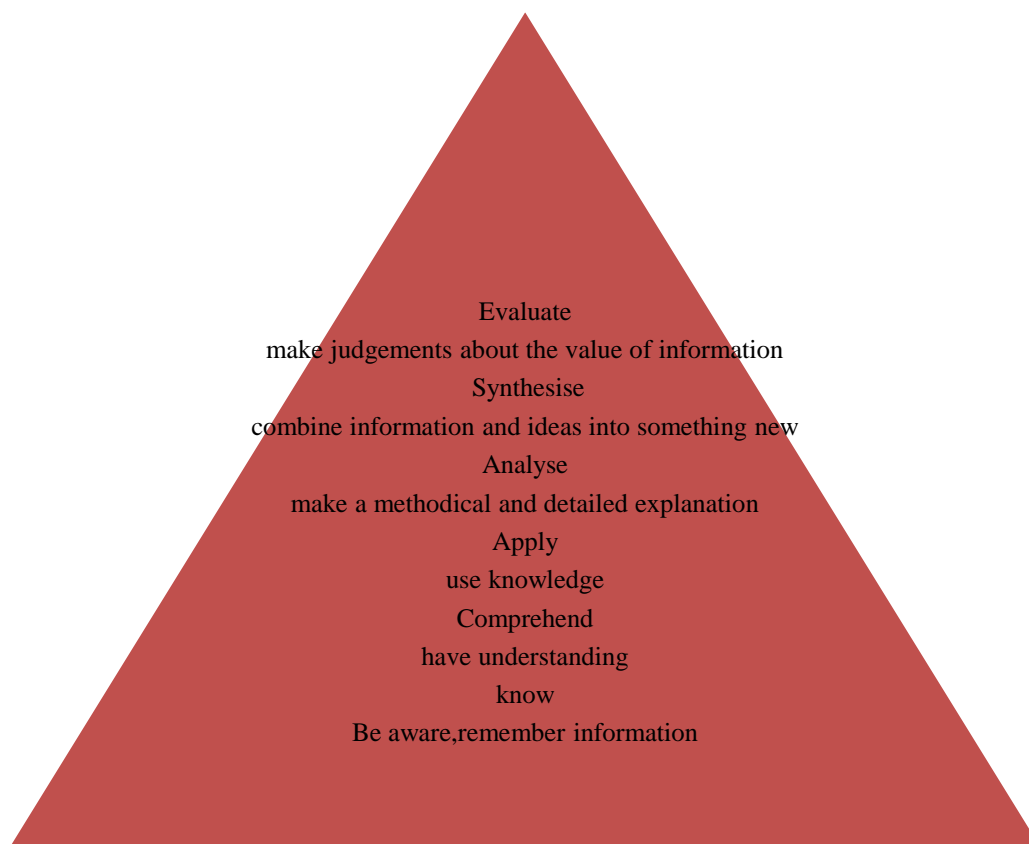
Figure 1: Levels of intellectual skill: the thinking triangle. adapted from Bloom, 1956

Those skills help students while they are reading or writing and enable them to work effectively and independently. The teacher also should be aware of the use of these skills by his students while he is presenting the course, and makes his efforts to make them learn how and when to use these skills.

3. Characteristics of good Critical Thinker according to Buskist and Irons (2008, p51)

The critical thinker is the person who,

- Can accurately explains his decisions, consider alternative explanations for any state of affairs.

- Determines the truth or falsity of assumptions.

- Develops and presents reasoned and persuasive arguments.

- Distinguishes between primary and secondary sources of information also distinguishes credible from non-credible sources of information raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely;

- gathers and assesses relevant information, and effectively interprets it.

- Can accurately explain his decisions, consider alternative explanations for any state of affairs.

From the above mentioned characteristics a critical thinker is one who does not swallow facts as they are, but works to manipulate and analyze arguments to build his assumptions.

4. The activities of critical thinking according to (Moon. 2008, p.32)

Teachers may have different forms of reference for critical thinking based on different activities needed to be used in the process of critical thinking.

4.1 Review of Someone Else's Argument:

In this case the argument is given and consists of the presentation of a series of ideas that lead to a conclusion such as essay, a research paper or a dissertation. The task of the critical thinker here is to review the components and process of the argument, the quality of the conclusion and the process of reaching it.

4.2 Evaluation of an Object:

We think critically in making an evaluative judgment of an object – such as a work of art, a piece of writing (e.g. a book), or another construction (e.g. in architecture or engineering) here the focus is on the object that has been developed and there may be interest in critical concern about the process of construction.

4.3 Development of an Argument:

In this case the argument is constructed by the critical thinker, working with her own presentation of evidence and reasoning and drawing his own conclusion, here the concerns should be on the content and the process of reasoning.

4.4 Critical thinking About Self (Reflective learning):

It is construed to be more focused on a particular characteristic or activity with the idea of improvement. The difficulty in this form of critical thinking is that the chooser of the evidence or criteria on which the thinking is based, is the subject and object of the thinking.

4.5 The Review of an Incident:

It is likely to entail the reviewing of an event (which may be called a 'critical incident') in which the thinker has been involved and the objective will be to review her performance and consider how the incident may have been handled differently. e.g. a natural disaster

4.6 Engage in Constructive Response to The Arguments of Others:

the engagements with others in argument is a further activity of critical thinking because, within it, the thinker has to consider the context of the argument and the response, the response could be presented orally or written.

4.7 Habit of Engagement With the World:

The 'habits' come into the manner in which people process experiences, write and speak or express themselves in other ways, and they flow over from academic or thoughtful activity into the everyday world, this activity is not an 'activity' in the same way as the others, being an ongoing disposition.

5. Personal Strategies for Critical Thinking Cottrell (2005, p.7)

These strategies might be used when a student is reading and analyzing a text.

- an analytical strategy for the material

- understanding of the wider context

- an evaluative and selective approach

- being self-critical about your own understanding, interpretation and evaluation

6. Approaches Related to Critical Thinking

Scholars have different views about the approaches related to critical thinking, but they agreed in the point that metacognition theory and Bloom's taxonomy accommodate a good understanding of critical thinking.

6.1 Bloom's Taxonomy of Critical Thinking

Benjamin Bloom was an American psychiatrist who contributed effectively in education, one of his contributions is the so called   Bloom's Taxonomy is a frame work established and developed by Benjamin Bloom, it is useful for 21st century students. In this taxonomy, Bloom presents the main areas in the cognitive domain. He generalized six levels of critical thinking. According to Bloom (1956,p.18) these six levels are as follows:

6.1.1 Knowledge

Is remembering the material that have been learned counting recall of facts and data as times and names. According to Bloom, knowledge represents the lowest level of learning outcomes in the cognitive domain.

6.1.2 Comprehension

it is the capacity to comprehend the main meaning of the material or concept.it comprises articulating the relationship among data. This level goes beyond the knowledge level. Comprehension is the lowest level of understanding.

6.1.3 Application

It is taking concept under study and using it in a new hypothetical situation to arrive at a correct answer. It refers to the ability to use learned materials in new and concrete principles and theories. Application requires a higher level of understanding than comprehension.

6.1.4 Analysis

Breaking the material into components and looking at individual items for trends or evidence for generalization. In this level the learning outcomes involve an understanding of both the content and the structural form of material.

6.1.5 Synthesis

Synthesis refers to the ability to put parts together to form a new whole. May include the production of a unique communication , a plan of operations, or a set of abstract relations.

In this level learning outcomes underline creative behaviors, with major emphasis on the formulation of new patterns or structures.

6.1.6 Evaluation

It is judging the value of material for a purpose, Learning outcomes in this area are highest in the cognitive hierarchy because they contain elements of all the other categories plus value judgments based on clearly defined criteria .

6.2 Metacognition

Metacognition is a process which is related to understanding Livingson (2003, p.2), defines metacognition as "higher order thinking that involves active control over the cognition process engaged in learning», means metacognition is related to higher order thinking which involves learners' control over the received information. Additionally the process of metacognition needs inquiry, analysis, inference, and argument. These skills are also required in critical thinking   metacognition is a supporting point for critical thinking because it controls one's high order thinking.

7. Strategies Used to Infuse Critical Thinking by the Teacher

According to Richard Paul et al (1989,p.21) the role of the teacher could be summarized as follows:

- ➢ Help students to break big questions into smaller, more manageable parts
- ➢ Create meaningful contexts in which learning is valued by the students
- ➢ Help students clarify their thoughts by rephrasing or asking questions
- ➢ Encourage students to explain things to each other
- ➢ Help students to find what they need to know by suggesting and showing students how to use resources.

Part two: Collaborative Learning

1.What is Meant by Learning

Learning is an active, constructive process: To learn new information, ideas or skills, our students have to work actively with them in purposeful ways. They need to integrate this new material with what they already know-or use it to reorganize what they thought they knew.

1.1 What is Collaboration ?

Collaboration has been described as a skill that encourages learning mechanisms such as induction, deduction and associative learning to be enacted (Dillenbourg, 1999,p.19)

1.1.2 Collaborative Learning

➢ Ingleton(1968,p.2) states that, Collaborative learning occurs as a result of interaction between peers engaged in the completion of a common task. Students are not only 'in 'groups, they 'work' together in groups, playing a significant role in each other's learning

➢ Smith and Jean T. MacGregor argue that (1993,p.1) Collaborative learning" is an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by students, or students and teachers together. Usually, students are working in groups of two or more, mutually searching for understanding, solutions, or meanings, or creating a product

➢ According to Styron (2014, p.206) Collaborative learning is associated primarily with constructivism in that learners create their own knowledge. It is connected to social

learning theory when considering the interaction between team, and is more age appropriate for college students.

Collaborative learning refers to the activities, the process of sharing ideas and experiences between students. They learn better when they are in groups where they try new ways of learning with their friends, in addition when they are learning in groups they reduce nonattendance because students feel responsibility to the group.

2. Historical Background of Collaborative Learning

The current teaching practices including collaborative learning have long and politically inspired histories. Anne Ruggles Gere dispels the notion that group writing is a twentieth century development by noting self-help writing groups and college literary societies in colonial America. Instructors all over the world in various disciplines historically have adopted collaborative teaching practices to meet the needs of learners. Over two-hundred years ago, George Jardine, professor of logic and philosophy at the University of Glasgow from 1774 to 1826, designed a method of peer review to help prepare his students for full participation in British society, who invented an extensive practical plan for using modern concepts such as , writing across the curriculum, and peer review.

Collaboration has become a twenty-first-century trend. The need in society to think and work together on issues of critical concern has increased d (Austin, J. E., 2000;p.44-55)

3. The Importance of Collaborative Learning According to Foster (1998,p. 1-23)

1. It increases motivation

2. It develops a sense of awareness among EFL/ESL students to risk – taking

3. It improves the creativity and tolerance of the learners.

4. It maximizes the interaction between learners, and to think directly in the target language.

5. It ameliorates the level of the students rather than in an independent way.

4. Approaches of Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning covers a number of approaches. Goodsell, et al (1992,p.14-24) give a set of approaches that help both teachers and learners.

4.1 Cooperative Learning

Represents the most carefully structured end of the collaborative learning continuum. it is defined as "the instructional use of small groups, so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning.

4.2 Problem-centered Instruction

Used in professional education, frequently is built around collaborative learning strategies. Influenced by the work of John Dewey who believed in the importance of giving students direct experiential encounters with real world problems.

4.3 Writing Groups (peer response groups)

Is the approach where students exchange their written drafts and get feedback on them either orally or writing, the exchange of drafts helps students understand that is social process. It includes students working in small groups at every stage of the writing process.

4.4 Discussions groups and Seminars

Refer to a broad of teaching approaches, these are spaces within classes, where instructors and groups of students consider a topic, issue or problem , and exchange information ideas ,experiences, conclusions with one other.

4.5 Learning Communities

Are delivery system and a facilitating structure for the practice of collaborative learning. They may serve different purposes, but they have two common intentions. They attempt to provide intellectual coherence for students by linking classes together and building relationships between subject matter.

5. The Basic Features of Collaborative Learning

Johnson and Johnson (1999, p.75-88) list five fundamental elements of cooperative learning that educators should consider when applying collaborative approaches as follow:

5.1 Positive interdependence

Is the basic factor of cooperation, as the success of the group needs all participants to complete their share of the assigned work. All team members have been assigned a specific role in the group with relation to their personal abilities, hence the group cannot work without all of its members' participation, as everyone's input is equally crucial.

5.2 Individual Accountability

Highlights the fact that all members of the group, nevertheless their role during the collaborative learning activity, should afterwards be able to perform a similar task on their own. It should ensure that every member in the group gains new knowledge and skills s from

the collaborative activity in order for them to have the capacity to do the same on their own later.

5.3 Face-to-face Promotive Interaction

Is highly needed for the group to both accomplish concrete tasks as well as for mutual support. Face-to-face promotive interaction is particularly crucial in activities with a high level of positive resource interdependence, as the resources students possess are most efficiently delivered face to face.

5.4 Interpersonal and Small Group Skills

Should be taught and practiced, as collaborative learning involves not only working on different tasks, but initially working together in a group. No matter how well developed the activities used in collaborative learning are, they are practically useless if students do not have the required interpersonal and small group skills in their repertoire.

5.5 Group Processing

Is a way to evaluate the group's success in order to see which procedures were helpful and which ones need improvement, hence an important phase in developing the group's functioning. Group processing is most efficient in cases where students work in the same collaborative group for a longer period of time.

6. The Effects of Collaborative Learning

While examining or applying an educational approach, we should be aware of not only the features of the approach, but also effects and benefits, naturally the learner is the one who benefits from collaborative learning the most, the effects and benefits from the perspective of second and foreign language learning. Crandall (1999, p. 233-234) presents an overview of

the reasons to use collaborative learning in the context of second and foreign language learning. As,

Collaboration in the language classroom is designed to lower learners' anxiety level; hence, students are feasible to be more actively involved in class activities to plan and practice their answers and language with the group former to acting to the whole class.

Collaboration needs learners to accommodate their speech to the group members' requests of clarification that help in production of more coherent language use that help all the members of the group to understand easier.

Peer support has a positive effect on learners' self-confidence and self-esteem as their motivation because; collaboration creates a safe, supporting atmosphere for students to participate in class.

Collaborative learning is likely to increase the quantity and quality of learner performance, create a favorable climate for intercultural communication, and promote learner-centered classroom procedures and learner autonomy.

Collaborative activities are needed to be implemented in EFL classrooms that help learners to perform better the tasks and share experiences through negotiation with the members of the group.

7. Collaborative Learning Strategies

According to Srinivas, (2009, p.28) there are four main CL strategies that the teacher may apply in his/her classroom: think-pair-share, three-step interview, simple jigsaw, and finally numbered heads together.

7.1 Think-Pair-Share

In this strategy the teacher poses a question to students this question may need an analysis or a synthesis, so that the instructor gives students time to think (about a minute).Then students share their responses with their pairs, as a final step they share their responses within a larger team of three, four or five students or even more. This is a useful technique in increasing discussion in the classroom.

7.2 Three-Step Interview

Here students form what is called dyads; group consists of no more than two students then each one of the formed dyads asks his/her peer questions in terms of an interview, as a second step students switch their roles and finally they two dyads together so as to form a group of four students to share and discuss with each other.

7.3 Simple Jigsaw

In this strategy in each group one volunteered member is expected to work with other volunteered members of the other groups in order to become experts in a given task or activity, then this expert students are supposed to return to their original groups to share what they have learned with their group members.

7.4 Numbered Heads Together

Usually in CL groups consist of four students, in the present strategy each group member knows his number 1,2,3, or 4,the teacher asks a given question, then that all group members discuss together and agree on one answer, afterward the teacher pick a number to answer the question. While students have no idea which number the teacher is going to call, they are all obliged to participate within their groups.

Each one of these strategies has an advantage in facilitating the learning process, starting with think-pair-share technique that learners think individually at first and share their ideas with others. Student find out how his classmates think and make assumptions through the three-step interview, students have the opportunity to experience a critical skill that is to teach what they have learned which help them to increase their sense of self-confidence and self-esteem. Finally the numbered heads strategy establish interest about the learning process among learners. The previous mentioned strategies help teachers to reduce time and make their learners engage in the teaching learning process.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have discussed critical thinking and collaborative learning skills. We have introduced a general overview for both skills, as we have focused on their importance mostly in the field of education, then we have included some beneficial titles that might be helpful for students, to make them aware of the significance of both skills. In addition to the strategies mentioned that should be used by teachers to increase their student's level and motivation. Critical thinking and collaborative learning considered as a contributing element in enhancing the EFL learning performance for students.

In the following chapter we will have a general overview about learning, types of learners , learning styles, motivational factors in learning a foreign language and teaching strategies.

CHAPTER TWO: LEAERNING PRFORMANCE

Introduction

Language Learning is considered as a complex task to do, many circumstances affect how well language learners will achieve communication skills and how instantly will reach various ranges of performance. it is known that the performance of each student is conditioned by some factors .This chapter is designed to shed light on the major points around the idea of learning performance, it discusses learning motivation and assessment for learning, the main theories of learning, learning process, also this chapter examines learning styles and learning strategies that students follow when practice a task.

1. Learning Performance

1.1 Learning

Learning has different definitions that vary from one author to another, according to Allan Pritchard (2009,p.1) Learning is not exclusive to the domain of an education system. Learning begins a very long time before school; continues for even longer after school; and happens rapidly, and in parallel with school, in a great number of different ways and settings.

Pritchard explains the idea that learning is not related only to education, people start learning before going to school and the process of learning continues after school.

1.2 Learning Theories

There are a number of learning theories, each theory has its own perspective in defining learning. It is crucial to use the knowledge gained from theories of learning to help in the planning and improving of learning plans in classroom.

1.2.1 Behaviorism

Behaviorism is primarily concerned with observable and measurable aspects of human behavior. In defining behavior, behaviorist learning theories emphasize changes in behavior that result from stimulus-response associations made by the learner. Behavior is directed by stimuli (Parkay& Hass, 2000).

1.2.1. Behaviorism Advocates

Watson (1878-1958) and Skinner (1904-1990) are the two principal originators of behaviorist approaches to learning. Watson assumed that human behavior is a result from specific stimuli that bring out certain responses Watson's basic premise was that conclusions about human development should be based on observation of apparent behavior. Zhou & Brown (2017,p.6)

In the 1930s, Skinner did a lot of research on laboratory rats and pigeons. He found that he could change the behavior of his laboratory animals in startling ways just by the judicious use of rewards, and applied it to human behavior. Gavin Reid (2005, p.9)

| Stimulus | → | Response | → | Reward or Punishment |

Figure 1: Skinner's Operant Conditioning

Through Skinner's research on animals he deduced that animals and humans would repeat acts that led to favorable outcomes, Skinner believed that rewards and punishments control the majority of human behaviors, and that the principles of operant conditioning can explain all human learning.

Behaviorists consider learning as an observable change in human behavior as a result of experience. The changing in behavior is affected by a process of reward and reinforcement.

1.1.2.2 Criticism of Behaviorism

Behaviorism as a theory of learning was criticized because; it did not take the mental process of learning into account also:

- ➢ The behaviorism theory was criticized due to its incapacity to consider the change in behavior that happens in the absence of the environment input
- ➢ Rewards may isolate children who feel they have little chance of getting a reward
- ➢ Behaviorism neglected the role of the mind and considered it as a black box

1.2.2 Cognitivism, Constructivist Learning Theory

The area of constructivism, in the domain of learning comes under the wide caption of cognitive science . Constructivism consider learning as the result of mental construction hence; learning takes place when the new information is constructed into and combined onto an individual's present structure of knowledge. ' (Posner, 1984 p.25)

1.2.2.1Cognitivism Advocates

Piaget (1896-1980), he is well known for his work on the development of intelligence in children, Piaget identified the child's four stages of mental growth.

> ➢ In Sensor motor Stage that happens from birth to the age 2 years, here the child is gaining g motor control and learning about physical objects.

> ➢ The Preoperational Stage, from 2 to 7 years the child is obsessed with verbal skills. Where he can name objects.

> ➢ The Concrete Operational Stage, from ages 7 to 11 the child starts to deal with abstract concepts as; numbers.

> ➢ Formal Operational Stage, from adolescence to adulthood. In this stage the child begins to reason things systematically and logically. (Constructivism, n.d,p.19)

Cognitive theories of language acquisition tend to be interactional in the sense that they emphasize the joint contribution of external and internal factors.

1.2.2.2 Criticism of Cognitivism Theory

The cognitivism theory also has been criticized because;

> ➢ Children may be more competent than Piaget originally thought, especially in their practical knowledge

> ➢ Young children can succeed on simpler forms of tasks requiring the same skills.

> ➢ Children often learn more advanced concepts with relatively brief instruction.

1.2.3 Experiential Learning Theory

It is clear that good and bad experiences affect the learning process of the student .Good experiences motivate , foster and allow students to achieve a helpful ,whereas, Poor experiences lead towards a learner closing off from fruitful experiences in the future.

Experiential Learning Theory "provides a holistic model of the learning process and a multi-linear model of adult development" (Baker, Jensen, & Kolb, 2002, p. 51)

1.2.3.1 Experiential Learning Theory Advocates

Kolb (1984) who suggested an Experiential Learning Cycle, which proposes that a learner goes through a concrete experience and this later, followed by Reflective Observation then the formation of Abstract Conceptualizations and finally undergoing Active Experimentation to test out the newly developed outcomes (knowledge).
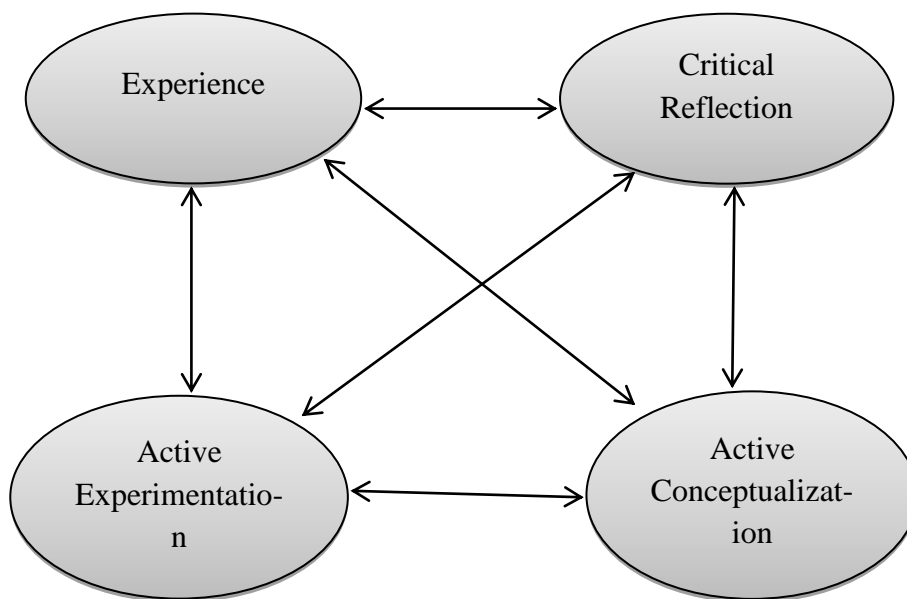
Figure 2. Experiential Learning Cycle

The figure is an explanation of the Experiential Learning Cycle, that contains the components of the learning cycle .the experience allows individuals to actively gather information to learn and to be a member of the society of practice.

Experiential learning is a cyclical process which focuses on the participants' experiences for the acquirement of knowledge. This process contains setting goals, thinking, planning, experimentation, reflection, observation, and review.

1.2.3.2 Criticism of Experiential Learning Theory

The work of David Kolb received various criticisms about the efficiency of his theory as:

- Herron (as cited in Yorks & Kasl, 2002, p. 180-181) believes that "the notion of feeling is nowhere defined or elaborated, thus concrete experience is not properly explored.

- Another common criticism of the theory that exposes a weakness is that the idea of immediate and concrete experience is problematic and unrealistic (Miettinen.2000,p . 54-72.)

- Miettinen also believes that ELT model is only an attempt to explain the societal of Kolb's benefit of his Learning Styles Inventory and thus may actually be a well derived marketing ploy

1.3 Learning Process

   The learning process involves attention and memory, short-term memory, working memory and long-term memory and meta-cognition.

1.3.1 Attention and Memory

  It is naturally that child when he is studying face new information to learn by his teacher, for example, a list of adjectives. To encode this new information into short-term memory the child have to imply it by selecting it e.g. if a student went to the faculty administration to ask about his exam marks and if his friend asks him about the hair color of receptionist, he might not answer him   because of not paying attention to it in the first place.

   Broadbent (1958) reported that attention was necessary for such tasks as monitoring a radar screen or inspecting items on an industrial production line and attention came under the general title of 'vigilance'.

1.3.2 Short-Term Memory and Long-Term Memory

Galton (1883) assumes that ideas are stored in something called an ante-chamber of consciousness and in today's terms this ante-chamber is known as short-term memory. Information retrieved from long term memory established by principles of organization and use of retrieval cues.

The more information is well organized during the process of storing, the more easily it is retrieved. (Tulving and Pearlstone, 1966).

1.3.3 Working Memory

According to Baddeley (1986), the core of working memory is active interpretation of newly presented information, besides to the integration of previously stored information.

Three main constituent come under the model of working memory, the phonological (articulatory) loop, the visuo-spatial sketch pad and the central executive. Working memory allows for temporary storage of information in the phonological loop , this later is used for the storage of verbal information.

1.3.4 Meta-cognition

Meta-cognition means knowledge in two ways, knowing about one's own memory ability and limitations and knowing tasks require different strategies according to the situation. Miyake and Norman (1979,p. 357 - 364) explains that in order to ask a question it is essential the learner must know that he or she does not know something, but most importantly have an idea about what that something is.

Many scholars have made different studies on gifted children considering the second type of meta-cognitive ability. Kurtz and Weinert (1989,p. 45 - 61) assumes that ten to twelve year

old gifted children were more likely to use study and recall strategies for a sort-recall task than their non-gifted contemporaries. Furthermore, twelve- years-old were more likely to use these strategies than ten years-old.

1.4 Assessment of Learning

Teachers need to make a kind of judgment on their learners' performance during the session. Using these judgment and interpreting them into feedback on the quality of each student' work is the focal point of assessment for learning.

1.4.1what is Assessment of Learning ?

According to Cheryl Jones (2005,p.4) Assessment as part of classroom activities is a fundamental process required to promote learning and ultimately achievement. Learners need to know and understand the following before learning can take place:

- ➢ What is the aim of the learning?
- ➢ Why do they need to learn it?
- ➢ Where are they in terms of achieving the aim?
- ➢ How can they achieve the aim?

If the learner takes those principles into consideration the quality of his learning performance will be improved s and a sense of responsibility will rise for both teachers and learners to achieve the learning aims.

1.5 Motivation in Learning

Learning is a hard process, teachers need to pay attention to motivating their students to be well engaged in the process of learning. Motivation is one of the most important element learning and teaching, the highly motivated students learn effectively and making a sense of challenge and fun in the classroom, unlike unmotivated students who learn very little in addition to making the teaching frustrating.

1.5.1 Definition of Motivation

Researchers try to give an exact meaning to motivation in order to simplify it for learners.

  ➤ Broussard and Garrison (2004, p.106) broadly define motivation as "the attribute that moves us to do or not to do something.

  ➤ Mcgroarty (2002,p. 69-89) believes that motivation come from various conditions and environment of the place where learning takes place.

Motivation is clearly related to student environment that encourages them to learn and achieve better results. It affects how students perform on assessments.

1.5.2 Types of Motivation

Different types of motivation serve to create clarity on each individual's motivation. According to Benjamin Ball (nd, p.5) there are:

1.5.2.1 Positive vs. Negative Motivation

The motivating forces can be positive like driving a learner to achieve certain goals. They can be negative as riding one away from an unwanted situation. As an example of positive motivation is that you like going to school and sharing experiences with colleagues because you like some parts of lessons; unlike negative motivation you do not like going to school due to the bills that must to pay (moving away from poverty).

1.5.2.2 Internal vs. External Motivation

There is internal motivation, or push. It's an internal state that impels one to act towards achieving a certain goal. Then there is external motivation, or pull. It's when an external goal influences one's behavior towards them. Behavior is a complex blend of internal pushes and external pulls.

1.5.2.3 Basic vs. learned Motivation

Motivation leans on motives. Motives are often categorized into basic motives And learned motives. Basic or primary motives are unlearned and common to both animals and humans. We're talking hunger, thirst, sex, avoidance of pain, and perhaps aggression and fear. The learned or secondary motives include achievement, power, recognition,   love...

1.6 Learning Styles

A lot of learning styles definitions have been implied to help learners to know their exact way of learning . As "learning styles are characteristic, cognitive, affective and physiological behaviors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment" (Keefe, 1987)

The main learning styles as follow:

1.6.1 Auditory

As an auditory learner, you prefer to learn by only listening to other people. For instance, you like lectures, presentations and recordings. Being an auditory learner, you often find it difficult to take notes while listening: It simply makes you lose your concentration.

1.6.2 Visual

A visual person learns by seeing. If you are picture-visual, you prefer to learn by looking at pictures of all kinds; photos, drawings, tables, flow charts etc. Picture-visual learners often create mental images. This kind of learners prefer learning by looking to a text , i.e. reading

1.6.3 Tactual and/or kinesthetic

As a tactual learner, you need to use your fine motor skills (i.e. your hands) when learning. You take notes, make drawings, use the computer regularly, knit, click your ballpoint pen etc. Here learners need to use their whole body to learn and prefer moving a lot and need to be actively involved with the material while they are learning.

1.6.4 Auditory-Verbal

The auditory-verbal learner needs to talk while receiving information through ears or eyes. Sense perception is taking place while the learner is talking: using body (gestures and facial expressions) and speech organs, being an auditory-verbal learner.

The above styles help both students and teachers to manage the lesson. By knowing each student way of learning, the teacher role will be easier to organize an effective method to present his/lesson and giving every student to present his ideas in the way he prefer.

1.7 Teaching Strategies

Teachers always work to make their learners involved in the classroom, and trying to do best for every individual looking for the most appropriate strategy to reach the teaching and learning aims. For that there certain teaching strategies the teacher needs to know in order to achieve comprehension and to meet the learners' needs.

If the teacher knows his learners needs and their learning styles he can suggest alternative strategies to convey the content .The Foundation of Teaching and Learning Strategies (2013;p.163-165) suggests some teaching strategies as:

1.7.1 Barrier Game

This strategy is used to enhance speaking and listening skills, sharing and collaboration. A barrier is arranged between two learners one as a speaker the other as listener, the speaker gives concise for his partner, when finishing giving instructions by the speaker the barrier is removed. The learners compare their boards to know if the instructions have been followed in the right way. The main role of this strategy is to know how well the learners have used questions to clarify meaning.

1.7.2 Brain Storming

It is like selecting an idea, question or an issue then write it on the board, at the same time setting the brain storming rules such as:

- ➢ share whatever comes to mind
- ➢ every answer counts no wrong answer
- ➢ There is no discouraging or criticism
- ➢ Limiting the time and stop it when finishes

Reading and discussing the answers then, clarify any questions where necessary will make the learners work freely without feeling confused in the case of making a mistake .This strategy can be used to a variety of activities as, conflict resolution. It is an effective process to think of new ideas within groups or individuals.

1.7.3 Circle Talk

It is a strategy used to make learners exchange their ideas and points of view, through listening and accepting others ideas, and giving a chance to every student to talk. Here teacher needs to place his students in two circles one circle within another that promote dialogue between students, the ones who are in the inner circle face those who are in the outer one in order to encourage active listening between learners
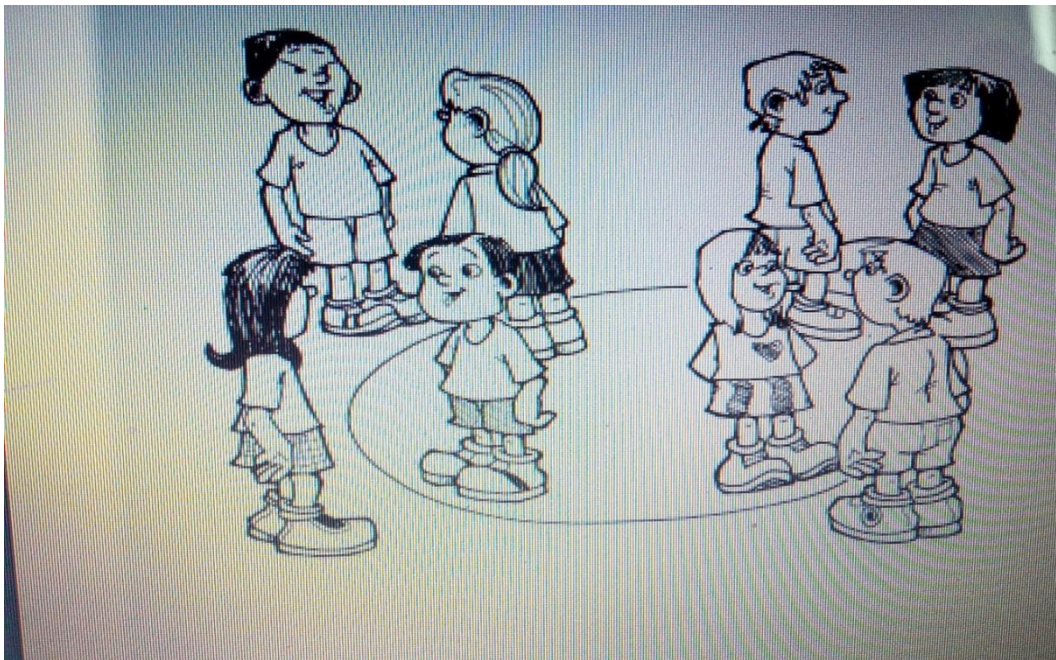
(Foundation Teaching and Learning Strategies,2013 ,p.164)

This kind of strategies help the learners who feel shy and afraid of expressing ideas, this feeling will be reduced as a result of sharing ideas with friends that make them feel at ease, because all of them are in the same level.

1.7.4 Role Play

Role play give a chance to learners to evolve their interpersonal skills such as; a negotiation within various contexts. To manage an impressive role play, an enthusiastic environment must exist create rules as:

- Using character name rather than the real names of students

- Each student have to express his opinion

- Speaking by turn not all at the same time

   The role of this strategy is that changes the usual learning context. Role play motivates students to learn since, they are learning by new technique which beaks the routine of learning process.

2. Performance

2.1 Definition of Performance

   Is the ability to apply the language or series of complex actions that combine skills and knowledge to produce result. Performance refers to language ability that has been practiced and it is within familiar contexts and content areas. (The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages,2012,p.4)

2.1. Proficiency

   The (ACTFL, 2012) differentiate performance from proficiency. Proficiency is the use of language in real situations in a manner that is accepted and appropriate to native speakers of the language.

2.2 Performance Learning Contexts

The theory of performance is beneficial in various learning contexts (Elger,nd,p.11)

2.2.1 Traditional Contexts

A theory of performance informs learning in classrooms, workshops, and other venues that are traditionally associated with learning, the places that are clearly related to learning such as: university.

2.2.2 Non-traditional Contexts

Learning performance is not limited only to the traditional contexts as mentioned above, the usual learning environment. An example of these contexts include academic advising, self-development, departments, academic committees, professional research groups, colleges.

2.2.3 Organizational Learning

A theory of performance informs learning by organizations through the idea of examining the "level of performance" of the organization.

The performance of each student is related in a way or another to the environment he is living within.

Conclusion

In this chapter we discussed learning and learning performance. We have seen the concept of learning and the most important learning theories in addition to its criticism. Moreover, we have dealt with the learning process that is useful to know. Therefore we mentioned learning styles and learning strategies that is so crucial to be known by both teachers and learners to facilitate learning process. We concluded this chapter by the meaning of performance and the theory of performance. As long as learning is a process of gaining knowledge and information. It is highly needed to be aware of what is learning is and how teachers will treat their students' learning process by selecting the most appropriate teaching strategies that feet

students' learning styles to achieve best results and to help teachers easily evaluate students'

performance.

CHAPTER THREE: FIELDWORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

Appendices

Abstract

Introduction

Collecting the data to investigate about the effect of learning critical thinking and collaboration skills in enhancing EFL learners 'performance, the questionnaire have been distributed for both teachers and students. This chapter is devoted to the analysis and interpretation of the gathered data, to confirm or disprove the proposed hypothesis: The ability to work in group, sharing ideas and thinking critically affect positively the EFL student's learning performance.

3.1 Review of Research Methodology

3.1.1 Research Method

For undertaking this study, a qualitative research approach has been adopted. A descriptive method is the most appropriate according to the nature of the study and to investigate student's pints of view, it works to investigate conditions and relationships that exist, as a result we have selected descriptive method that tends to achieve our main purpose which is to describe our obtained results about the effect of learning critical thinking and collaboration skills in enhancing EFL learners 'performance.

3.1.2 Sample of the Study

From a population of students, a sample of fifty (50) students of English, Master one ((Science of the Language and Civilisation and Literature) at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra is selected to manage our research, besides to ten (10) teachers teaching different courses have been chosen to contribute in our research by providing us with their helpful thoughts through fulfilling the questionnaire.

3.1.3 Data Gathering Tools

The research tool used in this study is a questionnaire. It has been handed for Master One students and teachers at Mohamed Kheider Biskra University in order to collect their opinions and attitudes about the topic.

3.2 Students' Questionnaire

3.2.1 Aim of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire has been used ,because it is the most convenient tool to investigate students' perspectives about the efficiency of learning critical thinking and collaboration skills, and giving the chance to each student to express his opinion towards the studied issue through his/her experiences. By answering the given questions we can reach the aims of the study.

3.2.2 Description of the Questionnaire

To achieve our research aim, which is making EFL students aware of the importance of critical thinking and collaboration skills in their learning process. To investigate the students' opinions about our research we needed to distribute a questionnaire that contains two main parts the first one is critical thinking while the second one is collaborative learning; this later is divided into three sections: background information, critical thinking and collaborative learning. Section one seeks to gather information about student's learning. Section two looks to see students' understanding and awareness about critical thinking skill. Section three deals with students' view concerning collaborative learning.

3.2.3 Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed to Master One students of both branches (science of the language and literature) during the academic year 2018/2019.The respondents were available at various places at the university as: the faculty library and BC rooms. Some of the respondents answered the questionnaire at the same time of distribution, while others gave back their answers days later. After all we have received forty three (43) after distributing fifty (50) questionnaires.

3.2.4 Analysis of the Questionnaire

Section One: Background Information (Q1 → Q3)

Item 01. Students' Choice to Study English Language

Choice	Number	Percentage
Personal	33	76%
Imposed	5	12%
Advised	5	12%
Total	43	100%

Table 01. Students' Choice to Study English Language

The table above shows students' choice of studying English at University. The results presents that the majority of students 76 % are studying English according to their personal desire; because they were highly motivated and positive perspective towards learning English .The other students 5% were advised to study English due to its position in the world as:

media, science, politics and economy ,while the other 5% were imposed and unmotivated to learn English.

Consequently, the learning performance of students is affected by their choice of studying or not .actually, students who followed their own choice to study English they are expected to learn that language effectively, unlike those who were obliged to study English that do not participate well in learning EFL.

Item 02. Students' Reason to Get a Master Degree

Choice	Number	Percentage
To upgrade their education	**15**	**34%**
To get more job opportunities	**22**	**51%**
To get research Opportunity	**2**	**5%**
Others	**4**	**10%**
Total	**43**	**100%**

Table 02. Students' Reason to apply for a Master Degree

The table presents EFL students' reason for applying for a master degree. The results indicates that most of the respondents 51% are studying for getting more job opportunities that make them more qualified when searching for job. While 34% of students explain their reason for applying for a master degree , that they need it to upgrade their educational level

and expanding their knowledge for future projects such as: Doctorate studies. When 5% of the students aiming to add their contribution to knowledge by getting more research opportunities under the master degree. The other 10% gave us their own personal argument for studying master like, living abroad and to add new fields of study that most of the Algerian universities are lacking such fields.

Item 03.Student's Averages during the first semester

Student's average	Number	Percentage
10	4	10%
11	7	16%
12	11	26%
13	6	13%
14	6	13%
15	1	3%
16	1	3%
No answer	7	16%
Total	43	100%

Table 03. Student's averages

We asked about students' averages to help us in the analysis of the coming questions that we need to know their levels to complete our interpretation, to achieve best results and making a clear judgment.

Section Two

Part One: Critical Thinking (Q4→Q7)

Item 01: Students' s definition of Critical Thinking

By asking this question to students we gave them a chance to express their ideas concerning critical thinking, the majority of respondents tried to define critical thinking according to their learning situation, the definition as follow;

- Critical Thinking is asking great deal of questions and do not accepting ideas as they are

- Giving personal point of view about an issue systematically

- It is to read or hear any information in a detailed way with deep analysis

- It is the application of some logical principles that helps in decision making

- It is the unusual thinking with evaluation and analyzing ideas in a different way

- Having questions in mind that are developed through reading

- It is the process in which the mind seeks to discover the hidden details behind certain issue

- Is a skill developed through the experience of solving problems

- The ability to evaluate and qualify scientific work before acquiring it as a source of knowledge.

Item 02: Importance of Critical Thinking for EFL Students

Choice	Number	Percentage
Yes	35	81%
No	6	14%
No answer	2	5%
Total	43	100%

Table 04: Importance of Critical Thinking for EFL Students

The above table indicates students 'points of view towards the importance of critical thinking in their learning process, 81% of them are agreeing with importance of such skill in their educational path, while 14% of the students do not think that critical thinking skill is beneficial, the rest 5% did not answer. Students who believe of the importance of critical thinking justified their answers as follow:

- It helps to infer information to improve each students 'skill.

- Helping in understanding the deep meanings

- The more a student asks the more he learns

- As master students it is needed to think critically especially in making research papers and assignments.

- Critical thinking helps to go beyond the hidden meanings.

- Helps in verifying one's own knowledge if it is reliable or not.

- Facilitate decision making and problem solving

Item 05: Students' views about themselves as critical thinkers

Choice	Number	Percentage
Yes	11	26%
No	1	2%
I do not know	30	70%
No answer	1	2%
Total	43	100%

Table 05: Students' views about themselves as critical thinkers

Asking students if they are good thinkers or not. To reach our goal to know if the Master students are studying by using their critical thinking or not. As it is mentioned in the table above most student answered "I do not know" that represents **(70%),** means they are lacking self-confidence due to the absence of this skill in their learning process and they are not familiar with the concept of critical thinking. Additionally **26%** of the students claim that they are good critical thinkers. However **(2%)** of the respondents see themselves as not really good critical thinkers. While **(2%)** they did not answer.

Item 06: Characteristics of a Good Critical Thinker

Choice	Number	Percentage
A. Inquisitiveness	10	24%
B. Open-mindedness	3	6%
C. Self-confidence in one's reasoning abilities	6	14%

D. Flexibility in considering abilities	8	19%
E. All of them	16	37%
Total	43	100%

Table 06: Characteristics of a Good Critical thinking

This question gives the students multiple choices to answer. According to students 'points of view all the given choices designate a good critical thinking **37%,** while **24%** think that Inquisitiveness is one of the most characteristics of good critical thinking, **19%** of the students believe. The flexibility in considering abilities as a main part of the critical thinking personality, **14%** of the respondents see that self-confidence in one's reasoning abilities is the feature of the good critical thinking, the rest **6%** consider open-mindedness is the element that characterizes a good critical thinking. The results prove that all the above mentioned characteristics build the good critical thinker character.

Part Two: Collaborative Learning

Item 01: Students' Learning Preference

Choice	Number	Percentage
Group work	**18**	42%
Individual work	**25**	58%
Total	**43**	100%

Table 07: Students' Learning Preference

The table above shows students 'learning preferences the majority of Master students **58%** prefer work individually, while the rest **42%** like working in groups. The results indicate that Master students are against the idea of working in groups due to many reasons as they believe working individually:

- Individual work develops critical thinking

- Working individually allow students to develop their research skills

- The teacher can assess the student achievement much better through individual work

- Many students do not take the given work seriously

While the students who prefer working in groups they assume that , they learn better with collective work because;

- Listening to others views help in knowing new ideas

- Group working allow to discuss the topic from different perspectives

- To get benefit from others experiences

- Group work is enjoyable and the task will be corrected from the students members through each individual feedback then goes to the teacher assessment.

Item 02: Students' views about difficulties in group work

Choice	Number	Percentage
Yes	27	63%
No	16	37%

Total	**43**	**100%**

Table 08: Students 'views about difficulties in group work

The table presents **63%** of the respondents find difficulties in working with their friends in groups due to the conflict behind discussing topics and the different opinions that cannot be accepted by the members of the group. Where we find **37%**of students do not have any problems with group and feel at ease when exchanging ideas with friends

Item 03: Description of the Process of Working in Group

Choice	Number	Percentage
Disturbing	22	51
Less exciting	5	12
Exciting	4	9
Enjoyable	12	28
Total	43	100

Table 09: Description of the Process of Working in Group

The explains the description of learning process of working in group.**51%** of learners seeing the group work is disturbing, and creates noise that impede the learning process, we find **28%** of respondents enjoy group working and work better when sharing the giving task with the members of the group. While 12% of students are less exciting, the rest 9% believing that group work is exciting.

Going back to the question that we asked master students to give us their averages to help us in our data interpretation. Consequently students who had good averages 13,14,15,16 are

strongly disagree with idea of working in group because they cannot express their learning abilities and group work keep them out of comfort zone. Students with average levels as 10, 11, and 12 they preferring working in team and they believe that group work support them to work better than individual work.

3.3 Teachers' Questionnaire

3.3.1 Aim of the Questionnaire

This questionnaire has been prepared for the aim of collecting teachers 'opinions about the importance of both skills Critical Thinking and Collaborative learning in enhancing EFL learning performance.

3.3.2 Description of the Questionnaire

Teachers' questionnaire contains seventeen (17) questions; some are open-ended while others are closed-ended. Primarily, it is divided into three parts; the first part includes background information about teachers. The second part covers questions about teacher's views about the use of both skills in EFL class. The last part deals with questions about their students 'learning performance and to which extent they encourage their students use critical thinking and collaborative learning skills.

3.3.3 Administration of the Questionnaire

Teachers' questionnaire was distributed to ten (09) teachers of both branches science of the language and civilization and literature (those who had taught master students or not) Teachers were available at university who answered us immediately while others took few days later.

3.3.4 Analysis of the Questionnaire

Section 01: Background Information (Q1 →Q4)

Item 01. Teachers' Educational Qualification

Choice	Number	Percentage
Master	1	12%
Magister	4	44%
PhD	4	44%
Total	9	100%

Table 10: Teachers' Educational Qualification

The results presents 44% have magister degree and the same percentage 44% have PhD degree while 12% has master degree.

Item 02. Teachers' Experience in Teaching English

Choice	Number	Percentage
1 to 5 years	1	11%
5 to 10 years	3	33%
More than 10 years	5	56%
Total	9	100%

Table 11: Teachers' Experience in Teaching English

The results indicates that 56% of the teachers have been teaching English more than 10 years, others 33% are teaching from 5 to 10 years and the rest11% are teaching from 1 to 5 years. The results show that teachers of Biskra University are experienced.

Item 03. Teachers' Experience in Teaching Master Students

We asked teachers about the number of years they have been teaching Master students as long as our research concerns master students. Different answers we have gained through this question one teacher 01 has been teaching master students for 7 years, other answered for 9 years, besides one 01 teacher has been teaching for 5 years and the others one 3 years , one 01 teacher has been teaching for 02 years and the last one 1year, the rest three 03 teachers have not teaching master students.

Item 04: Subjects Teachers Have Taught

We asked teachers about the modules they have been teaching. Various answers have been given. The teachers who answered this question taught different modules. The most mentioned modules are related more to writing skills such as; written expression/ academic writing/ theme and version/ language mastery. In addition to other modules; discourse analysis, applied linguistics, didactics, ESP (English for specific purposes).This variety of modules that are taught at Biskra University seeks to develop the different skills of each student so, teachers try to integrate both critical thinking and collaborative learning through different tasks or strategies.

Section Two: Critical Thinking and Collaborative Learning(Q5→ Q13)

Item 05.Teachers' Perception of Critical Thinking

Choice	Number	Percentage
Analyzing objectively	0	0%
The art of asking questions	0	0%
Making reasoned judgments	0	0%
All of them	9	100%
Total	9	100%

Table 11:Teachers' Perception of Critical Thinking

The table above explains teachers perceptions of critical thinking .100% agreed that critical thinking is all the above mentioned options .Indeed critical thinking is a process of analyzing and asking questions, in addition to making reasoned judgment .

Item 06. Teachers' Evaluation of Students' Critical Thinking Abilities

Choice	Number	Percentage
Good	0	0%
Average	6	67%
Poor	3	33%

Total	**9**	**100%**

Table 12: Teachers' Evaluation of Students' Critical Thinking Abilities

According to the presented data above, teachers do not consider their students 'critical thinking as good 0%;consequently they need to develop their critical thinking skill to understand better what they learning. On the one hand 67% of teachers see their students critical abilities as average. On the other hand 33% of teachers believe that their students level is poor when dealing with critical thinking.

Item 07. Encouraging Students to Think Critically

Choice	Number	Percentage
Yes	**9**	**100%**
No	**0**	**0%**
Total	**9**	**0%**

Table 13:Encouraging Students to Think Critically

Teachers are not satisfied due to their students 'critical thinking skill. For that we asked teachers if they encourage their students to develop their critical thinking skills as it is presented in the table above 100% of teachers work to enhance their students critical thinking skills by using different strategies.

Item 08. Activities Used to Encourage Students to Think Critically

Choice	Number	Percentage
Problem solving	4	45%

Peer groups	0	0%
Classroom discussion and debates	2	22%
Writing assignments	3	33%
Total	9	100%

Table 14: Activities Used to Encourage Students to Think Critically

As the table shows teachers use different kinds of activities that help learners to be critical thinkers. The majority of teachers 45% use problem solving activities,33% writing assignment, while 22% prefer to use classroom discussions. Here teachers use a variety of activities to achieve their teaching aims.

Part two: Collaborative Learning

Item 9.Incorporating Collaborative Activities by Teachers

Choice	Number	Total
Yes	8	89
No	1	11
Total	9	100%

Table 15. Incorporating Collaborative Activities byTea chers

The table shows that 89% of teachers use collaborative activities while they are teaching,11% do not use group works according to the nature oh subject they are teaching ,

teachers who answer yes they use collaborative activities as: problem solving activities, think pair share tasks, prepared based assignment and inter-groups debates .

Item 10.How teachers group their students?

By asking this question we seek to know how teachers group their students, if they are based on students' interests and academic performance and which kind of difficulties that hinder them to do so. All of the respondents answered that they try to group their students according to their interests and academic performance but in sometimes it is not possible in overcrowded classes as a result, they allow students to group themselves as they want.

Item 11.The role of Collaborative Learning in Enhancing Students' Social skills

Choice	Number	Percentage
Yes	9	100%
No	0	0%
Total	9	0%

Table 16. The Role of Collaborative Learning in Enhancing Students' social skills

As shown on the table above, all teachers agree that collaborative learning enhances their students' social skills, taking the case of master students that are preparing themselves to the working environment, group work allow students to practice debates, accepting others opinions and work as team this will be beneficial in their jobs.

Item 12. The importance of Teaching Collaboration and its Advantages/disadvantages

All teachers believe in the importance of collaboration in their classes. Some of the mentioned advantages are:

- Collaboration makes students contribute in the given task , also teaches them interactive and social skill.

- Enriches students 'knowledge and they will more autonomous.

- Develops a sense of responsibility

Disadvantages are as follow:

- Impossible to know and evaluate who actually work.

- It is a time consuming while organizing the groups .

- It creates a mess in the classroom.

Item 13.The basis that teachers follow to group students

This question provide us with various answers. Teachers are grouping their students according to their own interest and the task to be done. Some of the teachers consider motivation as an important element in grouping students and language aptitude.

Section Three. Learning Performance

Item 14. The Effect of Students' Collaborative Skill on their Learning Achievement.

All the teachers claim that collaboration effect students' learning achievement, this is done through sharing experiences. The spirit of working in group improve students 'skills and performance in order to achieve difficult task in shorter time, moreover collaboration helps in reducing psychological problems(shyness).

Item 15.The Effect of Critical Thinking Skill on Students' Learning Performance

Thinking critically means being aware of the learning process. For that teachers agree in the point that critical thinking skill affect students' learning performance, they believe that when learners think critically they analyze data and give opinions about their learning, hence they become metacognitively aware.

Item 16.The Importance of both Skills to be Taught Among EFL Classroom

All the respondents see that it is so crucial to teach both skills for EFL students, since they need both skills either in class or in their social life. Critical thinking and Collaborative skills must be taught otherwise learners become passive ,and the teacher has to do everything in the class alone which may have bad impact on both teaching and learning process.

Item 17. The Criteria of a Good EFL Learners

The teachers agree that good learner is a learner who has the following criterion; evaluation, discipline, achievement, participation. Students evaluation is very important to test his level, discipline is required that give good image to the student, achievement and participation are interrelated that make teacher easily make judgment about their students' performance.

Discussion of Results

After the description and interpretation of both teachers and students 'questionnaire. We have noted some facts relating to teachers as well as students 'attitudes and beliefs, towards soft skills namely critical thinking and collaborative learning skills, and their effect on EFL students' learning performance.

First, concerning students 'questionnaire, since critical thinking and collaborative learning skills are essential to achieve better results and facilitate the learning process. Master One students of English at Biskra University, the majority of them 51% are aiming behind applying for a master degree to get more job opportunities; as a result they are preparing themselves to the working environment by being more qualified. From the gathered data Master one students have a good level since the majority of respondents got good averages (13,14,15,16) which explains to which extent they work hard. From this point Master students are aware of the importance of critical thinking in their learning process, and they really need it in doing research papers and assignment. Moreover they think that critical thinker is the one who is inquisitive in knowing new information and having self-confidence in reasoning abilities. Regarding collaborative learning, Master one students feel at ease when they work individually due to many reasons as conflict of ideas, here selfishness is one reason that prevents students to share ideas with each other, students who got good averages and their level is good are not in favor of group work. While students with average levels prefer group works to exchange ideas and experiences to enhance their learning abilities.

Second, from the interpretation of teachers 'questionnaire, we have recognized that teachers of English at Biskra University are experienced in teaching English and are highly qualified. Teachers believe that their students 'critical thinking skill is average, for that reason they work to improve their students' critical thinking skill through different strategies and

activities as problem solving, reasoning. At the same time teachers trying to make their students engage in collaborative activities because; collaboration teach students interactive and social skills to enhance their learning performance. After analyzing the results, we can conclude that our hypothesis has been confirmed.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have discussed the collected data through our research tool. The analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire of both teachers and students of Master one students at Biskra University, help us to collect different views and beliefs concerning the effect of critical thinking and collaborative learning skills in enhancing the EFL students 'learning performance

According to the collected data and the given results, we conclude that students are well-acquainted with the skills "critical thinking and collaborative learning»; however, most of them assume that they do not have good critical thinking skills. Additionally they have different views about working in group. Concerning teachers claimed that they work to incorporate critical thinking and collaborative activities into EFL classrooms.

Suggestions and Recommendations

In this research, we will suggest some recommendations which might be future solutions to some problems facing EFL students and teachers in the Division of English at the University of Mohamed Kheider, Biskra.

- ➢ In is highly recommended that critical thinking should be integrated in the syllabus as other skills.

- ➢ It is recommended to teach students how to work in groups and making them the benefits of collaboration.

- ➢ The critical thinking skill should be taught from first at university till graduation to produce creative students.

- ➢ Promoting students' critical thinking skill must be one of teachers' proprieties.

- ➢ The problem of large classes and insufficient time to give the student all the needed activities and information, that make teachers away of group work activities, therefore the administration have to intervene in such situations.

- ➢ Exposing students to extensive critical thinking activities, that make them familiar with this skill.

General Conclusion

Making students think critically and work in team is one of the main aims of any educational system. Students who are not critical thinkers have low learning performance because their thinking is based on memorization and the lack of analytical, questioning and reflective thoughts. For that reason we have conducted this study to investigate the effect of soft skills namely critical thinking and collaborative learning skills in enhancing EFL students' learning performance.

In this descriptive study there are three chapters; two chapters are devoted for literature review while the third one is concerned with the fieldwork. We followed qualitative approach that is most appropriate for our research and we have conducted the research with a case study investigation at Biskra University. We hypothesized that: The ability to work in groups, sharing ideas and thinking critically affect positively the EFL student's learning performance .to validate our hypothesis, we have used questionnaire as a data gathering tool; one for master one students and one for teachers of English at Biskra University. We concluded with some suggestions and recommendations for the future.

From the results we found that students still find some difficulties to improve their learning level and enhance their learning performance also their thinking abilities are poor. For that reason students should be engaged in thinking activities which are prepared by their teachers to evolve their thinking abilities Moreover, all teachers agreed that collaboration helps students in enhancing their learning performance through different activities that enable them to share experiences and idea.

As a final point, the current study has investigated the effect of critical thinking and collaborative learning in enhancing EFL students' learning performance. According to the collected data and the findings, we can conclude that that critical thinking and collaborative

learning skills contribute in the improvement of students' learning performance, thus we can say that our hypothesis is proved.

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Appendices

Students' Questionnaire

Dear Master Students, You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire which represents a data collection tool for the accomplishment of a Master dissertation. We direct this questionnaire to investigate the effect of critical thinking and collaboration skills in enhancing EFL students 'learning performance' . Your answers are very helpful for us, so please give as precise answers as you can.

Would you please tick "√" the appropriate box or give your own answer whenever it is possible.

We greatly appreciate your contribution

Prepared by: Supervised by:

Miss, KADRI Samira   Dr, RezigNadia

2019

Section One: Background Information

1. Studying English at University was:

a. Your own choice.

b. Imposed.

c. Advised.

2. Why do you apply for a Master degree?

a. To upgrade your education.

b. To get more job opportunities.

c. To get research opportunity.

d. Others..………………………………………………………………………..

3.please would you like to give us the average that you attain in the first exam…………………………………………………………………

Section Two:

Part One :Critical Thinking

3.In your personal view how can you define critical thinking?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

4.Thinking critically helps you analyze and synthesize information for making the right

decision. Do you believe that it is important for you?

 a. Yes b. N☐　　　　　　　　　　　　　　☐

- Please justify……………………………………………………………………………..........

5. Do you think that you are a good critical thinker?

a.Yes b. N☐　　　　　　　☐not know　　　　　　　　☐

6. Among the following, please specify which ones that characterizes good critical thinkers?

a. Inquisitiveness (interest and curiosity to learn new things) ☐

b. Open-mindedness ☐

c. Self-confidence in one's reasoning abilities ☐

d. Flexibility in considering opinions ☐

e. All of them ☐

f.Others……………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Part Two: Collaborative Learning

1.What do you prefer, working in group or individually? justify

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…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

2.- Do you find difficulties when you work in group?

a. Yes ☐   b. No ☐

3. How would you describe the process of working in group ?

Disturbing ☐

Less exciting ☐

Exciting ☐

Enjoyable ☐

4. If you are not in favor of group work because:

 a .You prefer to work individually ☐

b. You do not know how to work in groups ☐

c. You will be evaluated ☐

d. You can only work individually ☐

Appendix 02:

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Teachers' Questionnaire

This research work is about the effectiveness of leaning soft skills "critical thinking and collaborative learning ", on the learning performance of Master One student . I would be grateful ifyou could answer the following questions.

We greatly appreciate your contribution.

.

Prepared by: Supervised by:

Miss KADRI Samira   Dr.Rezig Nadia

2019

Section One: Background Information

1. Would you like to specify your educational qualification?

a. Master ☐

b. Magister ☐

c. PHD ☐

2. A- How long have you been teaching English?

3. How many years have you been teaching Master students?

……………………………………………………………………………………..

4. Which subjects have you been teaching?

…………………………………………………………………………………….

Section Two: Critical Thinking and collaboration 5. In your opinion, critical thinking is…

a. Analyzing objectively. ☐

b. The art of asking questions. ☐

c. Making reasoned judgments. ☐

d. All of them ☐

2.How can you evaluate your students' critical thinking abilities?

Good ☐   Average ☐   Poor ☐

3.Do you encourage your students to think critically?

Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes, which kind of activities do you use?

a. Problem solving ☐

b. Peer groups ☐

c. Classroom discussion and debates ☐

☐

d. Written assignments

e. Others………………………………………………………………………………….

4. Incorporating critical thinking skills into EFL classrooms is crucial.

a. Strongly agree.

b. Agree.

c. Disagree.

d. Strongly disagree.

Please justify……………………………………………………………………………….

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Part two: collaborative learning

1.Do you incorporate collaborative activities while you are presenting the course?

Yes   No

If yes which kind of activities do you use?..

……………………………………………………………………………………………..

2.Have you ever grouped your students based on their interests and academic performance? If no, what kind of problems hinder you to do so…………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

3. Do you think that engaging in cooperative learning enhances students' social skills.

yes   No

4.Is it important in your view to teach collaboration , if yes what are its advantages and disadvantages?

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5.On which basis have you grouped your students during classroom activities

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Section three: learning performance

1.Do students' collaborative skill affect their learning achievement, if yes

how…………………………………………………………………………………………

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2.Do students' critical thinking skill affect their learning achievement, if yes

how…………………………………………………………………………………………

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3.Do you think that collaboration and critical thinking should be taught among EFL classroom

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4.What criteria do you give to a good EFL learner?

- Evaluation
- Discipline
- Achievements

- Participation

Others

………
………
………
………

Thank you

الملخص

يعمل هذا البحث على اكتشاف دور المهارات الشخصية و هي " التفكير النقدي و التعاون العلمي " على اداء تعلم طلاب الانجليزية. الاساتذة غير راضون على مهارات طلابهم الفكرية ,حيث يجدون صعوبات في تقييم المعلومات و تحليلها. كما ان طلاب اللغة الانجليزية لا يدركون اهمية التعاون الدراسي من حلال تبادل الافكار و الخبرات في تحسين ادائهم التعليمي . لهذا السبب يحاول بحثنا تسليط الضوء على كلتا المهارتين في تحسين اداء الطلاب التعليمي. حيث افترضنا ان مهارات التفكير النقدي وا لتعاون الدراسي ضرورية لتعزيز اداء تعلم الطلاب اللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية . يعتمد هدا البحث على المنهج البحث البحثي النوعي, حيث يبحث في دراسة حالة في جامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة و كانت سنة اولى ماستر كعينة لدراستنا خلال العام الدراسي 2019/2018 لغرض جمع البيانات لهذه الدراسة الوصفية , تم توزيع الاستبيانات لكل من طلاب ماستر سنة اولى ماستر (عينة من 43 تم اختيارها عشوائيا) و 10 اساتذة يدرسون مواد مختلفة. بعد تحليل و تفسير البيانات , اثبتت النتيجة المعطاة ان كلا من التفكير النقدي و التعاون العلمي يعمل على تحسين اداء الطالب.

الكلمات المفتاحية .التفكير النقدي , التعاون العلمي , طلاب اللغة الانجليزية.