

**AN EVALUATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL LANGUAGE
TEACHERS' TEACHING METHODS TO ENHANCE
CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS OF ESL LEARNERS**

CHRIZELLE WRIGHT

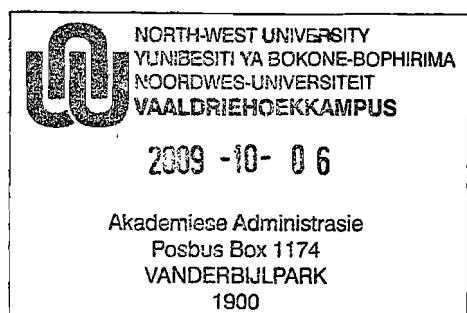
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SUMMARY

This study was undertaken in the Johannesburg South district (D11). Primary school language teachers in this district (D11) were invited to participate in this study by means of a questionnaire. This study investigated which kind of teaching methods teachers are currently using to develop and enhance critical thinking skills of ESL learners in language classrooms. Teachers' knowledge of Blooms' Taxonomy of cognitive objectives and how to use this taxonomy to develop ESL learners' critical thinking skills were also scrutinized. Since many ESL learners' language proficiency in English is also limited the responses of the teachers indicated that this could have a negative influence on their critical thinking development. This study accentuates the need for the use of a variety of teaching methods to enhance ESL learners' critical thinking skills in language in the Johannesburg South District (D11).

SAMEVATTING

Hierdie studie was onderneem in die Johannesburg Suid distrik (D11). Laerskool taalonderwysers in hierdie distrik was uitgenooi om deel te neem aan die studie deur middle van 'n vraelys. Hierdie studie het onderwysmetodes ondersoek wat onderwysers tans gebruik om kritiese denke by Engels tweedetaalleerders te ontwikkel en te bevorder. Onderwysers se kennis van Bloom se taksonomie van kognitiewe doelstellings was noukeurig ondersoek asook hoe hulle die taksonomie gebruik, om kritiese denkvaardighede van Engels Tweedetaalleerders te bevorder. Omdat baie Engels tweedetaalleerders se taalvaardighede in Engels beperk is, het onderwysers aangedui dat dit 'n negatiewe invloed op die ontwikkeling van hulle kritiese denkvaardighede het.

Hierdie studie aksentueer die behoefté vir die gebruik van 'n verskeidenheid onderwysmetodes om kritiese denkvaardighede in taal te bevorder, veral vir Engels Tweedetaalleerders in die Johannesburg Suid distrik (D11).

DECLARATION

I, CHRIZELLE WRIGHT, hereby declare that this script, “**AN EVALUATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL LANGUAGE TEACHERS’ TEACHING METHODS TO ENHANCE CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS OF ESL LEARNERS**” submitted to obtain the M.Ed. degree at the Nort-West University, is the result of the research I have done. I further declare that this research has never been submitted at any other faculty or university.

CHRIZELLE WRIGHT

DATE: _____

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

The South African National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (Department of Education, 2002a) regards the development of language and critical thinking as vitally important. The Foundation Phase Languages Learning Area has a Learning Outcome five which specifically focuses on how learners think and reason, access, process and use information for language learning (Department of Education, 2002a). The learning area Languages in the General Education and Training (GET) phase should transform the way in which learners think, learn and understand. Language is therefore, used as a tool or instrument of thought (Eysenck, 2004: 537). Vygotsky (in Eysenck, 2004: 537) attached great importance to the link between the development of language and critical thinking. Irvine (2007:303) states that critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualising, applying, analysing and evaluating information gathered from or generated by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning or communication, as a guide to belief and action. To accomplish these critical thinking actions good language ability is crucial. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2004:219) assert that language, thinking and therefore learning are linked and that the capacity to use language is essential to execute critical thinking.

According to Swamy (2005:37) an important task of a language teacher is to enhance critical thinking skills. Hardy and Mawer (1999:89) state that critical thinking is not just a set of skills; it involves planning, revision, and evaluation of your own thinking and is also referred to as metacognition. Critical thinking requires a variety of learning styles. McCracken and McCracken (1995:5) maintain that since learners learn in different ways as well as at different paces some teaching methods may in fact interfere with a learner's individual learning style.

Unfortunately, numerous teachers only use one teaching method that they prefer. For example, if the teacher prefers visual input the teacher will probably use the visual style of teaching more (Sprenger, 2003:68).

According to the Education For All Global Monitoring Report (EFA) (EFA, 2007) research across Africa has found that the use of unfamiliar languages as medium of teaching forced teachers to use teacher-centered methods which could also have an effect on the way learners learn as well as their development of critical thinking skills in language learning.

Woods (1996:3-4) asserts that researchers have examined the question of teaching methods for second language learning for decades since it is such a crucial issue in successful learning. According to Woods (1996:5) a large number of articles, papers and theses have been devoted to comparing methods for teaching a second language. However, in a study conducted by Schlebush and Thobedi (2004:8) most of the ESL teachers surveyed gave preference to traditional teaching methods such as telling or using the textbook and did not feel the need to change their tried and tested ways. Kelly and Melgorano (2004:85) as well as Moore (2005:227) confirm these findings. According to them, many teachers still use only the direct, teacher-centered, instructional model with the teacher as the major information provider who passes facts and actions on to the learners in the most direct way possible and might have negative results on the development of critical thinking skills.

Rosa (2004) found in her study that South African teachers are incapable of teaching critical thinking skills and mentioned the following reasons:

- Teachers do not give much attention to encouraging critical thinking skills, owing to the pressure of workload;
- too much information need to be covered, which gives little time for creative teaching; and

- opportunities for the development of creative and critical thinking skills are limited.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The problem arising is whether primary school teachers use a variety of teaching methods in language teaching aiming at developing critical thinking skills, especially for ESL learners.

In order to address this problem the following research questions are relevant:

The following questions gave direction to the research project:

- What teaching methods are Primary school language teachers currently using to develop critical thinking skills of ESL learners?
- To what extent do teachers possess adequate knowledge and skills to implement different teaching methods to enhance critical thinking skills of ESL learners?
- Do teachers have adequate knowledge to incorporate Bloom's taxonomy in their teaching to improve ESL learners' critical thinking skills?

1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study is to determine if primary school teachers use a variety of teaching methods to promote critical thinking in their classrooms with the focus on English second language learners (ESL).

The overall aim can be operationalised as follows:

- To determine what teaching methods Primary school language teachers are currently using to develop critical thinking skills in language of ESL learners.

- To determine whether teachers possess adequate knowledge and skills to implement different teaching methods to enhance critical thinking in language of ESL learners.
- To ascertain whether teachers have adequate knowledge to incorporate Bloom's taxonomy in their teaching to improve ESL learners' critical thinking skills.

1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

1.4.1 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study builds on social constructivism. Constructivism is described as a view that sees knowledge as actively constructed (by individuals, groups and societies), and not simply transferred (Donald *et al.*, 2004:104). Donald *et al.* (2004:103) states that an important key of social constructivism is that knowledge is not "*fixed and given*". Knowledge is shaped, constructed and re-constructed in different social contexts and at different times (Donald *et al.*, 2004:104). Vygotsky stated that the development of cognition in the young and the social construction of knowledge itself are related processes. For the purpose of this study the focus is on the cognitive domain (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1999:34) of Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive objectives, also build on constructivism, that promote higher-order thinking skills such as, critical thinking skills.

Constructivist learning theory has its primary roots in the work of Piaget and Vygotsky (Howe, 2003:93). Constructivist learning occurs when learners actively create their own knowledge by trying to understand the material that is presented to them and take ownership of their own learning (Reigeluth, 1999:143). Learners must be self-motivated and capable of thinking and reasoning (Westwood, 2009:9) on their own. Waterman (2006:9) explains that teachers who use a constructivist approach to learning see learners as valuable thinkers, whose ideas and theories are important to the overall learning process. Teachers act as

facilitators and mediators for learning (Waterman, 2006:9). Mesibov, Flynn, Vermette and Smith (2004:114) describe constructivism as Bloom's taxonomy upside down. If the teacher challenges a learner to evaluate material, the learner will be able to synthesize, analyse, apply and comprehend information (Mesibov, et al. 2004:114). Westwood (2009:9) argues that many learners unfortunately do not meet these requirements to take ownership of their own learning and consequently become frustrated in unstructured learning activities. Therefore learners need guidance from a teacher. The constructivist teacher strive to encourage critical thinking skills (Gayle, Preiss, Burrel & Allen, 2006:35) and therefore a more detailed description of critical thinking will be discussed next.

1.4.2 Research method

In this study a quantitative survey research was conducted. Quantitative survey research involves acquiring information; the researcher selects a sample of respondents from a population and administers a questionnaire to them (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:183). According to Gorson (2006), survey research is the method of gathering data from respondents thought to be representative of some population, using an instrument composed of closed structured or open-ended items (questions). The survey can be a written document that is completed by the person being surveyed, an online questionnaire, a face-to-face interview, or a telephone interview. It is possible to collect data from large or small populations through survey research. For the purpose of this study a self-structured questionnaire was used.

1.4.3 Literature study

A literature survey consisting of books, reports from appointed commissions of the Department of Education, journals, articles, newspapers and educational conference papers, was conducted. Search engines, e.g. Ebsco host,

SApublications, Sabinet, Astor and Google book search were used to collect data.

The following concepts were central to the study and the following key words were used during the literature study:

Teaching method: A teaching method is a strategy, that teachers use for teaching-learning activities with a purpose to achieve desired outcomes (Tomlinson, Kaplan, Renzulli, Purcell, Leppien & Burns, 2001:53).

Critical thinking: Critical thinking is the ability to think creatively, make decisions, solve problems, visualize, observe, reason, and is characterized by originality and uniqueness (Davis-Seaver & Davis, 2000:9).

ESL Learners: English second language learners. ESL learners refer to learners who are learning in their second language, namely English.

Mother-tongue: The language that the learner is born with and speaks at home (Kgwadi, 2008).

LOLT: Language of learning and teaching.

BICS: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (Aukerman, 2007:626).

CALP: Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (Aukerman, 2007:626).

Bilingualism: Bilingualism is the speaking of two languages with ease (Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg, 1999:135).

Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive objectives: This taxonomy guides teachers on the development of learning objectives at each taxonomic level (six levels) to evaluate learner achievement (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1999:34).

1.4.4 Population and sample

A list of primary schools was obtained from district D11 of the Department of Education. The study population was primary school language teachers in Gauteng teaching at schools where the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) is English. Due to logistics a sample was drawn. Since the researcher lives and works in the Johannesburg South District (D11) logistics made it easier to draw the sample from this district. A convenient purposive sample was used. In purposive sampling, people or other units are chosen for a particular purpose (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:206). There are 30 Primary Schools teaching through the medium of English in the Johannesburg South District. Ex Model C schools as well as township schools have been included in this sample. From data gathered from the District Office's Language facilitator there are at least five language teachers (including foundation phase teachers) per school therefore the sample consisted of 150 teachers (n=150).

1.4.5 Measuring instruments

Self-structured questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers. The questionnaires included both closed-ended questions as well as open-ended questions. The new dictionary of social work (in Delport, 2005:166) defines a questionnaire as "*a set of questions on a form which is completed by the respondent in respect of a research project*". The basic objective of a questionnaire is to obtain facts and opinions about a phenomenon from people who are informed on the particular issue (Delport, 2005:166). Open questions give the respondent the opportunity of writing any answer in the open space (Delport, 2005:174). According to Neuman (as quoted by Delport, 2005:174)

open questions are best to use if the researcher wants to learn how the respondent thinks, to discover what is really important to him/her or to get an answer to a question with many possible answers. Closed questions offer the respondent the opportunity of selecting one or more response choices from a number provided. The closed questionnaire is advantageous when a substantial amount of information about a subject exists and the response options are relatively well known (Delport, 2005:174). Reliability means dependability or credibility. A questionnaire is reliable to the extent that it measures consistently, from one time to another and from one situation to another (Fink, 2002:4).

A pilot study was done to evaluate the appropriateness and completeness of the questionnaire. 10 Questionnaires were distributed to language teachers teaching ESL learners at schools in the same district. Their recommendations were taken into consideration and the questionnaire was amended where necessary.

1.4.6 Data analysis

A descriptive data analysis of the questionnaires was conducted with the help of the statistical services of the North-West University, Vaal Triangle Campus using the Excel programme to obtain single group data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:252,253). Descriptive statistics describe a body of data determining points of central tendency, amount of variability and the extent to which different variables are related to one another (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005: 257). Frequencies, means and percentages were calculated from which conclusions were drawn.

Open-coding were used to analyse the open-ended questions. The data are divided into segments and then analysed for commonalities that reflect categories or themes. Open-coding is a process of reducing the data to a small set of themes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:141).

1.4.7 Ethical aspects

Participants in a research project must clearly understand the nature of the study and must be willing to participate (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:144). Informed consent was obtained from teachers who agreed to participate in the completion of the questionnaire, as well as the principals of all schools and the district manager. The participants' remarks were at all times kept strictly confidential (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:102) and were reported in an anonymous manner (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:185). The researcher made an application for a request to conduct research in institutions and/or offices of the Gauteng Department of Education, in order to get permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to proceed with the survey research within the target area and permission were granted to proceed. Participants were asked to sign an informed consent form. The informed consent form is included as Annexure B.

An application to the ethical committee of the North-West University was also submitted.

1.5 CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter 1: Overview/ Introduction, research problem and methodology

Chapter 2: The development of critical thinking during ESL learning

Chapter 3: Teaching methods for developing critical thinking in ESL teaching

Chapter 4: Research design

Chapter 5: Data analysis and interpretation

Chapter 6: Findings, conclusion and recommendations

CHAPTER 2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING DURING ESL LEARNING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

“*Language is a fundamental instrument in educational development*” (Webb, 2002:175). In South Africa a number of learners are taught in a language other than their mother tongue. The fact that they are not educated in their mother tongue causes barriers to learning and this has an effect on their critical thinking skills (Theron & Nel, 2005:221). This chapter addresses the central issues concerning critical thinking in language learning and development for ESL learners. The focus will also be on Bloom’s Taxonomy of cognitive objectives. Teachers find this to be a helpful tool to assess and develop higher-order thinking skills such as critical thinking skills.

2.2 A DEFINITION OF LANGUAGE

In order to comprehend what the crucial issues around learning in a language are, and the link with critical thinking, it is essential to provide a fundamental description of language as such.

Harley (2001:48) states that language is not easy to define. However, Baltaxe (1999:473) define language as “*a conventional system of arbitrary symbols used as a code for representing messages*”. Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1999:133) describe language as a “*body of words*” that needs to be united so that humans can express themselves verbally to communicate. Language has two purposes which are: transfer (i.e. communicate) and receiving (i.e. understanding) (Baltaxe, 1999:473). Learning a new language is a challenge (Corson, 2001: 138). Consequently, difficulties arise for ESL (English Second Language) learners when they attempt to learn a new language and at the same

time trying to learn new concepts and skills through the medium of this new language (Gibbons, 2006:3).

Since South Africa has such a range of home languages, many of which are not chosen as LOLT (Language of Learning and Teaching), many learners learn in a language other than their mother tongue (Kgwadi, 2008). This results in learners experiencing many barriers to learning. Currently the South African language in education policy attempts to promote multilingualism and additive bilingualism, but does not attempt to curb the above mentioned scenario (Kgwadi, 2008).

2.3 SOUTH AFRICA'S LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION POLICY

South Africa's language in education policy states that learners have to take two languages at school, one at Home language level and another at first additional level (DoE, 2002:17b). The policy gives the schools governing bodies (SGB's) the choice and responsibility of selecting the languages of language and teaching and the additional languages (DoE, 2002:17b). Learners are supposed to become competent in their additional language and maintain and develop their home language (DoE, 2002:17b). Kgwadi (2008) states that the governing bodies of most black schools choose English as LOLT for the reason that they believe English is a better option for further education and career development in future.

Many South African learners currently do not learn in their mother tongue (Theron & Nel, 2005:221). Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1999:135) state that a learner who does not learn in his home language has a disadvantage. The language in education policy promotes additive multilingualism, where learners are encouraged to learn in their mother tongue and additionally learn other languages (Webb, 2002:181). However, this does not realise in the practice. Olivier (2006) confirms that the government's commitment to multilingualism and the promotion of language rights is not revealed in the education sector since there are still insufficient language policies

in schools. The government doesn't ensure the right of learners – especially Foundation Phase learners – to learn in their mother tongue (Fleisch, 2008:113).

Another scenario exists: the transition from the Foundation phase to intermediate phase is difficult. In many schools Foundation phase learners are allowed to be taught in their mother-tongue, but when they move on to intermediate phase they have to start learning in English. Since many intermediate teachers feel that the learners' English proficiency is very poor they need to make use of code-switching or translate work before teaching can commence (Kgwadi, 2008).

2.4 LEARNING IN THE MOTHER TONGUE

As mentioned before, governing bodies have to make the choice regarding the school's language policy (DoE, 2002:17b). Kgwadi (2008) states that: "*There is a strong belief in most parents in the black community, that if their children start school and learn in English, they will be better people in trade and in the technical world thus the governing bodies of most black schools choose English as LOLT of the school*".

Disadvantages of not learning in the mother tongue are seen to be numerous compared to the advantages (Obanya, 2004:10). In most cases the teacher and the learner both don't have an appropriate level of mastery of the LOLT. Consequently, both teachers and learners have trouble communicating with each other (Obanya, 2004:15). As a result linguistic barriers are many times mistaken for academic barriers.

Henrard (2000:259) claims that education should start with the mother tongue and then later a second language can be used as LOLT. When the mother tongue is taken away too early from the learning environment, the learners' cognitive development in the mother tongue is not developed to the point where thinking and conceptualizing take place (Henrard, 2000:259). These second

language learners then have limited language understanding that “masks” the level of their thinking aptitude (Baker & Sienkewicz, 2000:77; Gibbons, 2006:3).

According to Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1999:139) and Obanya (2004:11), advantages of learning in the mother tongue are:

- meaningful / deep learning (understanding at higher cognitive levels) are more likely to take place;
- learners will be able to reproduce work in their own way and in their own vocabulary;
- knowledge gained is usually more long-term or permanent;
- learners will find it easier to be creative and participate in discussions; and
- transition from home to school is easier because parents, learners and teachers are communicating through the same language.

Kgwadi (2008) declares that adequate education in the learners’ mother tongue will make learning easier rather than learning in a second language.

2.5 THE LANGUAGE SCENARIO IN SOUTHERN AFRICA SCHOOLS

Before 1994, the majority of learners in South Africa were forced to learn through a language other than their mother tongue (Donald, *et al.* 2004:219). This kind of learning is called subtractive bilingualism: it is bilingualism in that it involves learning through a second language, but subtractive in the sense that it replaces their first language with their second language (Donald, *et al.* 2004:219).

This is evident in the current low literacy rates and poor grade 12 results (Kgwadi, 2008). The current National Curriculum Statement provides that all eleven official languages can be taken on a 'home language' level, 'first additional language' or 'second additional language' (Olivier, 2006). These eleven official languages include: Sepedi, Sesotho, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans,

English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu (Mesthrie, 2002:23). However, Kamwangamalu (2005:251) states that with regard to the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) parents often make the choice for their children to rather study in English than in their own mother tongue.

Granville, Janks, Joseph, Mphahlele, Ramai, Reed and Watson (1998: 257-258) as well as Olivier (2006) and (Fleisch, 2008:112) provide possible reasons why parents would want their children to study in English:

- English is known as an international language and has achieved global power;
- the job market prefers that employees have a good English proficiency;
- English is seen as a language that is necessary for future studies and education, and parents want their children to pursue their studies through the medium of English because currently studies can not be completed at secondary and tertiary level in African languages;
- schools where African languages are used as medium of instruction might not have the same resources such as, textbooks and expertise; and
- schools might not have the infrastructure and not enough teachers to accommodate more languages in schools (Olivier, 2006). Adler (2001:27) asserts that the economic and human resources needed for the development of all the official languages of South Africa as LOLT (Language of learning and teaching) are very difficult and will take time.

Since language proficiency and cognitive development are closely linked (Fleisch, 2008:104) it is essential that learners have a good proficiency in their LOLT, which is not always the case, as discussed above.

2.6 LINK BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Donald *et al.* (2004:219) affirm that language and thinking as a result of learning are all directly connected. There is a great deal of evidence that if learners' processes of formal learning are immediately cut off from their mother tongue, it

can negatively affect cognitive development in general, as well as their scholastic performance. Therefore, teachers need to guide learners and support them, starting with basic language skills, gradually build the basics of language and then move towards more challenging content (Carder, 2007:53). Greathouse (2007:14) explains that every aspect of a language is important to develop effective communication and to achieve optimal learning potential in speaking, writing and reading.

Banda (in Brock-Utne, Desai and Qorro, 2006:245), state that if communication in the classroom is not effective due to language barriers, as is the case with many ESL learners, it might have an effect on some learners' cognitive development and their success during their schooling years.

2.7 WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING?

According to Halvorsen (2005) critical thinking is a difficult concept to describe. However, the following descriptions of what critical thinking entails have been provided. Davis-Seaver and Davis (2000:9) state that critical thinking is the ability to think creatively, make decisions, solve problems, visualise, observe, reason and is characterised by originality and uniqueness. According to Davis-Seaver and Davis (2000:9) it is the learners' cognitive ability to carry out certain tasks successfully. Hughes and Lavery (2004:24) affirm that there are three forms of critical thinking skills: interpretive skills, verification skills and reasoning skills. Interpretive skills are to formulate an observation (Hughes & Lavery, 2004:244). Verification skills are to substantiate the accuracy of truth (Hughes & Lavery, 2004:121) and reasoning skills are to solve problems and make decisions (Hughes & Lavery, 2004:17). Feldman (2002:7) explains that critical thinking skills are practiced when reasoning skills are used to carefully think about our choices we make, similar to Davis-Seaver and Davis (2000:9) who calls it "purposeful thinking". If learners in a language class are able to ask questions and build connections among ideas they are thinking critically (Lipman, 2003:73).

Machan (2004:49) state that the term “out-of the-box” or creative thinking has become a metaphor of critical thinking. Buhrow and Garcia (2006:4) mention a “*critical pedagogy*” as a way of increasing a culture of thinking: this is when learners have the ability to support their learning on critical thinking and questioning. Critical thinking skills are very important for learners to have; they will be faced with recurrent choices and need critical thinking skills to guide them when making these decisions now and even more in their future (Feldman, 2002:3). According to Davis-Seaver and Davis (2000:1) critical thinking is the heart of the teaching and learning process The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) Language Learning Area has a Learning Outcome (Learning Outcome 5) that encourages thinking and reasoning in language. However, to be able to do this language proficiency is essential.

2.8 DEVELOPING PROFICIENCY IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN ORDER TO DEVELOP CRITICAL THINKING

The Languages learning area is described as the “*gateway learning area as it makes it possible for learners to learn all their other subjects or learning areas*” (DoE, 2002:24c). Therefore, teachers constantly need to develop, accentuate and strengthen the language tools to ascertain the development of critical thinking in all learning areas (DoE, 2002:24c).

Language skills that are needed to be successful in the classroom are: listening, speaking, reading and writing (Barrentine & Stokes, 2005:256) as well as grammatical structures, vocabulary and pronunciation (Hinkel, 2004:17).

Glasgow and Hicks (2003:113) stress the importance of teachers providing the opportunities for interesting activities to promote problem-solving and critical thinking skills. Luongo-Orlando (2001:123) and Yearwood (2008:62) suggest that the following teaching techniques are important in developing ESL learners’ language proficiency:

- Explain new vocabulary visually and concretely;
- use graphic organisers;
- use cooperative learning;
- seat the learner close to you and in front of the class;
- give additional time to ESL learners to complete activities;
- teachers must read aloud to learners daily;
- listen when the learner tries to communicate with you, give them a chance to speak before correcting grammar and speech. Focus on what they are trying to say and not how they say it;
- develop listening skills and improve listening comprehension;
- improve oral language and presentation skills;
- develop reading and reading comprehension skills;
- broaden vocabulary;
- improve writing skills;
- stimulate imagination to encourage creative thinking skills and lastly; and
- build the learners confidence.

Law and Eckes (2000:284) assert that an integrated approach should be used. This approach links reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in the process of learning and does not teach them as separate skills. Reading, writing, speaking and listening are all modes of thinking and are deeply interconnected (Paul & Elder, 2002:22).

According to Haynes (2007) learners can gain a basic understanding of academic material by accessing three kinds of knowledge: universal pragmatic knowledge (basic-level concepts, image schemas); language proficiency (including the features of academic English, reading and listening comprehension); and background knowledge (knowledge of a specific content area as well as scripts for school). In both pragmatic and background knowledge language proficiency is essential. Hirsch (2007:11) also asserts the importance of knowledge and the connection between critical thinking skills. Learners won't

benefit from simply knowing facts; learners need to apply their information critically (Hirsch, 2007:11).

Augmenting vocabulary is essential for English Second Language (ESL) learners to help them communicate and understand their learning environment. Teachers often make the mistake to only have ESL learners memorise words for tests and not teach the meaning of these words (Buhrow & Garcia, 2006:128).

Learners' vocabulary develops in a particular order, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing. A learner will first listen to a new word before using it in a speech and they will also read a new word before using it in writing (Greathouse, 2007:14). Therefore, the development of the learners' listening, writing and speaking skills will be focused on next.

2.8.1 Listening skills in (English Second Language) ESL learning

Jesness (2004:45) declares that of the four skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking skills that are included in the learning outcomes of the Language learning area, listening skills are seen as the most important skill, since it involves a great deal of mental activities. Even in the early stages of language learning, a learner can understand what is said before they can speak that language (Jesness, 2004:45).

Venkatesan (2004:134) explains listening as a process that involves both mental and physiological processes: we actively pay attention to the sounds we hear, we interpret the sounds, remember them and then evaluate the meaning and finally respond to what we have heard. Pinkley (1999:11) and Rozakis (2002:52) confirm the importance of listening skills and state that to have the ability to listen well is an invaluable aspect of language development. Verbal and listening skills should be the focus in developing learners' communication skills (Gordon, 1999:145).

Rozakis (2002:52) identified three types of listening skills that must be taught:

- Informational listening. This is when the learner gathers information, distinguishes between the different pieces of information and then organises the information that they have heard;
- Evaluative listening. The learners are constantly busy with evaluation and assessing what they hear. This type of listening is a central focus for this study, since it involves critical thinking skills.
- Empathic listening or also known as active listening. This is when a learner gives support through listening to others. Empathetic listening is also used to solve problems.

It is, therefore, obvious that listening is crucial for the development of critical thinking. According to Rolton (2006:4) critical listening skills include the following:

- Learners must be able to listen, interpret and analyse what they have heard verbally;
- understand and make meaning of what they have heard; and
- evaluate what they have heard.

2.8.2 Reading and the ESL learner

Lapp, Flood and Farnan (2004:128), state that reading is obtained through practice and most ESL learners need a lot of practice to achieve proficiency in reading, but it is important that the teacher focuses on specific skills and knowledge when teaching ESL learners to read.

The art of reading is a complicated skill since there are a lot of components or parts that make up reading, such as recognition of words, prediction and confirmation of words (Law & Eckes, 2000:112). Major barriers to reading for ESL learners are vocabulary, structures and patterns of the English language

(Booth, 1998:86). Especially with ESL learners' limited English proficiency is a big challenge (Fleisch, 2008:106).

High interest, low vocabulary books were designed for ESL learners, but researchers have found that ESL learners don't want to read books that are read by learners who are younger than them or struggling, reluctant readers (Booth, 2001:66). However, Glass, Pike and Peist state (2000:112) that ESL learners will benefit to first know the alphabet and then move on to sight words before they start with reading books as a whole. It is important that the ESL learner develops full recognition of every letter during the beginning of the first grade (Honig, 2001:54). Learners also need to learn sight words to develop automaticity and fluent reading (Westwood, 2005:13).

When critical reading takes place learners will be able to analyse, evaluate, synthesize and see relationship of ideas (Tanguay, 2002: 221). Westby (2002:98) explain that linguistic diversity makes it more difficult for ESL learners to acquire skills that are needed for critical reading: limited higher level vocabulary and syntactic language are barriers that ESL learners experience.

Limited English reading material is available to some learners, especially in the rural areas, which worsens the problem of improving these learners' English language proficiency even further (Fleisch, 2008:111).

2.8.3 Oral communication in ESL learning

Pronunciation, an aspect of speaking, is to be able to distinguish word endings and intonation (Pinkley, 1999:11) and plays a big role in communication. The wrong pronunciation could "skew" the meaning of what the learner intended to say (Law & Eckes, 2000:199). Some ESL learners are embarrassed if they don't know how to enunciate words or if they pronounce it wrong. ESL learners tend to become passive and silent to avoid speaking (Fleisch, 2008:108).

Whitfield (2001:25) states that many ESL classes should focus more on the development of oral communication skills such as responding and asking questions. Birch (2007:11) makes it clear that ESL learners won't always be able to recognise and produce all words accurately in speech. Therefore, they should feel free to speak in a comfortable classroom environment without being scared to make mistakes (Rooyackers, 2002:2).

Rolton (2006:4) asserts that ESL learners will need to apply their speaking skills critically in:

- communicating formally and informally by sharing their ideas;
- expressing their feelings; and
- acquiring information, when listening to other speakers.

2.8.4 Writing, Vocabulary and Grammar in ESL learning

2.8.4.1. Writing

Writing is one of the most important skills that an ESL learner must acquire in today's life. With little grammar and limited vocabulary it is difficult for an ESL learner to build their writing skills on weak groundwork (Narayanaswamy, 2004:7).

Writing is like building blocks: a process which starts with the building of words, then sentences and lastly the writing of paragraphs (Connelly, 2005:11). Since ESL learners struggle with arranging their thoughts, before they write, teachers need to guide their learners to help them with this (Hinkel, 2004:59). Harklau, Losey and Siegal (1999:109) confirm that ESL learners fail to get their thoughts across when they have to put it down on paper and declare that one of the main reasons could be a lack of vocabulary. Law and Eckes (2000:157) assert that ESL learners, learning how to write, face two obstacles: i) the decision on what to write and to choose a topic; and ii) how to write what they want to say or how to

put their ideas down on paper. Law and Eckes (2000:157) also provide the following guidelines to support ESL learners with these problems:

- Give enough time for the learner to express his thoughts in writing;
- the learner must be comfortable in his environment and not be afraid of making mistakes; and
- feedback, support and guidance from the teacher after an assignment or activity is essential.

According to Kabilan (2000) learners can only become competent language users if they, besides using the language and knowing the meaning, could display creative and critical thinking through the language. Pre-writing skills are those skills that the learner needs before he starts with the actual writing process. It develops muscular strength and co-ordination to hold and control the writing implement and is the beginning of critical thinking (Connely, 2005:12; White, 2005:55). Writing is an active form of critical thinking and demands that the learners make sense of what they think they know and is a reflection of their ideas (Moon, 2007:29).

2.8.4.2 Vocabulary

Vocabulary links speaking, reading and writing together, without vocabulary in a language, none of the above mentioned is possible (Pinkley, 1999:47). Jesness (2004:2) state that learning a lot of new words are like drinking from a fire hose. ESL learners especially; need to learn lots of new words before they will be able to communicate fluently.

Knight and Swanwick (1999:151) uses the word “*label*” to explain the process of thinking of words (vocabulary) to spark ideas and concepts for the critical thinking process to use during speaking, reading and writing.

2.8.4.3 Grammar

Language structure is described by Baltaxe (1999: 437) as a system of rules. Understanding sentence structure and language rules are important aspects of language learning (Pinkley, 1999:53). Proper understanding of sentence structure and language rules will enable the learner to form and analyze new sentences (Chomsky & Otero, 2002:361). Pasch and Norsworthy (2001:13) suggest that critical thinking should complement aspects of the curriculum i.e. in the language classroom the teacher needs to look beyond the mere memorisation of grammar rules and use different teaching approaches to teach grammatical structures.

2.9 BARRIERS ESL LEARNERS EXPERIENCE IN DEVELOPING PROFICIENT LANGUAGE AND CONSEQUENT GOOD CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

The language that learners use in the classroom must be well developed to cope and process the cognitive challenges of learning (Baker, 2006:170). In the case of ESL learners, with a limited English proficiency, the quantity and quality of their work is many times poor and inadequate. Consequently, their cognitive functions and academic performances are negatively effected (Baker, 2006: 170).

When developing ESL learners' language proficiency and thinking skills teachers should evade the following (Yearwood, 2008:57):

- rote memorization of language facts and grammar;
- memorisation of vocabulary lists and verb combinations;
- speaking too fast or too slow; and
- not making use of full sentences, since this is the only way to build new vocabulary as well as modeling the correct way of communication to them.

Aukerman (2007:626) states that it is important for teachers to know the difference between BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) in order to assess their learners' language proficiency levels and to provide them with the necessary support and education.

BICS is the language of social interaction and CALP refers to formal academic learning (Aukerman, 2007:626). BICS will usually be acquired in informal settings, e.g. in the playground, on the bus, or with friends. These skills usually develop between the ages of six months and two years (Haynes, 2007; Aukerman, 2007:626). BICS includes mastery of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar and is used in daily activities to communicate. It is also the language of social interaction and includes analysis, synthesis and evaluation, which are needed to think critically (Ledbetter & Seo, 2008). Coelho, Rivers and Cupples (2004:256) state that some learners cope well with BICS and then teachers think that they function well in the classroom. Consequently, learners don't get the necessary support they need for academic purposes. CALP is needed for success in the classroom, for academic purposes (Donald, *et al.* 2004:219). It is, therefore, essential for more complex language development which involves more higher-order thinking skills. For this the learner needs to process more information (Coelho, *et al.* 2004:257). Learners who are unsuccessful in acquiring CALP in their first language will find it hard to achieve CALP in their second language and this will have a negative impact on their academic success (Aukerman, 2007: 626).

2.10 BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

As already mentioned language and cognitive development is closely connected (Hyerle, Alper Curtis, 2004:110). Bloom's Taxonomy focuses on the development of cognitive skills. Language development together with cognitive skills start at the bottom of Blooms Taxonomy (knowledge level) and aim to end at the last,

highest level (evaluation level). Davis, Sumara and Luce-Kapler (2002:128) state that when babies start to learn a new language the first stage is babble sounds, then words, sentences and over time develops the more abstract skills of a language i.e. critical thinking skills. This is similar to Bloom's Taxonomy that begins from the concrete levels of thinking and moves on to more abstract levels of thinking.

Bloom's Taxonomy is set in a hierarchical taxonomy of learning with different domains. The level of Bloom's Taxonomy progresses on the accomplishment of the previous level of learning that took place (Wyatt & White, 2007:61). There are three major parts in the taxonomy, the cognitive (focus on thoughts), affective (emotions) and the psychomotor domains (physicality) (Moseley, Baumfield, Elliot, Higgins, Miller, Newton & Gregston, 2005:52).

Teachers find Bloom's taxonomy a useful and powerful tool to evaluate and assess their learners' cognitive thinking skills and plan their lessons (Walsh & Sattes, 2004:31). Bloom's taxonomy is usually applied without difficulty to all levels of schooling and suitable to use with the entire class (Tarlinton, 2003). However, teachers also need to remember that a tool is ineffective if it's not used properly and not understood (Zepeda, 2003:134).

2.10.1 Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive objectives

Bloom's Cognitive taxonomy was developed by Benjamin Bloom, an educator (Conklin, 2007:81), and a panel of educational psychologists in 1956 (Osborn & Davies, 2003:72). Blooms Taxonomy is divided in three domains and they are the cognitive-, affective and psychomotor domain. For the purpose of this study the focus is on the cognitive domain (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1999:34). "*Objectives of the cognitive domain are related to the mind, to the results of attending, perceiving, remembering, associating, discriminating, analysing, synthesizing, evaluation that are all forms of intellectual activity*" (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1999: 34). Six levels are identified in Bloom's

taxonomy of cognitive objectives. (Greathouse, 2007:6). The knowledge level represents the lowest level followed hierarchically by comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation at the highest level (Bereiter, 2002:94). Learning ranges from relatively simple understanding to complex evaluative understanding (Afflerbach, 2007:53). The taxonomy classifies thinking skills from the concrete to the abstract (Wyatt & White, 2007:61). The first three stages are concrete thinking and the last two levels are abstract thinking (Wyatt & White, 2007:61). Haynes (2007) asserts that teachers need to be careful, though, not to start the taxonomy on the knowledge level and work up progressing to the evaluation level every time. Tasks like analysis, synthesis and evaluation on the taxonomy are difficult for English Second Language learners. This could be because of their limited English vocabulary and their battle to express their responses in English (Haynes, 2007). These learners' limited English proficiency and limited English vocabulary then causes difficulties in the expression of critical thinking skills in the classroom.

2.10.1.1 Knowledge Level

This is the first and lowest level of the cognitive domain and only requires the learner to recall simple facts, recognise material and repeat what they have heard (Wyatt & White, 2007:61). Acquiring knowledge involves memory and repetition (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1999:34). Armstrong (2000:117) defines it as rote-memory skills where the learner only knows facts and terminology. On this level the learner remembers previously learned material and should be able to locate it later (Parker, 2006:7). Stripling (1999:41) gives the following example to explain knowledge: a child learning the alphabet is able to recite the alphabet, but does not have any understanding of the letters. Edmonson, Harris, Anderson, Jinksin, Platt and Rosada (2003:45) as well as Davis (2006:106), confirm that the knowledge level is similar to a closed question; it has only one right answer to the question. It is also very common that questions such as: when, where, who and what are used during this level (Davis,

2006:106). However, learners should have content to think about (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1999:34).

2.10.1.2 Comprehension Level

This is the first level of understanding that takes place (Wyatt & White, 2007:62). It will involve translation, paraphrasing, explanation of word meanings, interpretation, new ideas and comparing (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1999:34). The verbs that teachers use to test comprehension will most probably be some of the following: define, illustrate, restate, describe and summarize. The learner must be able to put the knowledge that they have gained into their own words to show that understanding or comprehension took place (Colburn, 2003:4; Edmonson, *et al.* 2003:45). This level tests the basic understanding that the learner has of concepts and the curriculum (Parker, 2006:7).

2.10.1.3 Application level

The application level is when the learner starts to take the material he has learned up to now, known as prior knowledge, and put it to use. Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1999:34) describe knowledge as ineffective unless it is applied to solve problems. Abstract thinking starts on this level and learners are first asked to identify and solve problems (Wyatt & White, 2007:6). In other words the learner is able to apply knowledge of the past, today. The teacher will use some of the following words to test knowledge: use, adapt, gather, modify, graph, show and solve (Parker, 2006:7). Colburn (2003:4) states that application means that the learner understands something well enough to apply it to a new situation and to apply it effectively. Colburn (2003:4) goes on by explaining that the learner will use problem-solving skills more and more on this level. Armstrong (2000:117) asserts that application means to have the ability to transfer knowledge from one setting to another and to use it in new and innovative ways (Erickson & Paterson, 2005:10). Learners think ahead what

could happen and start to make predictions (Colburn, 2003:4). Gregory and Chapman (2006:121) confirm that it also can test knowledge and comprehension.

2.10.1.4 Analysis level

At the analysis level higher-order thinking skills start (Stripling, 1999:41). According to Gregory and Chapman (2006:121) as well as Armstrong (2000:117) at this level the learner breaks information down into specific smaller parts to understand the whole. Edmonson *et al.* (2003:46) confirm that analytical thinking is about taking something apart, looking at the different pieces and then making a response.

2.10.1.5 Synthesis

On this level the learner starts putting information together to get to new solutions to problems in a new and creative way (Colburn, 2003:4; Edmonson *et al.* 2003:46). Synthesis involves combining elements to create new and different ideas (Gregory & Chapman, 2006:121). Armstrong (2000:117) uses the word "weave" to explain the different parts getting together to form a whole. Sousa (2002:75) indicates that synthesis is the level most closely associated with creative thinking and this is when learners are original, confident and flexible in their thinking and ideas. Parker (2006:8) declares that on this level learners jumble facts around until they make sense of them.

2.10.1.6 Evaluation

Gregory and Chapman (2006:121) as well as Armstrong (2000: 117) state that when a learner is able to function at the last level of the taxonomy, namely evaluation, they will be able to rank/rate the value of information by judging it against a set of criteria. Evaluation refers to forming your own opinions (Gregory

& Chapman, 2006:120). Edmonson *et al.* (2003:46) assert that this usually involves questions that evaluate what you are thinking. This is the highest level of thinking (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1999:34). ESL learners should be taught how to evaluate their own work with the guidance of the teacher (Gallagher, 2008:125). Tests could be adapted to suit the needs of the ESL learner i.e. the teacher could read the instructions to the learners and allow them more time to complete the test (Gallagher, 2008:125). According to Nation (2008:123,125) learners need to get a chance to evaluate their own work. They need to be encouraged to get into a habit of checking their work before they give it to the teacher to assess.

2.11 BLOOM'S REVISED TAXONOMY

Lorin Anderson was a former student of Benjamin Bloom and revised his original one-dimensional taxonomy with the help of a group of cognitive psychologists to a two-dimensional framework (Materna, 2007:134).

The lowest level of the original Bloom's Taxonomy has been renamed in Bloom's Revised Taxonomy and is currently called memory instead of knowledge. The order of the two highest cognitive levels have been reversed from synthesis (level 5) and evaluation (level 6) to evaluation (level 5) and create (synthesis-level 6) (Holt & Kysilka, 2006:63).

Knowledge has four major dimensions: factual knowledge, conceptual knowledge, procedural knowledge and metacognitive knowledge (Holt & Kysilka, 2006:64) which lead to active thinking (Materna, 2007:134).

According to Holt and Kysilka, (2006:66) as well as Solomon and Schrum, (2007:36) Blooms revised taxonomy includes the following levels:

Remember: To retrieve relevant information from long-term memory. The learner must retrieve and recall information or knowledge.

Understand: Constructing meaning from oral, written and graphic messages through comparing and explaining.

Apply: At this level the learner must use information. Execute and implement.

Analyse: Breaking material into constituent parts and then organizing these parts together to make sense.

Evaluate: At this level the learner makes judgments based on external as well as internal criteria.

Create: Putting information together to form new ideas and patterns.

Holt and Kysilka (2005:66) declare that since teachers mostly plan their instruction according to the lower order levels that acquires the learners to only remember and understand (comprehension), Bloom's Revised Taxonomy helps them to make sure that they include all the levels of thinking in their lesson plans (Holt & Kysilka, 2005:66).

Bloom's taxonomy is an important resource for language teachers (Osborn & Davies, 2003:72). Walsh and Sattes (2005:31) indicate that teachers reported Bloom's Taxonomy as a great instrument to help ESL learners to formulate their own questions. It has been used successfully in English language classrooms for more than 40 years (Conklin & Parker, 2007: 76).

2.12 CONCLUSION

South Africa is a multilingual country. There are 11 official languages that are recognised as languages of learning and teaching for education purposes. South Africa's curriculum implies that the mother tongue should receive priority as the language of learning and teaching. However, many learners in South Africa do not learn in their mother tongue, but are taught through English as the LOLT. These learners are known as ESL learners. This chapter provides an overview of the development of proficiency in the English language for ESL learners in order to develop critical thinking. Teachers need to assess the level of development of

critical thinking skills and it has been found that Bloom's taxonomy is a useful and "powerful tool" to evaluate their learners' cognitive thinking (Walsh & Sattes, 2004:31).

In the next chapter the focus will be on teaching methods that promotes critical thinking skills in ESL teaching. Different methods will be discussed that teachers could implement during their daily planning.

CHAPTER 3

TEACHING METHODS FOR DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING IN ESL TEACHING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on teaching methods used by educators to promote critical thinking skills in the English Second Language (ESL) classroom for English Second Language (ESL) Learners.

“The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think- rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory with thoughts of other men.” Bill Beattie (2008.)

3.2 TEACHING METHODS

3.2.1 Description

A teaching method is a strategy, that teachers use for teaching-learning activities with a purpose to achieve a desired outcome (Tomlinson, Kaplan, Renzulli, Purcell, Leppien & Burns, 2001:53). Feez (in Johns, 2002:67), refers to a teaching method as a management style that is used to ensure that all learners have the same opportunities to learn. Teachers must, therefore, provide instruction in such a way that every individual learner's needs are met (Heacox, 2001:86). Teachers should match the teaching method with the learning objectives to be able to give accurate support and assistance to ensure learners' achievement (Tomlinson *et al.* 2001:53). Consequently, a variety of teaching methods must be used (Tomlinson *et al.* 2001:53). Feez (in Johns, 2002:67), however, suggests that it is the teachers' choice to select the teaching methods they want to.

According to McEwan (2006:65) direct and indirect instruction are two main categories for classifying teaching methods. However, there are many more methods that need to be mentioned.

3.2.2 Direct Instruction

Tomlinson *et al.* (2001:55) provide the following definition of direct instruction: “*Direct instruction is a method of teaching that consists of a teacher’s systematic explanation of a new concept followed by guided practice under the teachers’ supervision.*” This method is also known as a teacher-centered method (Queen, 2002:106) or sometimes referred to as active teaching (Shalaway & Beech:1998:304) where the teacher delivers the academic content and also directs these activities to maintain a focus on achievement (Killen, 1998:2). Maney (1999:397) asserts that direct instruction supports traditional ways of teaching and learning. Although, learner-centered approaches to teaching have become more popular in recent years, support for direct instruction still exists. Killen (1998:2) mentions two main causes for this: this method gives teachers more control over what, when and how learners are taught; and this method has strong research support.

Though, direct instruction is still a popular method used by teachers, Killen (1998:2) declares that this method is only successful when teachers use it appropriately. For example, direct instruction should be used when learners are being introduced to new content: it may be useful to develop basic knowledge and skills in language and reading in the primary school years, before giving them a chance to reflect critically on those ideas or activities (Killen 1998:2). The teacher plays an active and important role in bringing the content of lessons to all the learners in the class through direct instruction, but should not neglect positive reinforcement, extensive modeling, immediate response and setting clear outcomes (Muijs & Reynolds, 2005: 40). Muijs and Reynolds (2005:40) as well as

Killen (2007:22) point out that if direct instruction methods are used ineffectively, i.e. the ‘chalk and talk’ lessons, there is little interaction with the learners which could have a negative result for ESL learners, since they need to learn through interaction.

According to Queen (2002:106), research supports direct instruction as a successful method in teaching ESL learners. The reason for this is that direct instruction avoids frustration and creates a “non-threatening” environment for the learner, because learners do not have to talk so much, especially in the early stages of developing a second language (Brisk & Harrington, 2000:111; Killen, 2007:104).

However, Marley (1999:397) declares that direct instruction does not help with the development of critical thinking skills, since the learners are passive recipients of information. According to Graham (2001:157) teachers should always ask the question: “Would the direct or indirect method be better in this lesson?”

3.2.3 Indirect Instruction

Indirect instruction is learner-centered and is the opposite of direct instruction. The learners learn by discovering information themselves (Brumbaugh & Rock, 2006:10) and exploring, rather than being instructed directly by the teacher (Tilestone, 2004:68). Indirect instructions are also known as indirect teaching (Orange, 2003:19) or as the cognitive approach (Graham, 2001:57). In this approach teachers and learners use open-ended questions and take part in discussions as well as hands-on exercises. Brumbaugh and Rock (2006:10) assert that the use of indirect instruction methods enhances critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

To illustrate how the direct and indirect methods differ from each other, a table compiled by Ainsworth and Fox (1989:20-22) and adapted by Graham (2001: 157) is used:

Teacher-centered methods (Direct Instruction)	Learner-centered methods (Indirect instruction)
Subject centered.	Learner-centered.
Teacher tells or speaks most of the time.	Learner discovers and explores for themselves.
Learner plays a passive role.	Learner takes responsibility for their learning therefore the learner plays an active role.
Teacher identifies errors and prescribes corrections.	The learner identifies errors and makes adjustments.
Less time-consuming in the early stages.	More time-consuming in the early stages.

Table 3.1 Comparison between direct methods and the indirect methods.

3.2.4 The discussion method

People engage in some verbal interaction, known as a discussion, with other people every day in different ways, for example: exchanging views or exploring ideas (Killen, 2007:126). This method or strategy usually occurs in two kinds of situations in the classroom. The first is between learners in groups or between the teacher and the learners (Muijs & Reynolds, 2005: 48). According to Killen (2007:128) discussion as a method of instruction can be viewed as a “bridge” between direct instruction and learner-centered instruction. Shibley (2005:52) states that this method is nothing new for most teachers since it is one of the most common teaching methods that teachers use as it is such a natural activity in a classroom which to enable teachers to talk about different issues (Killen, 2007:126).

Muijs and Reynolds (2005:48) assert that classroom discussion can accomplish three major learning goals:

- it encourages learner involvement and gives learners a chance to voice their own opinions;
- it helps learners to think things through. They must think before they talk as this develops better understanding; and
- it assists learners with communication skills. For example, Abbott & Godinho (2001:9) explains that with a sociogram the learner could record and observe thinking patterns because they write down what they think and at the end of a discussion these communication patterns could be assessed.

Mahaye and Jacobs (in Jacobs, Vakalise, and Gawe, 2004:177) suggests that knowledge can't be given to a child; they must experience it for themselves to understand what they have learnt. To achieve this, the teacher should use conversations and dialogues (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:177). This method also helps the teacher to understand learners better, since learners can discuss their own views with the teacher of how they see and make sense of the work given to them (Muijs & Reynold, 2005:48). Mahaye and Jacobs (2004:177) agrees that conversations help learners to think about the ideas they have. Sousa (2004:154) maintains that the whole class can join in a discussion to clarify confusion. Problem-solving situations encourage discussion and this is important for language development, especially for ESL learners (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004: 200). Another advantage that the discussion method has is the fact that it helps learners to formulate answers promptly and deliver it almost instantly and when learners participate they learn more (Shibley, 2005:52). A class discussion also provides the opportunity for teachers to encourage critical thinking through effective questioning and class debates (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:177).

McLaughlin and Allen (2001:8) also confirm the importance of the discussion method in reading. They emphasise that reading is a meaning making process

and that reading, writing and discussions are integrated. A discussion also helps learners to broaden their vocabulary, which is essential for ESL learners (Block & Israel, 2005: 166). However, when teachers use this method it is important that they know to draw the discussion to an end when both the teacher and the learners have said what they wanted to (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004: 179). Therefore, discussions, as with all other methods, must be planned carefully (Muijs & Reynolds, 2005:480). Mahaye and Jacobs (2004:177) explain that the advantage the discussion method has that it develops the learners' insight into subjects and assists in the progress of effective communication skills, which is important for ESL learners. Learners also use prior knowledge to communicate their thoughts and ideas (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:177).

3.2.5 Scaffolding

The theory of scaffolding was developed and introduced by Jerome Seymour Bruner, an American cognitive psychologist in the late 1950's (Dara-Abrahams, 2002:11). As in Bloorn's Taxonomy (cf. 2.10), Bruner suggests a system of coding in which people form a hierarchical arrangement of related categories. Scaffolding is also closely related to Vygotsky's idea of zone of proximal development (Davies, Gregory & McGuinn 2002:145). Bruner used this theory of Vygotsky to build his theory of scaffolding (Frances, 2005:44). This strategy, scaffolding refers to continually challenging learners with their own zones of proximal development with the support and assistance of the teacher (Colburn, 2005:63).

The word "scaffolding" is used to describe the support that is needed when building a structure. As the building is finished, the scaffolding or parts of it can be removed and the building will be "self-sustaining", but scaffolding may be continuously needed when the building is extended and fixed (Green, 1999:7). Scaffolding in teaching refers to both the teacher and the learner "*building*" together and support is only removed when the learner is ready (Colburn,

2003:63). When teaching ESL learners, scaffolding is an excellent way of support, because the teacher builds bridges between what the learners already know and what they need to know (Salkind, 2004:283). During this process of scaffolding, the teacher guides the learner and gradually increases the difficulty of tasks until the learner is able to work autonomously (Hyland, 2003:123; Dorn, French & Jones, 1998:21). Candlin and Mercer (2001:104) as well as Dorn et al. (1998:21) assert that teachers must constantly pay attention to signs that signal that their learners are ready to work more independently. Dorn et al. (1998:21) also mention that the teacher must only provide the minimum amount of support required at a specific point in time. In helping learners to develop cognitive skills it is important to gradually withdraw support as the learners gain knowledge and confidence and take responsibility for their own learning (Frances, 2005:44).

Therefore, scaffolding can only be a temporary method to help learners to reach understanding of content (Baker, 2007:157). Scaffolding also requires that teachers guide, assist and support learners by using carefully selected and understandable language when they teach and communicate with learners, especially ESL learners (Hyland, 2003:123; Hartas, 2005:16; Baker, 2007:157). The teacher should be there to fill in the necessary background information to help learners understand new concepts (Adamson & Courtney, 2005: 148). It is also a form of reciprocal teaching: this is when both the teacher and the child are involved in the learning process (Hartas, 2005:16).

There are three types of scaffolding that is in particular helpful to ESL learners (Coggins, Kravin, Coates & Carroll, 2007:30):

- Verbal scaffolding helps with higher language skills. Teachers could use techniques such as think-alouds or paraphrasing to support their learners with verbal scaffolding (Voght & Echevarria, 2007:68);
- Procedural scaffolding which includes modeling and coaching; and
- Instructional scaffolding where the teacher makes use of graphic organisers to improve comprehension skills. Instructional scaffolding

includes promoting, questioning and elaboration from the teacher to develop better understanding for the learner (Hennings, Stone & Kelly, 2008:44).

As mentioned before, scaffolding is very helpful for ESL learners in developing language skills (Barbara, Scott & Celani, 1994:77; Coggings *et al.*, 2007:30) According to Coggins *et al.* (2007:30) scaffolding adds to English language fluency and creates a starting point for more successful verbal communication skills. Haslett and Samter (1997:314) as well as Hartas (2005: 16) assert that scaffolding can enhance a child's communication, cognitive as well as linguistic skills. Glasgow and Farrell (2007:51) declare that research has shown that learners are able to master early English second language reading skills by using appropriate scaffolding. Scaffolding focuses on the development of knowledge, skills and competence, and that is why the teacher should use scaffolding instead of just simplifying a task or activity (Baker, 2007:157).

Hartas (2006) goes on by explaining scaffolding by use of the following example: during storytelling teachers ask a lot of questions and they draw links between ideas and situations to lead the child in the right direction. Roskos, Tabors and Lenhart (2004:40) add the following example: teachers repeat sentences; saying important words again; explain the meaning of some words and also using gestures to guide their learners. Scaffolding begins with modeling by the teacher followed by guided practice that will lead to independent practice and then finally to autonomous work by the learner (Douglas, Klentschy, Worth & Binder, 2006:159).

Most teachers use this method during their daily classroom routine without even realising it (Hartas, 2005:117). Hartas, (2005:16) declares that scaffolding can come in many forms and they provide the following examples to explain this:

- By asking questions in a new way to encourage thinking;
- prompting learners to try a new approach;

- giving learners a clue if they find it difficult to do a task;
- showing learners how to complete a task or to solve a problem;
- making use of graphic organisers;
- using pre-reading questioning;
- using visual aids. For example, flashcards, pictures and videos/ DVD's;
- kinesthetic (facial expressions and gestures);
- using literacy blocks which consist of two elements. The first element is a sentence scaffold or sentence starter and the second element is a word bank or pictures made of nouns, verbs or adjectives needed to complete the sentences. The learner will be able to write the rest of the sentence or they can look at the pictures and the words in the word bank help in order to write sentences or stories; and
- language frames is also a good way to help ESL learners. To differentiate and make it easier or more difficult for the specific learner, for example: I see _____. The learner needs to complete the sentence. The length of the sentence will depend on the learner and some will be able to add less or more words (Buhrow & Garcia, 2006:28).

ESL learners are expected to learn English as a language, as well as, develop critical thinking skills in English at the same time (Baker, 2007:157). Thinking skills are abstract and difficult to teach, but scaffolding allows the learner to break thinking down into more concrete components and to practice these components with the support of the teacher (Zwiers, 2004:30). Kruger and Silva (2006:55) emphasise that scaffolding and support by the teacher in second language learning are inseparable.

Frances (2005:44) stresses that teachers must be patient when using this technique because the result of successful scaffolding won't show immediately. It may only emerge over some weeks, as the learner gets opportunities to practice and use language in a variety of ways (Frances, 2005:44).

3.2.6 Questioning

A series of carefully planned step-by-step questions can be asked with the purpose to lead learners towards a solution to their questions/problems (Fisher & Frey, 2007:54). Questioning is an essential strategy that teachers use, since questions should be part of every teaching situation (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:188). Given that teachers could ask between 300 and 400 questions a day, teachers need to plan their questions carefully in order to use it effectively (Fisher & Frey, 2007:56).

Mahaye and Jacobs (2004:188) explain that teachers must formulate questions that will encourage insight and creative thinking and not just simple yes or no questions, also referred to as closed questions, which do not motivate the learners to think about the questions. Questioning allows learners to correct the teacher if necessary, for example, if the teacher makes an error of logic or fact, the learners may give their opinion. Bender, Neutons, Skorrie-Hardin and Sorochan (1997:72) affirm that the biggest challenge teachers' face is to encourage learners to ask questions to both the teacher and the other learners in their class, especially ESL learners that feel uncomfortable with the language of communication.

Petty (2003:270-275) provides a summary of six steps that teachers can follow in order to support their questioning skills or as he calls it "*Assertive Questioning*". They are:

Step 1: Pose the question that you have planned to ask. The question must motivate the learner to reason.

Step 2: Monitor the learners reasoning. The teacher is not allowed to give the answers to their learners at first, but if some of them really battle the teacher is allowed to provide them with some clues that might help them.

Step 3: Check for completion - See which of the learners need more time. Petty (2003:270) suggests that the teacher asks the learners to put their hand up if they need more time to think about the question and their answer.

Step 4: Get more than one answer to a question. Ask or nominate a learner. This will also improve their concentration if they know the teacher might ask them next.

Step 5: The class examines the correct answer. This step is optional. The class will present reasons why they believe an answer is correct or incorrect and this also gives them time to reason with the teacher. This step helps to involve learners in the learning process.

Step 6: Reinforcement and confirmation. This is the only time during which the teacher is allowed to give the correct answer to the question and explain it to the learners. Confirmation is the final step and this is when the teacher asks if there was anyone with the correct answer and praises those learners.

An excellent way to test understanding is questioning (Fisher & Frey, 2007:56). Petty (2004:189) states that research has shown that 70% to 80% of the questions that teachers ask only requires factual knowledge or recall. Petty (2004:189) suggests that teachers need to examine Bloom's Taxonomy (cf., 2.10.1) to skill them in asking different levels of questions. It is important that learners feel that they have earned the answer, especially ESL learners, to give them the necessary confidence. It is important that teachers give enough time before putting pressure on the learner to answer. ESL learners, particularly, need time to organize their thoughts before they can answer and wait time is necessary (Buhrow & Garcia, 2006:30-31). The teacher must model patience to their learners and give the learner enough time to respond to a question (McKnight & Berlage, 2007:19). Mahaye and Jacobs (2004:192) suggest a pause/ waiting time of three to five seconds after asking a question for a response. Waiting time allows and encourages the learners to think, structure and organise their thoughts (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:192).

Perrot (in Pollard, 2000:267) states that lower order questions do not encourage learners to think critically but only encourages rote learning. Therefore teachers need to ask open-ended questions to encourage critical thinking and avoid “pseudo questions” which the teacher expect only “one right answer”, since these types of closed-questions do not promote critical thinking skills (McKnight & Berlage, 2007:17).

3.2.7 Co-operative learning methods

According to Strijbos, Kirschner and Martens (2004:121) Robert Slavin’s method of peer learning, co-operative learning and collaborative learning are different descriptions of explaining instructional methods where learners actively learn together as equals in small groups in order to maximize learning for each member and to achieve a goal together. O’Donnell (2006:781) states that peer learning is an “umbrella term” that includes collaborative, as well as co-operative learning which involves structured group activities, where learners help one another. This is believed to improve learner performance and to enhance critical thinking. It is also particularly beneficial to the ESL learner since the learner engages in meaningful communication which is ideal for language development and learning (Bender *et al.*, 1997:72; Kottler & Kottler, 2001:80; Roueche, Milliron & Roueche, 2003:42).

Kottler and Kottler (2001:80) mention that this method teaches the learner to take responsibility and ownership and to participate in his or her own learning (Larsen-Freeman, 2001:168). Research (Sousa, 2004:109) has shown that learners need to engage in a great deal of oral interaction, problem solving and determining meaning if they are to achieve a high level of proficiency in the second language. Sousa (2005:109) asserts that co-operative learning is a significant method to achieve exactly this. Yearwood (2008:68) confirms that this not only helps ESL learners to develop language, but also teaches them to use age appropriate language, because they are interacting with learners of their own age. The more learners communicate in the language the more the learners’

thinking and listening skills will develop in that language (Dong, 2004:210). Therefore, it will be beneficial to ESL learners, since it allows them to learn from each other with additional support for example, a buddy system.

A buddy-system could be implemented where an ESL learner is paired with a learner that is capable in English and who assists the ESL learner when necessary (Corson, 1998:196; Lisi, Chinn & Rios, 2004:56).

Kottler and Kottler (2001:80) advise that the teacher can structure groups by combining learners that have strong academic skills with those learning in a second language. The stronger academic learners can then guide the other learners. However, Yearwood (2008:68) affirms that structure is important to make this method work. Activities should be designed to develop communication and trust amongst the learners. It is therefore also wise to keep the learners in the same group for a period of time to help them build trust in each other and to work better together (Larsen-Freeman, 2001:167). Slavin (1996:62) as well as Cohen, Brody and Sapon-Shevin (2004:80) declare that co-operative learning methods have a positive impact on learners since it builds their self-esteem and also motivates them to work with others. Dong (2004:210) asserts that even the learner who is always too shy to talk may open up in these groups. Groups can also help learners to think critically by encouraging them to respect other learners' ideas and opinions and to justify their own opinions (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:198). It does, however require a lot of time and preparation in order to execute.

3.2.8 Games

Rooyackers (2002:1) state that by making lessons fun, by using games, you will make the classroom environment more encouraging and effective for language learning. Law and Eckes (2000:204), Miller (2003:54) as well as (2000:204) Wyldeck (2007:27), assert that games help ESL learners with communication in real-life situations (for example: going to the shop to buy something). Miller

(2003:54) as well as Law and Eckes (2000:204) confirm that the use of games is a good strategy to use in order to help learners communicate, because they simply have to talk to each other when playing. It encourages co-operation and team work and improves oral skills. Games are helpful in repeating language skills which in turn helps to retain language (Brisk & Harrington, 2000:112).

There are varieties of games that teachers can play with their ESL learners; for example: word games, true and false games, card and board games as well as linking and matching games to name just a few (Gainey & Brucato, 1999:106). Games lower anxiety and this helps second-language learners to try to speak English more easily and more automatically (Hirsch & Supple, 1996:12).

Some of the games teachers can use to develop ESL learners' language are:

- Bingo games. This is played with words instead of numbers. Each learner must have a vocabulary list of words in a grid form on the table and a token. When a certain word is called out the learner must cover that word with his token if he has the word on his grid. The objective of the game is to see who gets the bingo first (Law & Eckes, 2000:204; Buhrow & Garcia, 2006:128). Varieties of these games could be used, for example: Synonym Bingo (Pinkley, 1999:49). According to Buttner (2007:150) language bingo is an excellent way to develop learners' speech and the value for language because of the repetition of sounds. Another advantage is that the learner learns new vocabulary, reviews words and gets a chance to practice the pronunciation of words.
- Fishing game. The learner must match a picture with a word. This is a good way of revising already attained vocabulary, but also to teach them new vocabulary (Law & Eckes, 2000: 204).
- Hangman and scrabble help with spelling (Law & Eckes, 2000:205). Hangman promotes memory, concentration, vocabulary, spelling and thinking skills (Wise & Forrest, 2003:73). One player thinks of a word and

writes on a piece of paper or on the board in the classroom, a line of dashes that represents the letters of the word. The other player or players must try to figure out what the word is. When there are letters that are guessed correctly, they will be written in the appropriate blank or blanks. If the player or players guessed a wrong letter, then the round head of a stick figure is drawn, hanging from the gallows. Every letter guessed incorrectly will add another body part i.e. neck, left arm and right arm to the stick figure until the stick figure hangs. If the word is guessed correctly before the stick figure hangs that team or player will score one point (Wise & Forrest, 2003: 73-74);

- Scrabble Junior is explained on the Board Game Geek website (2008) as a game designed for players aged 6-12 featuring a double-sided board. The introductory version resembles more a crossword puzzle in which all the possible words have already been spelled out and it has a picture of the word in the first square (Turkington, Harris, Talbott & Vickery, 2000:56). The aim of the game is to promote spelling. Points are received by completing words. The reverse side is an entirely blank grid, leaving players to come up with their own words, which encourages critical thinking skills. A point is earned for each letter placed. Letters are formed from cardboard tiles and do not have values.
- Tongue Twisters (Law & Eckes, 2000:206). A tongue twister contest could be held between learners, the learner who reads the tongue twister correctly and in the quickest time will go through to the next round (Booth, 2001: 35). Tongue twisters also promote pronunciation of words (Hewings, 2004:221). Another game that could be played, and that involves more critical thinking, is to ask the learner to think of words beginning with a certain letter and then to create their own tongue twisters (Fisher, 2002:35).
- Word sort games or word families to promote fluency (Rooyackers, 2002:2). Words could be grouped based on a number of different criteria, e.g. words ending on the same letter string (tomb and comb), words

containing silent letters, words with short vowels or long vowels (Diller, 2003:80; Westwood, 2005:34). A game that could be played is word hunt and then the same words are sorted together. The learners must use familiar text books that they are able to read fluently and hunt for words, for example words that end in –ed. They record their words on a piece of paper and then compare and sort their words in their groups. According to Westwood (2005:34) word sorting intends to encourage learners' critical thinking skills. The following example is given: Give words all ending in –ick and ask the learners "*What is the same about these words?*" Pinkley (1999:49) gives another example of the same kind of activity: ask the learner to think how many words they can make with the word family – photo.

- Use pictures and sentence matching games (Garcia & Baker, 2006:196). This game works well with young ESL learners. They need to match a specific picture with a sentence. Garcia and Baker (2006:196) use an example of dinosaurs and explain that if a sentence were given e.g. "the Stegosaurus had a row of plates on its back", they need to read the sentence and match it with that picture. They also need to understand and think about the meaning of the words to match it with the right sentence.
- Skipping games (Pretorius, 1999). Shane van Staden, a South African, has developed a multifunctional skipping rope that he coupled with lesson plans from a programme called, play2think. The rope has little three-dimensional squares with the alphabet and the numbers zero to nine printed on them. The consonants are printed on white tiles and the vowels on red tiles. The tiles can be removed from the skipping rope. The tiles can be used for letter identification and spelling. Learners can use their own set to spell 600 basic words but they can also work together to spell words i.e., the more learners spell, the more complicated words can be made, which also encourages thinking. It is an affordable game and includes a rope, tiles and a CD with lesson plans. More advantages is that it improves fitness, co-operation and helps the teacher with informal

assessment i.e. letter identification, the teacher can ask the learners to hold up the letter “e” if she wants to assess letter identification (Pretorius, 1999).

Language games are a fun way to develop vocabulary, verbal skills and general reasoning and critical thinking skills (Rooyackers, 2002:1). According to Rooyackers (2002:1-3) word games develop language and thinking since learners need to solve problems during playing games; they also need to think about words; learn the meaning of new words which leads to the memorization of words; and as a result it can also improve concentration span.

3.2.9 Story telling and Dramatisation

Stories and dramatisation go hand in hand. Ashworth and Wakefield (2004:54) assert that concepts can be learned through stories and dramatisation. Mahaye and Jacobs (2004:198) state that dramatisation as a teaching method changes the way that learners think and it teaches them to ask questions as well as to take responsibility for their own learning. Stories and dramatisation are exciting strategies to teach language especially when a story is predictable, makes use of repetition and uses vocabulary representing the school, home or things relating to them (Phenix, 2002:23). It also helps if the stories have a lot of visual illustrations, because it catches the readers’ attention (Jobe & Dayton-Sakari, 1999:61). Mosha (2000:35) describes the teacher as a formator that uses formation tools such as songs, riddles and stories to mold or form the learners intellectually, spiritually and morally. These are also known as pedagogical tools.

A lot of repetition gives meaning if it is combined with dramatisation (stories, songs and poetry). For example, if the learner repeats something and acts it out it will start to mean something to them, consequently, words won’t be just words with no meaning (Guofang, 2006:73).

Balla (1999:14) affirms that stories could be used during ESL teaching to teach learners basic vocabulary. Hearing the story more than once, learners will become more and more familiar with the vocabulary. If ESL learners have acquired more English language skills and vocabulary they could act out different characters of the stories and make their own dialogues (Balla, 1999:15).

Law and Eckes (2000:206) as well as Almond (2005:10-11) feel that dramatisation must be central to all curriculums and they provide the following reasons for that:

- It encourages spontaneous speaking;
- It develops basic listening skills;
- it develops vocabulary because it provides a meaningful social context, learner get the chance to interact meaningfully with words;
- it develops problem-solving skills because if they have to work on a play for example, they need to solve problems in their group;
- it builds confidence; and
- pays attention to broader communication skills such as, facial expressions, gestures and prosody (pitch, tone, volume and tempo of speech).

However, Mahaye and Jacobs (2004:198) state that role-play methods like dramatisation could be time-consuming and the teachers must be passionate and creative to make a success this method. Mahaye and Jacobs (2004:7) state that dramatisation is sometimes an unsuccessful method to develop critical thinking skills.

3.2.10 Problem solving methods

Jacobs (2004:97) explain that the old traditional methods or rather strategies of teaching thought that learners were born with problem-solving capabilities and teachers can not change how learners solve problems. Mahaye and Jacobs

(2004:199) assert that it is important for learners to discover solutions for themselves. Jacobs (2004:97) explains that teachers must find ways to allow their ESL learners to practice problem solving skills and to apply critical thinking skills. Teachers should create an atmosphere in their class where the ESL learner wants to think and be actively involved in the classroom which can be achieved through the problem-solving method (Jacobs, 2004:97). Problems should always encourage learners to take greater responsibility for their learning (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:200). Problem solving methods encourage critical thinking skills (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:200).

3.3 CONCLUSION

Teachers have individualistic teaching methods. There is no method that is better than another. All methods and strategies have advantages and disadvantages. When it comes to teaching ESL learners critical thinking skills there are some proven methods that teachers may take into consideration more than other methods to enhance critical thinking skills. This study evaluates methods that teachers use to develop ESL learners' critical thinking skills in language. Methods and techniques that develop critical thinking skills in ESL language learners were discussed in this chapter.

In the next chapter the outline of the research methods will be discussed. The advantages and disadvantages of the research methods and the research instrument (questionnaire) will also be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

METHOD OF RESEARCH

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter intends to outline the research design. The following aspects of the investigation are discussed in this chapter:

- Aims of the study;
- research methods used in this study;
- the instruments used in this study;
- how the data was collected and administrated; and
- the analysis techniques used.

4.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The problem arising is whether primary school teachers use a variety of teaching methods in language teaching aiming at developing critical thinking skills, especially for ESL learners.

In order to address this problem the following research questions are relevant:

The following questions gave direction to the research project:

- What teaching methods are Primary school language teachers currently using to develop critical thinking skills of ESL learners?
- To what extent do teachers possess adequate knowledge and skills to implement different teaching methods to enhance critical thinking of ESL learners?
- Do teachers have adequate knowledge to incorporate Bloom's taxonomy in their teaching to improve ESL learners' critical thinking skills

4.2.1 Aims of the study

The overall aim of this study is to determine if primary school teachers use a variety of teaching methods to promote critical thinking in their classrooms with the focus on English second language learners (ESL).

The objectives can be operationalised as follows:

- To determine what teaching methods Primary school language teachers are currently using to develop critical thinking skills of ESL learners.
- To determine whether teachers possess adequate knowledge and skills to implement different teaching methods to enhance critical thinking of ESL learners.
- To ascertain whether teachers have adequate knowledge to incorporate Bloom's taxonomy in their teaching to improve ESL learners' critical thinking skills.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

4.3.1 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study builds on social constructivism. Constructivism is described as a view that sees knowledge as actively constructed (by individuals, groups and societies), and not simply transferred (Donald *et al.*, 2004:104). Vygotsky stated that the development of cognition in the young and the social construction of knowledge itself are related processes. For the purpose of this study the focus is on the cognitive domain (van den Aardweg & van den Aardweg, 1999:34) of Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive objectives, also build on constructivism, that promote higher-order thinking skills such as, critical thinking skills.

4.3.2 Method of research

In this study a quantitative survey research was conducted. A quantitative survey research involves acquiring information: the researcher selects a sample of respondents from a population and administers a questionnaire to them (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:183). Quantitative researchers usually start their studies with theories or problems and then use these problems to guide them to evaluate the outcomes of those procedures (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:96). Survey research is to collect information from groups of people by asking these people questions (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:184). Certain characters in a population can be captured with survey research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:108). One of the disadvantages of survey research is the fact that researchers rely on “self-report” data, where people answer questions according to their beliefs. According to Singh (2007:86), survey research is the method of gathering data from respondents thought to be envoy of some population, using an instrument composed of closed formation or open-ended items (in this case a questionnaire). The survey can be a written document that is completed by the person being surveyed, an online questionnaire, a face-to-face interview, or a telephone interview (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:184). It is possible to collect data from large or small populations through survey research. For the purpose of this study a self-structured closed questionnaire was used.

Open-coding were used to analyse the open-ended questions. The data are divided into segments and then analysed for commonalities that reflect categories or themes. Open-coding is a process of reducing the data to a small set of themes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:141).

The investigation was conducted in 2 phases:

- phase 1: a literature study was conducted;

- phase 2: a questionnaire, based on the literature study, was compiled to determine primary school educators' teaching methods in developing critical thinking skills. A pilot study was conducted and thereafter the larger study was implemented.

The procedures intrinsic to each phase are discussed below:

4.3.3 Phase 1: Literature research

Search engines, e.g. Ebsco host, SAepublications, Sabinet, Astor and Google book search were used to collect data.

The following key words were used: Teaching methods; critical thinking; ESL Learners; mother-tongue; LOLT; BICS; CALP; bilingualism; Bloom's Taxonomy of cognitive Objectives.

4.3.4 Phase 2: Empirical study

A survey was conducted to ascertain the extent of teachers' knowledge of critical thinking skills and to determine which teaching methods they use to develop and promote critical thinking skills of ESL Primary school learners during language teaching.

4.3.4.1 Pilot study

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:110) emphasise that a pilot-test is an excellent way to determine the viability of a study. The pilot group consisted of 10 educators in the same category as the sample group (i.e. Language teachers in primary schools of ESL learners). This pilot study group was not part of the final sample group. However, these 10 teachers were from the same Gauteng Department district as the pilot study, namely, Johannesburg South District (D11).

The 10 educators were chosen on the following basis:

- they had ESL learners in their classroom;
- they were experienced Language teachers;
- they were easy to reach;
- they had a positive attitude towards the research material; and
- they understood what was expected of them.

The pilot study group was asked to make comments and recommendations regarding the length and relevance of the questions and whether there were any unclear questions. They were also requested to give their input regarding areas they feel, need to be addressed in the questionnaire.

After the results of the pilot group were analysed and processed, adaptations were made regarding the clarity of some of the questions. The questionnaire was also submitted to the statistical services at the Vaal Triangle Campus in order to determine the statistical validity and reliability. After approval the final questionnaire was then distributed to the respondents. The questionnaire was found to be valid and reliable.

For the purpose of this study a self-structured questionnaire was used. This questionnaire was informed by the literature study. The questionnaire was compiled to determine which teaching methods teachers use to promote critical thinking skills during ESL teaching.

In the following section the self-structured questionnaire as research instrument will be discussed.

4.3.4.2 The research instrument

The self-structured questionnaires included both closed-ended as well as open-ended questions.

The open questions that were asked gave the respondents an opportunity to voice their own opinion regarding their thoughts on critical thinking namely:

- Firstly, how would they describe critical thinking and;
- secondly, if they agreed with the statement that one of the greatest challenges that educators are facing today is the question of how to generate learners who are critical thinkers.

A Likert scale was used for the closed questions. The Likert scale is a rating scale, used to evaluate on a scale (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:185). It simplifies and measures people's behaviors and attitudes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:187).

4.3.4.3 The questionnaire as research instrument

A questionnaire is a written list of questions and the respondent reads and answers these questions in writing (Kumar, 2005:126). Questionnaires are designed to gather information which could be used subsequently as data for analysis (Denscombe, 2007:153). Questions may be open ended or closed questions. Wheather and Cook (2000:9) state that open questions ask for respondents' comments without limiting them to a probable response. Closed questions restrict the respondent to one or a number of listed responses, although it is wise to combine a closed question with an additional open response (Wheather & Cook, 2000:9). Closed questions allow the respondents to choose only from the questions provided, which fit into categories that the researcher established in advance (Denscombe, 2007:166).

a) Advantages of questionnaires

The questionnaire as a research instrument held the following advantages for this study:

- The open format of some of the questionnaires gave respondents the opportunity to express themselves liberally and to add information in their own words (Kumar, 2005:135);
- the respondents' task was simple as the questionnaire was easy to read (Kumar, 2005:126);
- the appearance of the questionnaire were attractive (Oppenheim, 2001:105; Kumar, 2005:126);
- the respondents were geographically easy to reach (Kumar, 2005:127);
- the anonymity of respondents was assured (Gillham, 2000:6);
- the respondents completed the questionnaires in their own time when it suited them (Gillham, 2000:6); and
- there were less pressure on the respondents for instantaneous responses (Gillham, 2000:6);

Although there are many advantages to the questionnaire, there were also disadvantages.

b) Disadvantages of questionnaires

The following disadvantages were noted in this study:

- The questionnaires had a low return rate. Questionnaires have low return rates unless respondents know you personally (Gillham, 2000:9). Kumar (2005:130) state that "*you can consider yourself lucky to obtain a 50 percent response rate and sometimes it may be as low as 20 percent.*"
- the questionnaires were relatively lengthy, making them time consuming and costly (Gillham, 2000:10), however, it was necessary to gain all the essential information to make comprehensive conclusions;
- People talk more easily than recording information (Gillham, 2000:13);
- Anonymity was assured in the cover letter and then respondents were asked to complete a form asking their personal information (full names) and signature in the informed consent form. Confidentiality is very important for

some respondents and therefore it influenced some respondents not to complete the questionnaire (Denscombe, 2007:159); and

- answers could have been superficial on the self-completed questionnaire as there was no interviewer available to interpret and explain questions (Kumar, 2005:126);

Gillham (2000:14) state that if researchers want to get the best out of this research tool, knowledge of both the advantages and disadvantages need to be taken into consideration. Therefore all the strengths and limitations were taken into consideration when the questionnaire was chosen as a research instrument.

4.3.4.4 The design of the questionnaire

Understandable and clear questionnaires were designed keeping the respondents' professional experience of ESL learners in mind. The following components received attention:

4.3.4.4.1 The covering letter

A cover letter accompanied the questionnaire. According to Brown (2001:86) the covering letter should give the respondent information about the study.

The following aspects were taken into consideration in drawing up the covering letter:

- identification of the researcher undertaking the research;
- the purpose of the study;
- the importance of the study as well as its target population; and
- an inducement to reply:
 - a request to complete and send the questionnaire back as soon as possible (Brown, 2001:86);
 - reassurance regarding confidentiality;
 - an invitation to be informed about the results; and

a word of gratitude to the respondents co-operation (Brown, 2001:86):

A copy of the cover letter is provided in Annexure A.

4.3.4.4.2 The questions

- There are different types of questions which can be used in a questionnaire. For the purpose of this study close-ended/multiple choice, open-ended questions and follow-up questions were used.
- a close-ended/multiple-choice question requires the respondent to choose answers that are already set out (Kumar, 2007:132);
- open –ended questions are questions where possible responses are not set out but give the respondents the chance to express themselves liberally (Kumar, 2005:135);
- follow-up questions aim to get more information about a response in a prior question, which will lead to a more in-depth knowledge about the response (Oppenheim, 2001:90).

4.3.4.4.3 The construction of the questionnaire for this study

The questionnaire included:

- a cover letter ;
- questions:
- closed/multiple choice questions: 3, 4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 6, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 7.10, 7.11, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 8.10, 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7, 9.8, 9.9, 9.10, 9.11, 9.12, 9.13, 9.14, 9.15.
- open- ended questions: 1, 2, 8.11; and
- follow-up questions: 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6

The questionnaire was divided into three parts:

Section A: General questions pertaining to the aim of the study:

- teachers' description of critical thinking;
- teachers' views regarding the problem of generating learners who are critical thinkers;
- teachers' rating of ESL learners' average language proficiency in English;
- teachers rating of ESL learners' average critical thinking skills in English

Section B: Bloom's Taxonomy. These questions aimed at determining:

- Teachers' rating of importance of critical thinking skills using the different levels of Bloom's taxonomy;
- teachers ranking the levels of Bloom's taxonomy from the most important to the least important in their teaching of ESL learners' critical thinking skills.

Section C: Teaching methods. These questions aimed at:

- Identifying the methods teachers use daily during teaching;
- determining the importance of certain teaching methods to teachers in teaching critical thinking skills;
- determining whether teaching methods are used more often than others.

A copy of the questionnaire is included as Annexure B.

4.3.4.4.4 Distribution of the questionnaires

Researchers have different options when distributing questionnaires. Questionnaires can be mailed, hand-delivered or electronically sent via e-mail (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:184). Hand-delivery was used for this study.

Hand-delivery has certain advantages as well as disadvantages.

a) Advantages of hand-delivered questionnaires

Hand-delivered questionnaires:

- are time-saving (Rogers & Viles, 2002:233); and
- the questionnaires were left at schools and collected afterwards, therefore, the researcher did not bother the respondents at an inconvenient time (Anderson, Ones & Sinagil, 2001:15).

b) Disadvantages of hand-delivered questionnaires

The following disadvantages are noted:

- Only a small geographical area could be covered;

4.3.4.4.5 The population and sampling

Leedy & Ormrod (2005:205) describes a population as a homogeneous group of individual units. The population of a study, however, sets limits.

4.3.4.4.6 Research sample

The population for this study is primary school language teachers in Gauteng teaching at schools with ESL language learners. Due to logistics a sample has been drawn. Since the researcher lives and works in the Johannesburg South District (D11) logistics made it easier to draw the sample from this district. In this study a non-probability, convenient purposive sampling was used. In non-probability sampling some members of the population would be more likely to be chosen than others for some reason (Brewerton & Millward, 2001:114). Some members of the population have little or no chance of being sampled (Leedy & Omrod: 2005:206). In purposive sampling, people are chosen for a particular purpose (Leedy & Omrod, 2005:206).

To be included, teachers needed to be primary school language teachers teaching ESL learners within the Johannesburg South District (D11). The sampling in this study was therefore done without randomisation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:199). The following steps were used to obtain this non-probability, purposive sample:

- i) A list of primary schools in the Johannesburg South District (D11) of the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) was obtained from the District Office. There are 30 Primary Schools teaching through the medium of English in the Johannesburg South District. Ex Model C town schools as well as township schools has been included in this sample.
- ii) All the schools that use English as their medium of instruction were identified from the list provided. Thereafter, 150 English Language teachers, who teach ESL learners in these schools, through the medium of English, were purposively selected as the sample for this study. These teachers were then invited to participate in the study. Of the 150 invited teachers, 62 responded.
 - Educators were chosen on the following basis:
 - they had ESL learners in their classroom;
 - they were experienced Language teachers;
 - they were easily reachable;
 - they were positive towards the research problem; and
 - they understood what was expected of them.

Language teachers in primary schools in the Johannesburg South District of GDE (2008).	Sample	Percentage
150 – 10 (pre-test) = 140	150	93.3

Table 4.1 Language teachers in primary schools in the Johannesburg South District of GDE (2008).

4.3.4.4.7 Administrative procedures

Permission was requested and granted from the Gauteng Department of Education for the questionnaire to be administered to the target population in the Johannesburg South District (D11).

Principals of the identified schools were telephonically or personally invited to allow their language teachers to participate in this study. After the purpose of the questionnaire was explained to the principal and confidentiality was ensured, no resistance was encountered. All principals were very positive towards the study.

The researcher delivered the final 150 questionnaires by hand, for the attention of Language teachers, to primary schools in Johannesburg South District (D11).

4.3.4.4.8 Response

Authors differ about the response rate that can be expected. Kumar (2005:130) states that “*you can consider yourself lucky to obtain a 50 percent response rate and sometimes it may be as low as 20 percent.*” Wheater and Cook (2001:8) state that questionnaires have low return rates; it could be as low as 10 percent.

62 questionnaires were returned. The response rate for this study was 42.6%.

Population category	Questionnaires distributed	Questionnaires received	Percentage
Language educators in primary schools	150	62	42.6%

Table 4.2 Response rate of phase 2

According to Gray, Williamson and Dolphin (2007:127) low response rates could be ascribed to the following reasons:

- Low degree of enthusiasm and involvement of respondents;
- unwillingness and inability to reply to the questionnaires and;
- some of the respondents lost the questionnaire or did not complete it.

The researcher found in this study low response rates could be ascribed to the following reasons:

- anonymity was assured but respondents were then asked to sign the ethics forms;
- the majority of respondents that received the questionnaires were reluctant to return them;
- teachers might not have had enough time to complete questionnaires due to planning, extra-murals etc.;
- respondents lost questionnaires.

4.3.4.4.9 Data analysis

A descriptive data analysis of the questionnaires was conducted with the help of the statistical services of the North-West University, Vaal Triangle Campus using the Excel programme to obtain single group data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:252,253). Descriptive statistics describe a body of data determining points of central tendency, amount of variability and the extent to which different variables are related to one another (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005: 257). Frequencies, means and percentages were calculated, and inferences drawn.

Responses to the open-ended questions have been evaluated .The open-ended questions responses were coded and analysed for patterns and themes that were the same.

4.3.4.4.10 Ethical aspects

Participants in a research project must clearly understand the nature of the study and must be willing to participate (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:144). Informed

consent was obtained from teachers who agree to participate in the completion of the questionnaire, as well as the principals of all schools and the district manager (see Annexure B). The participants' remarks were at all times kept strictly confidential (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:102) and reported in an anonymous manner (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:185). The researcher made an application for a request to conduct research in institutions and/or offices of the Gauteng Department of Education and permission was granted by the Gauteng Department of Education to proceed with the survey research within the target area. Ethical approval was also granted from the North-West University's ethical committee.

4.4 CONCLUSION

The research design was discussed in this chapter. An explanation of the research methodology was provided, as well as the development of the measuring instrument, the population, sampling of the population, the administrative procedures and the statistical techniques for interpreting the data.

In the following chapter the data gathered will be discussed.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The findings of the research done to investigate teaching methods used by teachers to develop critical thinking skills of primary school ESL learners in the D11 district, Southern Johannesburg are presented in this chapter.

5.1.1 Collection of data

As mentioned in chapter 4 the collection of data was done at primary schools in district D 11 in Johannesburg. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed and 62 (42.6%) of the questionnaires were returned.

Population category	Questionnaires distributed	Questionnaires received	Percentage
Language educators in primary schools	150	62	42.6%

Table 5.1 Return rate of questionnaires

5.2 ITEM ANALYSIS

The statistical consultancy service of the North-West University, Vaal Triangle campus processed the results of the research using the Excel-Program system. An item analysis was conducted for each of the following sections of the questionnaire, namely, Section A (General), Section B (Blooms Taxonomy) and Section C (Teaching methods).

5.3 DIVISION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

This section covered all the general questions about critical thinking. Respondents were asked how they would rate their ESL learners' average critical thinking skills as well as their ESL learners' average language proficiency. Respondents were also asked how they would describe critical thinking and if they agreed that teachers are facing challenges to generate critical thinkers. They had to motivate their answers.

5.3.1 Question 1

Question 1 was an open-ended question and asked the respondents to describe the concept critical thinking in their own words. It is important to keep in mind that according to Halvorsen (2005) (cf.2.7) critical thinking is a difficult concept to describe. Davis-Seaver and Davis (2000:9) (cf.2.7) state that critical thinking is the ability to think creatively, make decisions, solve problems, visualize, observe, reason, and is characterized by originality and uniqueness. Six respondents used many of these same concepts to describe critical thinking as: "*independent, complex-, creative- and lateral-, quick thinking and it is a higher-order skill.*" Some respondents added that it is: "*Thinking beyond what is required of you.*" Concepts such as "*reasoning and problem solving*" were also used by a nine of the respondents. Hughes and Lavery (2004:17) (cf.2.7) confirm that reasoning skills can be described as solving problems and making decisions.

"*Thinking out of the box*" was a description of critical thinking used by some of the respondents. This concept has become very popular in the last few years. Machan (2004:49) (cf.2.7) state that the term "out-of the-box" thinking has become a metaphor of critical thinking. Three respondents referred to critical thinking as "*thinking about something from a different point of view or perspective.*" Some respondents also added that critical thinking is "*diverse and*

involves possibly differing from the opinion of others and going against popular thought.”

Seven respondents also stated that critical thinking consists of “*mental process of discernment, analysis, skillfully conceptualizing, applying and analyzing and/or evaluating information gathered by observation.*” Three of these respondents specifically referred to critical thinking as a “*mental process.*” Eleven respondents described critical thinking as the “*ability to judge and evaluate.*” Some descriptions used were: “*it is the ability to think through a problem logically, to weigh your opinions, evaluating it and then make your judgment or give your opinion.*” Three respondents depicted critical thinking as “*thinking which requires an opinion, a judgment and serious thought.*”

Twelve respondents depicted critical thinking as the skill “*to ask questions and not accepting all answers.*” The literature also confirms this. Lipman (2003:73) (cf.2.7) asserts that if learners in a language class are able to ask questions and build connections among ideas they are thinking critically.

Three respondents said that critical thinking is a “*foundation of education, knowing how to think and not what to think and thinking towards a certain goal.*” Another respondent added *it is the ability to think ahead.* One respondent said: “*That it is the ability to have the freedom and chance to express your thought.*” This corroborates with Davis-Seaver and Davis (2000:1) (cf.2.7) who declare critical thinking as the heart of the teaching and learning process.

Only three of the respondents did not motivate their answers. Some of the questions had more than one motivation.

5.3.2 Question 2

Question 2 was also an open-ended question. This question made a statement that one of the greatest challenges facing educators worldwide today is that of how to produce learners who are critical thinkers. Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with this statement as well as provide motivation. Most respondents (59) agreed and only 3 of the respondents disagreed with this statement.

Some of the respondents that agreed with the statement had the following motivations: "*Learners are used to being spoon-fed and they don't want to think independently.*" "*Learners need to be motivated to think for themselves and not take the easy way out of being spoon-fed.*" "*Learners are spoon-fed answers and rote-learning hinders critical thinking.*" Moon (2007:108) confirms that learners want to be spoon-fed and they don't want to think for themselves.

Nine respondents referred to learners as being "passive learners." They state that: "*many learners are still in the mindset of accepting all information.*" "*Learners have become spectators; expecting to be entertained, yet not willing to become actively involved in the learning process.*" One respondent believed that: "*I think parents think for their children and don't allow them to say what/how they feel and then they want the same from school and their teachers.*" Another respondent said: "*Learners are not motivated to think out of the box. Parents and educators should allow learners more freedom to explore. We should be more enthusiastic when learners display non traditional interest.*"

This reasoning is confirmed by Hirsch (2007:11) (cf.2.8) who asserts that learners won't benefit from simply knowing facts; learners need to apply their knowledge critically. One respondent stated that: "*learners cannot apply knowledge*". Another respondent said: "*Yes, teachers don't allow learners to question them- they don't like it.*" The reason for this could be that teachers make

use of more traditional teaching methods such as the direct instruction method. Maney (1999:397) (cf.3.2.2) declares that direct instruction does not help with the development of critical thinking skills, since learners are then passive recipients of information. However, Queen (2002:106) (cf.3.2.2) contradicts this statement by asserting that research supports direct instruction as a successful method in teaching ESL learners.

Four respondents pointed out that: "*Learners just want to learn facts, they don't want to take chances and they don't want to be wrong.*" "*Learners tend to follow and not think, evaluate and then reject or accept.*" "*They follow the crowd; learners only think for themselves when they are rebellious.*"

Some respondents avowed that critical thinking skills are "*not part of the curriculum.*" This statement is not entirely true. Outcome 5 of the NCS Home Language and First additional Language learning areas deals specifically with the use of languages for thinking and reasoning, which is especially important for the language of learning and teaching. This is where a problem could occur for ESL learners who are not taught in their mother tongue and are expected to achieve this outcome of the curriculum, in the LOLT.

Four respondents asserted that "*teaching critical thinking skills is usually one part of the curriculum instead of throughout.*" Some respondents also added that there is "*no time or place in the school's program for critical thinking;*" "*South Africa's curriculum does not allow enough time, have to finish curriculum and then pay attention to those thinkers.*" "*Limited time*" plays an important role. "*Critical thinkers normally take longer to do things because they want to make sure they do it right and the best way which is frustrating for educators.*" An integrated curriculum permits the teacher to focus on other skills (such as critical thinking, social, and reading skills, etc.) that are not taught in a single subject curriculum (Vakalisa, 2004:66). Therefore, teachers need to integrate critical thinking skills into their planning and lessons and must form an important part of

the curriculum. Teachers need to be trained on how to use an integrated approach if they don't see it as part of the curriculum.

Five respondents agreed that teachers need to find "*methods*" to use in class which encourages critical thinking. "*I don't think teachers are trained on different teaching methods that would assist teachers to teach learners how to think critically.*" Another respondent said: "*Educators don't know how to teach these (critical thinking) skills.*" The literature states that a variety of teaching methods must be used during instruction to develop critical thinking skills (Tomlinson et al., 2001:53) (cf.3.2.1).

"Learning and language barriers are a problem." If communication in the classroom is not effective due to language barriers, as is the case with many ESL learners, it might have an effect on some learners' cognitive development and their success during their schooling years (Fleisch, 2008: 104) (cf.2.5). "*Learners have so many barriers to learning...*" Respondents also asserted that "*learners are often unable to express themselves due to inadequate language that also has an impact on critical thinking skills.*" Two respondents indicated that "*the number of pupils in a class/big classes and the mixed ability grouping*" does not make it easier and has a negative influence on the development of critical thinking skills. Literature confirms that the number of learners in a class is a problem. The average ratio is 1:40 (one teacher for forty learners) in most African classes (Kgwadi, 2008). Large classes could be a problem for ESL learners, because it could result in ESL learners not receiving the individual attention that they need and consequently this can also have an influence on critical thinking skills.

Two respondents mentioned that "*ESL learners need the very basic academic/language skills*" before critical thinking can take place. The literature study also confirmed that augmenting vocabulary is essential for ESL learners to help them communicate and understand their learning environment. Teachers often make

the mistake to only have ESL learners memorise words for tests and not teach the meaning of these words (Buhrow & Garcia, 2006:128) (cf.2.8).

One respondent indicated that “*technology*” can help a lot with the development of critical thinking skills and added that learners “*don’t read enough*” which could hinder the development of critical thinking skills. Certain respondents mentioned that “*the problem also lies in their ability to read, understand and evaluate the information*”. “*Learners don’t read enough to widen their general knowledge which enables them to critically think about a question*”. “*Reading calls for inferential questions to be answered and pupils can’t think for themselves.*” It could be, as were found in the literature, that some ESL learners have limited English reading material available, especially in the rural areas, which worsens the problem of improving these learners’ English language proficiency even further (Fleisch, 2008:111) (cf. 2.8.2) and consequently their critical thinking skills.

Three of the respondents disagreed with the statement in the question and motivated their answers with the following statements:

- “*teachers must always have an explanation ready and may need to do more research so that you as a teacher can stand your ground*”;
- “*it is only a challenge if educators allow it to be*”;
- “*educators must teach these skills to the learners I feel educators just teach to get done with their work and through the curriculum*”.

5.3.3 Conclusion

From the responses it seems that most teachers have a relevant good insight into what the development of critical thinking skills entails. It also appears that teachers are well aware of the challenges that exist to develop ESL learners’ critical thinking skills. This is a positive indication that teachers are knowledgeable about critical thinking.

5.3.4 Question A3

How would you rate your English Second Language learners' average language proficiency in English?

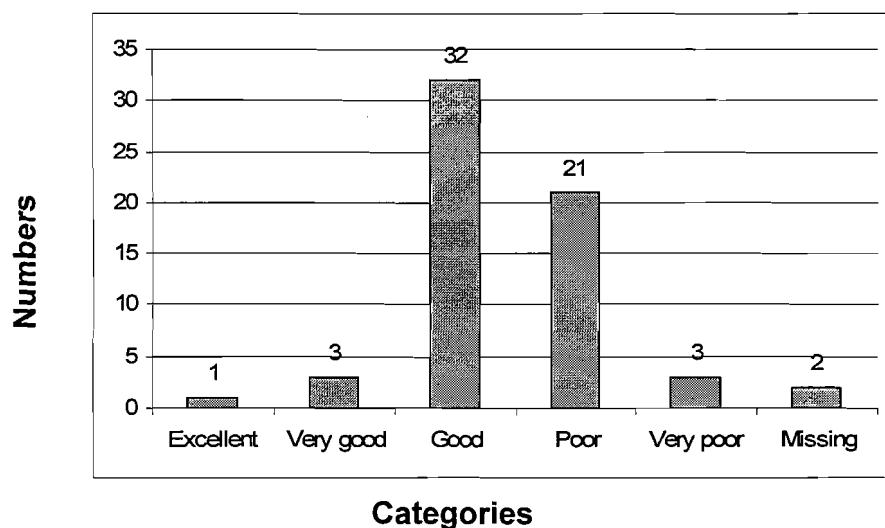


Figure 5.1 Rating of English Second Language Learners' average language proficiency

5.3.4.1 Rating of English Second Language Learners' average language proficiency.

The data that emerged from Table 5.2 shows that more than half of the respondents, 51 % (32) respondents, rated their ESL learners' average language proficiency in English as good and 5 % (3) respondents as very good. Only 2% (1) respondent rated their ESL learners' language proficiency in English as excellent. A total of 34% (21) respondents indicated that their ESL learners' language proficiency is poor, while 5% (3) of the respondents indicated that their ESL learners' English proficiency is very poor. A total of 3 % (2) respondents did not answer the question.

Literature (Fleish, 2008:104) (cf.2.8.2) specified that the average ESL' language proficiency, especially in primary schools are poor. Language proficiency is

linked to academic success and primary school ESL language learners often fail to master the fundamental of literacy, because of their limited English proficiency (Fleisch, 2008:104-105). Learners that are not proficient in English are a major cause of underachievement in South Africa (Fleisch, 2008:112).

5.3.4.2 English Second Language Learners' average critical thinking skills in English.

How would you rate your English Second Language learners' average critical thinking skills in English?

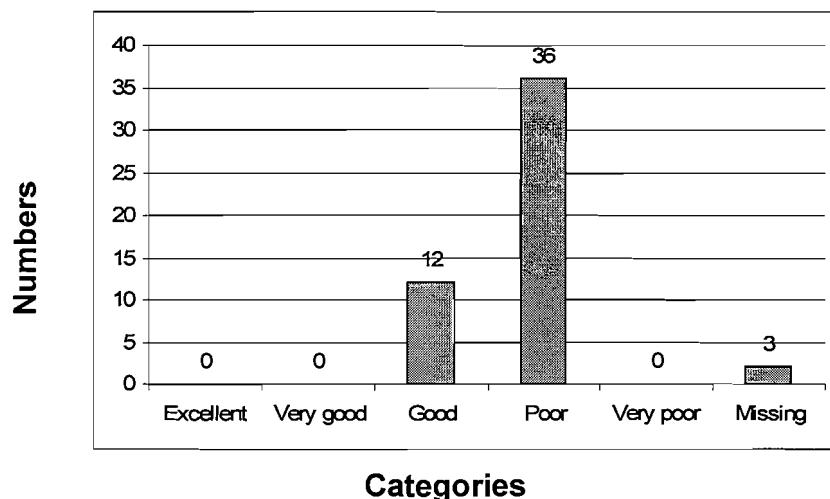


Figure 5.2 Rating of English Second Language Learners' average critical thinking

The findings in table 5.3 show that 72% (36) of the respondents rated their ESL learners' average critical thinking skills in English as poor. A total of 24 % (12) of the respondents rated their ESL learners' critical thinking skills as good. None of the respondents indicated that their ESL learners' critical thinking skills are excellent or very good or the opposite very poor critical thinking skills in English.

As learners are expected to master critical thinking skills in their second language, this only gets harder as the grades progress and learners are expected to master more complex and demanding skills (Fleisch, 2008:105). Although these questions do not indicate an obvious link between language proficiency and critical thinking skills it is notable that quite a large percentage of teachers judged their ESL learners language proficiency as well as critical thinking as poor and very poor.

5.3.5 Conclusion

Most of the respondents indicated that their average ESL learners' critical thinking skills are poor which should be a wake-up call for the design and implementation of teaching as well as learning strategies to ensure that these learners do not experience academic problems, because of this problem.

5.4 DIVISION B: BLOOM'S TAXONOMY OF COGNITIVE OBJECTIVES

How would you rate the importance of each of these levels in teaching ESL learners' critical thinking skills?

Benjamin Bloom developed a classification of levels of intellectual behaviour in learning. This taxonomy contained three overlapping domains: the cognitive, psychomotor and affective. Within the cognitive domain, he identified six levels: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. These domains and levels are still useful today to develop the critical thinking skills of learners (Moseley *et al.*, 2005:52) (cf.2.10). Respondents were asked to rate how important the different levels of Bloom's Taxonomy were to them and to motivate their answers.

5.4.1 Level 1 of Bloom's Taxonomy

Level 1: Knowledge: exhibits previously learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts and answers

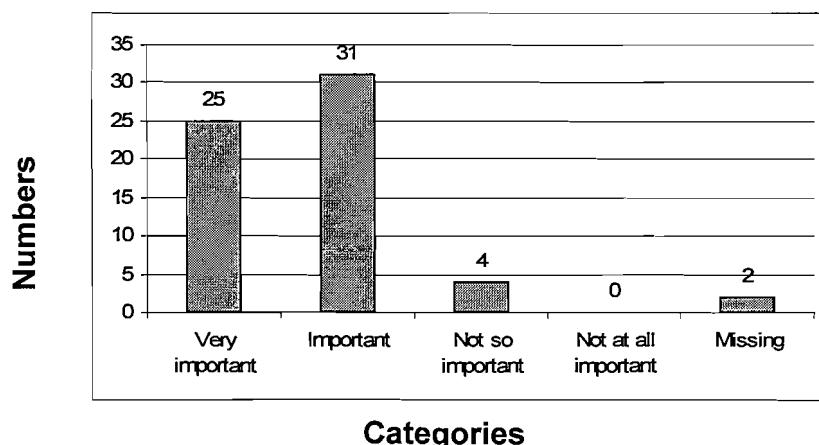


Figure 5.3 Importance of knowledge level of Bloom's Taxonomy to develop ESL critical thinking skills

Level 1 of Blooms' Taxonomy is knowledge. This is the first and lowest level of the cognitive domain and only requires the learner to recall simple facts, recognise material and repeat back what they have heard (Wyatt & White, 2007:61) (cf. 2.10.1.1).

Respondents were asked how important knowledge was to them during English teaching to ESL learners to develop critical thinking. A total of 40% (25) of the respondents indicated that knowledge plays a very important role to develop ESL learners' critical thinking skills. 51 % (31) agreed that it is important. Only 6 % (4) designated that knowledge is not important. None of the respondents indicated that it was not important at all. 2% (1) respondents did not answer this question.

Respondents motivated their answers and the following statements were made:

Some of the respondents indicated that is an "*important skill to use especially in a test situation and to recall facts during questioning.*" "For example, to recall

facts like language rules." Other respondents also mentioned that "some teachers tend to focus too much on knowledge/facts." Acquiring knowledge involves memory and repetition (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1999:34) (cf.2.10.1.1). Armstrong (2000:117) (cf.2.10.1.1) defines it as rote-memory skills where the learner only knows facts and terminology.

Respondents mentioned that "*learners can't develop more complex thinking processes if they haven't acquired knowledge therefore they need to build onto basic knowledge to expand their knowledge/ better their knowledge.*" "*Insight comes from the prepared mind.*" Two respondents stated that "*prior knowledge is necessary to build upon, a point of departure or foundation to start and build on.*" Two of the respondents also stated that without "*a solid foundation critical thought cannot develop*". On this level the learner remembers previously learned material and should be able to locate it later (Parker, 2006:7) (cf. 2.10.1.1.).

Most respondents explained this level by referring to "*prior/previous knowledge*". One respondent asserted that "*it is important to have passed experiences and knowledge on various concepts in order to facilitate critical thinking.*" "*Without knowledge you cannot reason.*" Another statement that was made by a respondent was that: "*if the basics are not yet established- new concepts are then not easily absorbed.*" "*Applied knowledge helps to master new concepts.*" "*Prior knowledge is important for language learning.*" "*It is important to have past experiences and knowledge on various concepts in order to facilitate critical thinking.*" Learners must "*have knowledge about something to argue critically*" *In order to form ideas and opinions one needs to have basic knowledge.*" One respondent asserted that: "*If they don't have knowledge: How can they question ideas?*" "*Learners begin with the basic and from there go on to more in depth questions.*" Another respondent added: "*A learner should be able to recall information whenever they see the question.*"

Another respondent mentioned: '*learning is a way of enlarging the thinking network of the brain*'. "*The broader the network the easier it is to study and link concept.*" "*A child/learner with average/below intelligence will be unable to reason or think critically without sufficient knowledge.*" Four respondents mentioned the importance of memory on this level: "*This goes hand-in-hand with memory, and is vitally important for child development.*" Several respondents indicated that "*creativity is often stifled by poor knowledge.*" One respondent said: "*Recalling of facts does not require critical thinking skills, only memory.*" It is stated by Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1999:34) (cf. 2.10.1.1) that acquiring knowledge involves memory and repetition.

ESL learners need to have knowledge of vocabulary before speaking and writing can occur. A respondent gave the following example to explain knowledge of language: "*knowing how to spell a word but unable to use it in a sentence or uses it in the wrong context.*" Two of the respondents stated that it is "*important for learning and especially a new language.*" Stripling (1999:41) (cf.2.10.1.1) gives the following example to explain knowledge: a child learning the alphabet is able to recite the alphabet, but does not have any understanding of the letters. According to one respondent: "*revision is very important and repetition makes you learn. Knowledge without understanding doesn't become steered knowledge.*" Another respondent answered: *Show their listening skill.*" "*Knowledge assists learners to express their views and opinions clearly.*" "*This also enables them to see situations differently and with an open mind.*"

It appears that teachers acknowledge that although knowledge is the first level of Bloom's taxonomy it is still essential for the development of critical thinking skills. For ESL learners this is especially important since having adequate knowledge about the vocabulary and concepts is crucial.

5.4.2 Level 2: Comprehension of Bloom's Taxonomy:

Level 2: Comprehension: demonstrating understanding of facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions and stating main ideas.

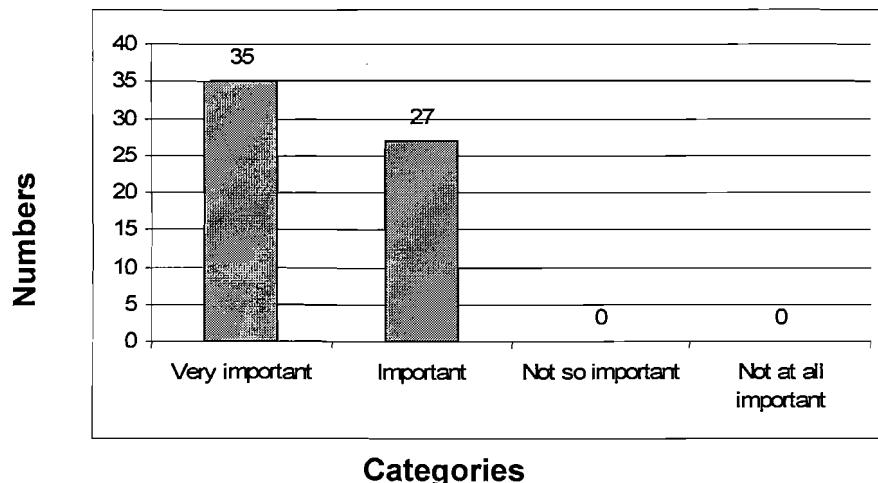


Figure 5.4 Importance of comprehension level of Bloom's Taxonomy to develop ESL critical thinking skills

The findings in Table 5.6 show that a total of 56% (35) of the respondents think that comprehension is very important for the development of ESL learners' critical thinking skills and 44% (27) of the respondents said that it is important. None indicated it as not so important or not at all important. The respondents' motivations are summarised as follow:

This level tests the basic understanding that the learner has of concepts and the curriculum (Parker, 2006:7) (cf.2.10.1.2) and is the first level of understanding that takes place (Wyatt & White, 2007:62) (cf.2.10.1.2).

Most respondents stated that without "*comprehension, understanding can't take place*". '*Knowledge is applied through comprehension.*' "*Comprehension allows the teacher to determine whether or not real understanding has actually occurred.*" One respondent stated: "*Understanding your facts gives you an*

advantage to formulate a better conclusion.” Another respondent said: “Without basic understanding and ability to apply ideas, learners cannot participate fully.”

Two respondents assert that “*one cannot gain knowledge or insight if you do not comprehend/ understand the meaning and value of current work.*” Other respondents affirmed that “*comprehension is important and that it gives the teachers an indication of how much has become meaningful learning.*” One respondent said: “*Learners have to comprehend learning materials. If you do not understand a language you cannot reason, think or understand*”. “*To come up with ideas you need to understand.*”

Respondents also indicated that “*learners need to be able to interpret the materials they have read and give meaning to the text: can extract certain important information, reads with a purpose in mind.*” If learners don’t comprehend what they have “*read they won’t have success.*” A basic understanding is needed to start a task. The learner must be able to put the knowledge that they have gained into their own words to show that understanding or comprehension took place (Colburn, 2003:4; Edmonson, et al., 2003:45) (cf.2.10.1.2). Knowledge needs to be applied through comprehension. One respondent mentioned that “*comprehension forms the basis for critical thinking skills.*”

If learners are not able to comprehend, respondents mentioned that “*the lack of understanding in essence means nothing has been learnt only temporarily memorized.*” ‘*Misinterpretations easily occur if they do not understand the language or concepts and makes communication difficult.*” Some learners know what the answers are but due to their ‘*limited vocabulary*” it is difficult to express themselves.

Some respondents indicated that comprehension is “*not possible in the early stages at an ESL level; is difficult*; and ESL learners need to “*be taught basics (knowledge) first which takes a long time*” before the rest of Bloom’s Taxonomy

can be developed. While other respondents indicated that ESL learners can comprehend but not that well and describe comprehension as “*part of the thinking process.*” “*ESL learners do not always think in their second language—therefore they can’t comprehend that well and that is the reason being that knowledge is so important for ESL learners.*” Some learners know what the answers are but due to their limited vocabulary it is difficult to express themselves.

Since knowledge without comprehension is senseless it is a positive indication that most teachers understand this. It will not help if ESL learners know the language, but they don’t understand what they know. This level is important for the development of ESL learners’ critical thinking skills

5.4.3 Level 3: Application level of Bloom’s Taxonomy of cognitive objectives

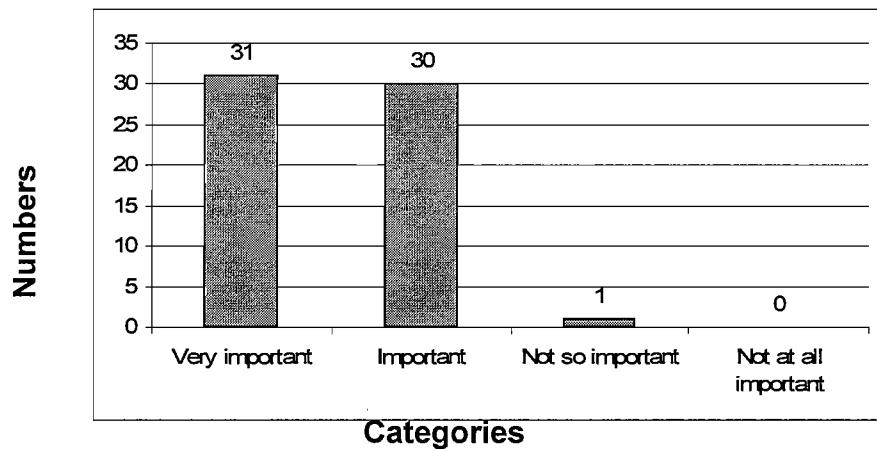


Figure 5.5 Importance of application level of Bloom’s Taxonomy to develop ESL critical thinking skills

The findings in table 5.7 show that half of the respondents, 50% (31) indicated that the application level is very important and 48% (30) of the respondents indicated it as important, whereas 2 % (1) of the respondents indicated that the application level are not so important to develop ESL learners’ critical thinking

skills. Colburn (2003:4) (cf. 2.9.1.3) states that application means that the learner understands something well enough to apply it to a new situation and to apply it effectively.

Respondents gave the following opinions about application of knowledge: ‘*By applying acquired knowledge, learners gain an idea of the relevance of that knowledge.*’ “*If knowledge is stored and never applied, it is useless and can never become wisdom.*” Another respondent explains that “*once the learner has an understanding of what they have read; learners must be able to apply this knowledge to solve a problem or a question.*” Two respondents declared “*that when learners apply knowledge in a variety of ways i.e. not just parrot fashion learning it shows that they can apply knowledge*”. Another respondent confirms this and adds that it is “*good to apply knowledge in various ways – shows understanding.*” Application shows whether the learners are able to “*put the theory into practice.*”

Gregory and Chapman (2006:121) cf.2.10.1.3) confirm that application can test knowledge and comprehension. Nine respondents referred to application “as problem-solving skills”. “*This is important but difficult as problem solving means that you are already able to reason and understand.*” Some respondents felt that learners can’t really solve problems unless they are “guided”. “*Problem solving requires analysis which is what critical thinking is.*” “*Moving from concrete to abstract.*”

Two respondents deemed that application is a way of “*assessing the level of comprehension*”. “*Application indicates the level of understanding the learner has attained.*”

Knowledge needs to be applied and when knowledge is applied in a variety of ways it increases better understanding. The statements by some respondents that asserted if the ESL learner can apply knowledge they will be able to solve

problems and answer questions summarises the critical role of this level in the development of their critical thinking skills. However, it is necessary to mention the important assertions by some respondents that feel that the ESL learner can not solve problems unless they are guided.

5.4.4 Level 4: Analysis level of Bloom's Taxonomy of cognitive objectives

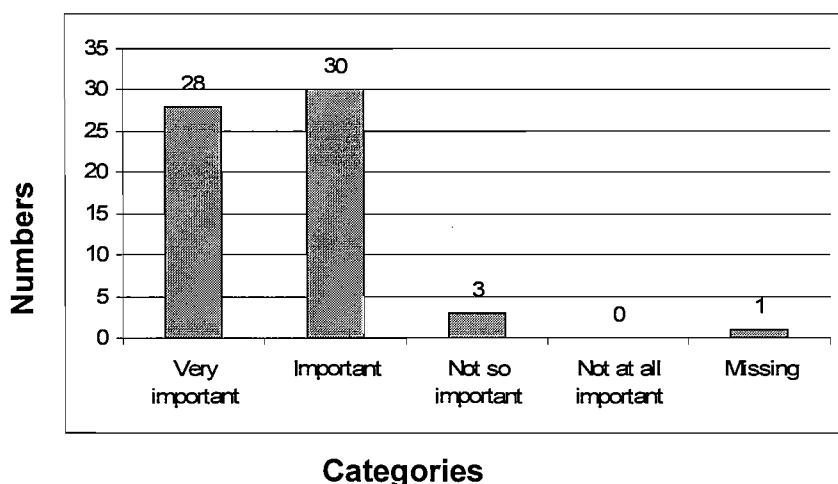


Figure 5.6 Importance of analysis level of Bloom's Taxonomy to develop ESL critical thinking skills

The analysis level of Bloom's Taxonomy, is very important to 45% (28) of the respondents. A total of 50% (31) of the respondents indicated that the application level is important to develop ESL learners' critical thinking skills. A total of 5 % (3) of the respondents consider that the analysis level is not so important to them. Respondents motivated their answers as follows:

According to Gregory and Chapman (2006:121) as well as Armstrong (2000:117) at this level the learner breaks information down into specific smaller parts to understand the whole (cf. 2.10.1.4). Most respondents explained analysis as: "*breaking information into smaller pieces.*" Several respondents indicated also that: "*One must first examine something in order to understand it.*" "*Smaller units*

of information are easier to understand, remember and apply.” “Examining parts often leads to better understanding of the whole.”

Other respondents mentioned that “*analysis is a key aspect of problem-solving.*” An analytical approach will help the learner to solve problems in a structured manner. One cannot “*solve a problem without analysing it.*”

Some respondents indicated that they feel this is too advanced for primary school learners: “*I think this is a very advanced skill and possibly when the other levels (1-3) have been mastered you could build on this.*” However, some respondents indicated it “*must be at a very basic level for ESL learners*”.

It seems as if most of the respondents understand that this level means breaking down information into smaller parts and dealing with one part at a time. This positive judgment of teachers could benefit the ESL learner, if it is at a very basic level, to learn to work with smaller part of information at a time.

5.4.5 Level 5: Synthesis level of Bloom’s Taxonomy of cognitive objectives

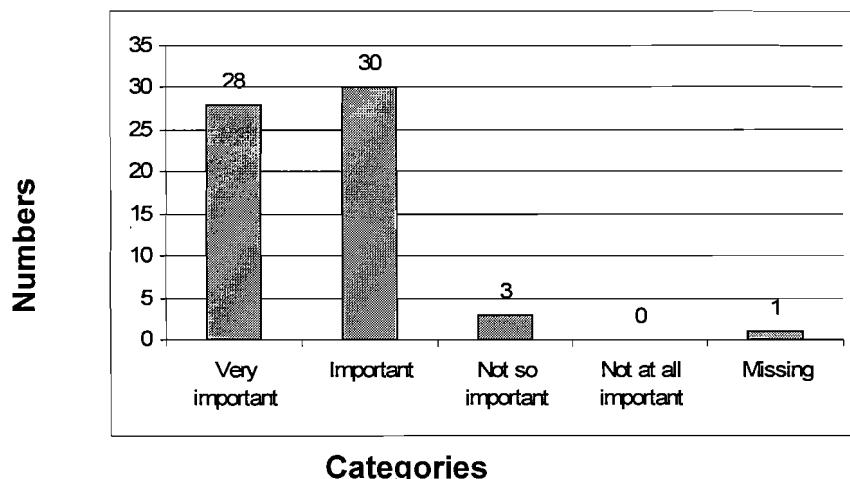


Figure 5.7 Importance of synthesis level of Bloom’s Taxonomy to develop ESL critical thinking skills

45 % (28) of the respondents showed that this level, the synthesis level of Bloom's Taxonomy, is very important and 48% (30) of the respondents indicated it as important. A number of 5% (3) of the respondents indicated that this level is not so important in the development of ESL learners' critical thinking skills. A total of 2 % (1) of the respondents did not answer the question. The following reasons were given by respondents to motivate their answers:

On this level the learner starts putting information together to get to new solutions to problems in a new and creative way (Colburn, 2003:4; Edmonson *et al.*, 2003:46) (cf.2.10.1.5). Synthesis involves combining elements to create new and different ideas (Gregory & Chapman, 2006:121) (cf. 2.10.1.5) and Armstrong (2000:117) (cf.2.10.1.5) uses the word "weave" to explain that the different parts get together to form a whole. Respondents made the following statements: synthesis allows the learner to "*internalize*" information to make it their own; "*combine previous and new knowledge gain*"; *in order to "create a new dimension of thought"*; "*the critical thinking process.*" "*It becomes part of their new conceptual framework.*" "*It is combining/ putting information together.*" One respondent gave the following example: "*it is to put sounds/syllables together again.* If learners can't, they will have *difficulty with reading and writing.*" This respondent also mentioned that it is an important skill for "*grammar, punctuation, language rules and put it all together*". Also mentioned by one respondent is: "*putting all the different skills of reading together and READ.*" The art of reading is a complicated skill since there are a lot of components or parts that make up reading, such as recognition of words, prediction and confirmation of words (Law & Eckes, 2000:112) (cf.2.8.2).

A few respondents also explained it as to "*communicate an idea, compiling important information is a skill and in problem solving/finding alternative solutions.*" Some respondents stipulated that learners "*need to be able to reason and explain alternative solutions to a problem.*"

Several respondents felt that: "This skill is not for primary schools learners."

Synthesis is seen as the process of combining old and new information together to create new solutions or ideas and critical thinking is to create and find alternative and innovative solutions. Therefore, synthesis is a skill that would be beneficial for the ESL learner to have. There were quite a few teachers that asserted that synthesis is not a skill that primary school ESL learners need. However, ESL learners would need the skill of synthesis to use during the writing and reading process especially.

5.4.6 Level 6: Evaluation level of Bloom's Taxonomy of cognitive objectives

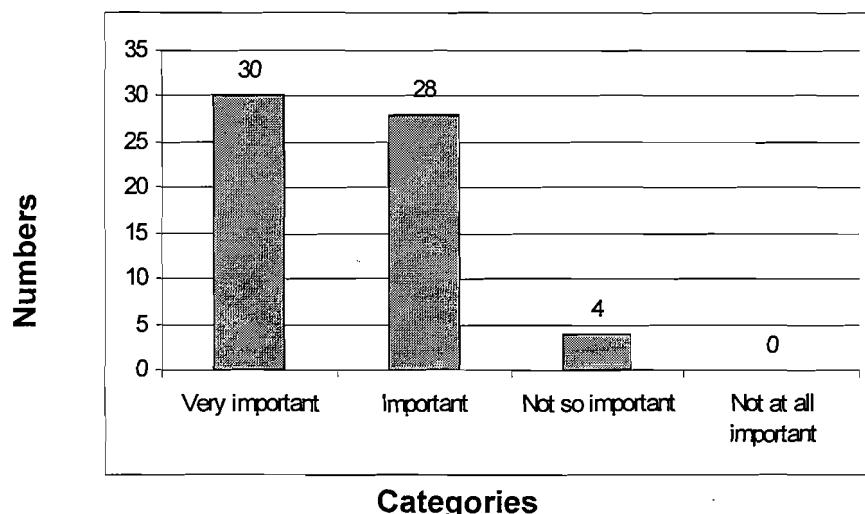


Figure 5.8 Importance of evaluation level of Bloom's Taxonomy to develop ESL critical thinking skills

The evaluation level of Bloom's taxonomy plays an important role in the development of critical skills for ESL learners, according to respondents. 49% (30) of the respondents indicated that it is very important in developing critical thinking skills and 45% (28) of the respondents indicated it as important. Only

6% (4) of the respondents indicated that this level is not so important to develop critical thinking skills.

According to Bloom this is the highest level of thinking (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1999:34) (cf.2.10.1.6). Sousa (2002:75) (cf.2.10.1.6) indicates that evaluation is the level most closely associated with creative thinking and this is when the learner is original, fluent and flexible in his thinking and ideas. Gregory and Chapman (2006:121) (cf.2.10.1.5) as well as Armstrong (2000:117) (cf.2.10.1.6) stated that when a learner is able to function at the last level of the taxonomy, namely evaluation, they will be able to rank/rate the value of information by judging it against a set of criteria.

The following statements were made by respondents: “*To be a critical thinker you must be able to present and defend your opinion based on the information you have collected.*” “*We do this daily, making judgments an evaluating it.*” “*Learners need to explore, voice their opinions or suggestions and give reason for it*”. At this level learners “*will start to ask questions; give their own opinions and recognize positive aspects and to improve on negative ones.*” One respondent indicated: “*that if learners cannot evaluate new ideas, they are unlikely to ever blossom into creative/ critical accomplishment.*”

ESL learners should be taught how to evaluate their own work with the guidance of the teacher (Gallager, 2008:125) (cf.2.10.1.6). According to Nation (2008:123;125) (cf. 2.10.1.6) learners need to get a chance to evaluate their own work and must be encouraged to get into a habit of checking their work before they give it to the teacher to assess. Most respondents saw evaluation “*as part of tests and assessment.*”

Some of the responses were that “*this is not expected of primary school learners and will be as future use of the learner; only grade 6 and 7 learners should be evaluated.*”

Respondents correctly indicated that learners need to start to ask questions at this level, voice their opinions and evaluate their own work. However, there were some teachers that felt it cannot be expected of ESL primary school learners to already evaluate their own work. According to Gallager (2008:125) (cf.2.10.1.6) ESL learners should be taught how to evaluate their own work with the guidance of the teacher. It seems that teachers still lack some knowledge and skills on how to guide the ESL learners to evaluate/judge their own work.

5.4.7 Conclusion

It is important to highlight a few responses of the respondents to emphasize that there still remains a lack of understanding with regard to the use of all the levels for all learners. Some respondents mentioned that the following levels: synthesis and evaluation is not needed for the primary school ESL learner. Respondents also stated that the analysis level is difficult for ESL learners and therefore need guidance.

Though, it appears that most educators have adequate knowledge of Bloom's taxonomy it is a concern that some respondents still have the opinion that certain levels, i.e. the synthesis and evaluation level, are not important for ESL learners. The ESL learner must learn to judge/ evaluate their work and give their opinions in order to think critically. Synthesis as mentioned before are needed for reading and writing and some respondents feel that primary school ESL learners do not need synthesis.

5.5 DIVISION C-TEACHING METHODS

Please indicate if you make use of the following method and how often

5.5.1 Direct instruction

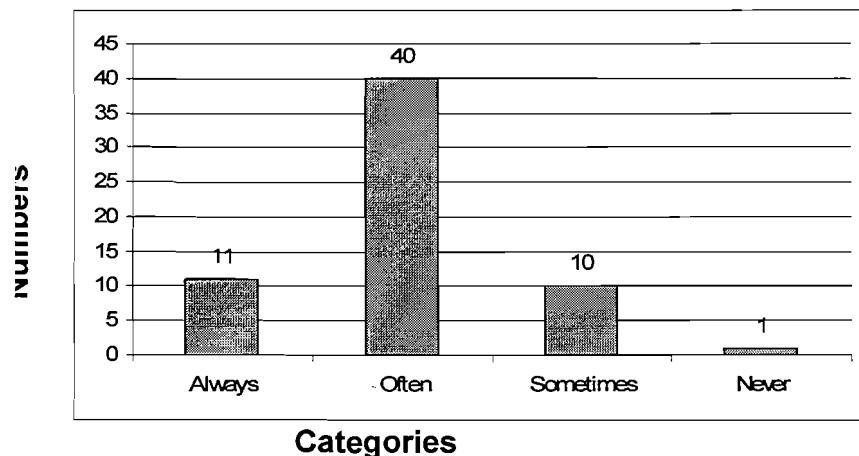


Figure 5.9 Direct teaching method

Direct instruction is still a popular method used by teachers (Killen, 1998:2) (cf.3.2.2) It was also found in this research study that direct instruction is a very popular method amongst the respondents. 64% (40) of the respondents indicated that they use it often. Only 2% (1) of the respondents felt that they never use the direct teaching method. 16% (10) of the respondents specified that they sometimes make use of this method. 18% (11) of the respondents specified that they always make use of this method during their teaching. Although all teaching methods are used it is obvious that direct teaching is still used as a main method of teaching which is not encouraged by Maney (1999:397) (cf.3.2.2) to develop critical thinking skills. Therefore it is clear that teachers still need to be trained with regard to choosing the best teaching methods to develop ESL learners' critical thinking skills.

5.5.1.1 Importance of direct teaching method in the teaching of critical thinking skills

How important do you think this type of method is in the teaching critical thinking skills?

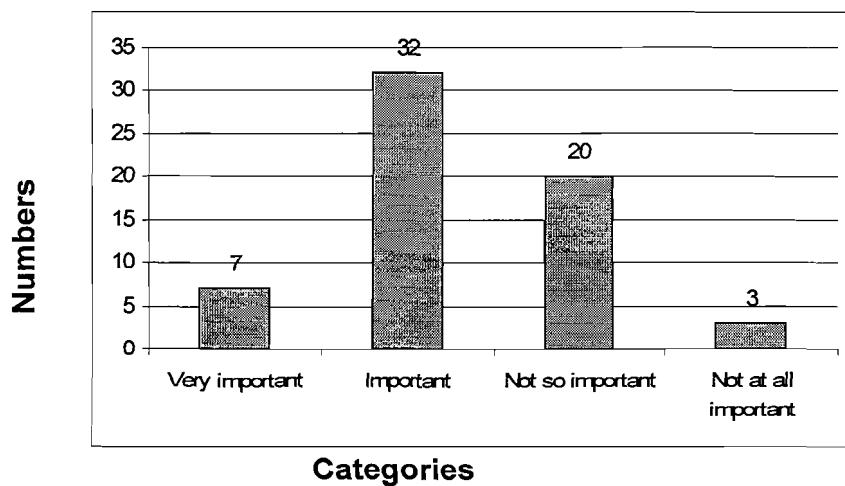


Figure 5.10 Importance of direct teaching method to develop critical thinking skills

11% (7) of the respondents deemed that direct instruction is very important and 52% (32) of the respondents stipulated that it is an important method in the teaching of critical thinking skills for ESL learners. 52%(32) indicated that they don't think it is so important in the teaching of critical thinking skills and 5%(8) of the respondents indicated that it is not at all important. Research supports that direct instruction is a successful method in teaching ESL learners (Queen, 2002:106). Direct instruction avoids frustration and creates a non-threatening environment for the learner, because learners do not have to talk so much. This is especially in the early stages of developing a second language (Brisk& Harrington, 2000:111; Killen, 2007:104) (cf. 3.2.2). Maney (1999:397) (cf.3.2.2) differ from Queen (2002:106) and feel that direct teaching does not develop critical thinking skills. From these results it is clear that teachers still need to be trained with regard to choosing the best teaching methods to develop critical thinking skills of ESL learners.

5.5.2 Indirect instruction

Please indicate if you make use of the following method and how often

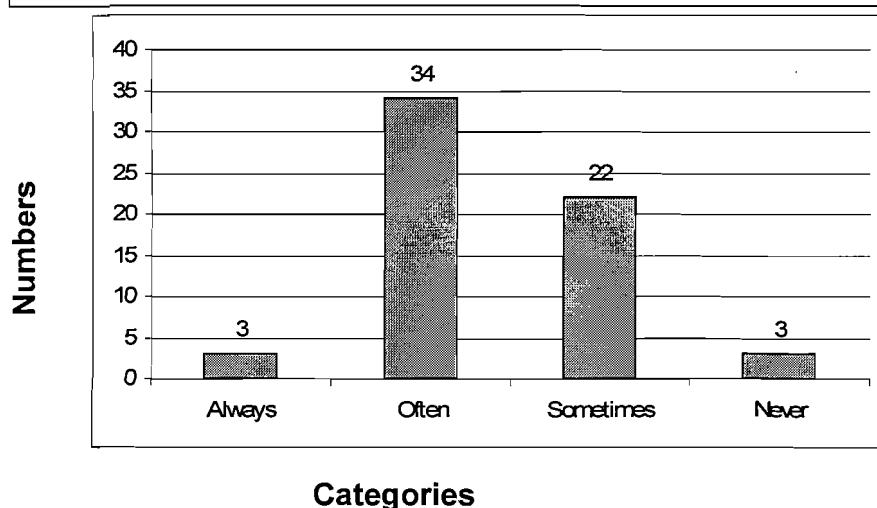


Figure 5.11 Indirect teaching method

The indirect teaching method is often used by 55% (34) of the respondents. A total of 5% (3) of the respondents always use the direct teaching method. 35% (22) of the respondents said that they sometimes make use of the indirect teaching method, while 5 % (3) of the respondents stated that they never use the indirect teaching method. Indirect instruction is a learner-centered method (Brumbaugh & Rock, 2006:10) (cf.3.2.3). Vakalisa (2004:5) explains it as participative learning and this kind of learning benefits the learner because they are allowed to express their view without the fear of pressure from either their friends or teacher. This result could be beneficial for the ESL learner since such a low percentage of teachers see this method as very important and important. Consequently, it appears that in most ESL classrooms ESL learners can feel free to express their opinions and make mistakes without being afraid of the teacher who will also promote critical thinking skills.

5.5.2.1 Importance of indirect teaching method in teaching of critical thinking skills

How important do you think this type of method is in the teaching critical thinking skills?

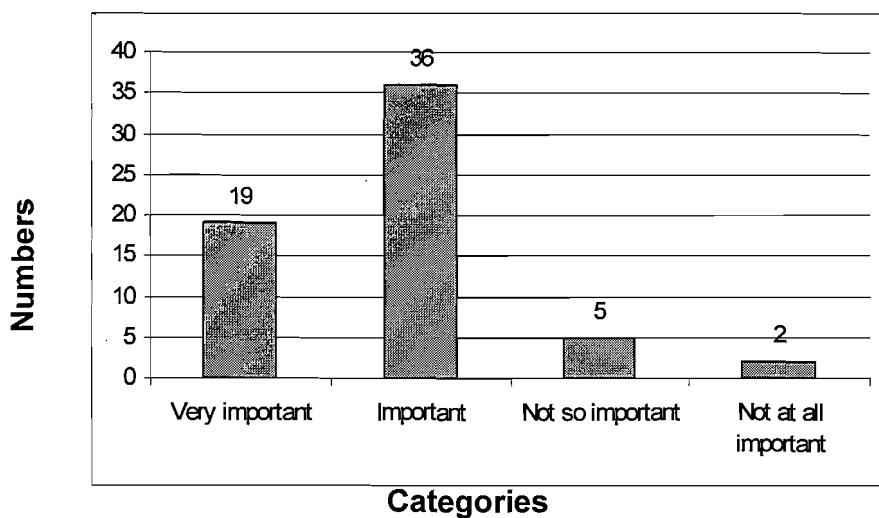


Figure 5.12 Importance of indirect teaching method to develop critical thinking skills

The indirect teaching method is important to 58% (36) of the respondents and very important to 31% (19) to teach critical thinking skills. 8% (5) of the respondents indicated that the indirect teaching method is not that important to develop critical thinking skills and 3% (2) of the respondents specified it as not important at all to respondents. The use of indirect instruction methods definitely promotes critical thinking skills and therefore these results are encouraging for ESL learners, since most teachers also agreed that this method is important (Brumbaugh & Rock, 2006:10) (cf. 3.2.3).

5.5.3 Question-answer method

Please indicate if you make use of the following method and how often

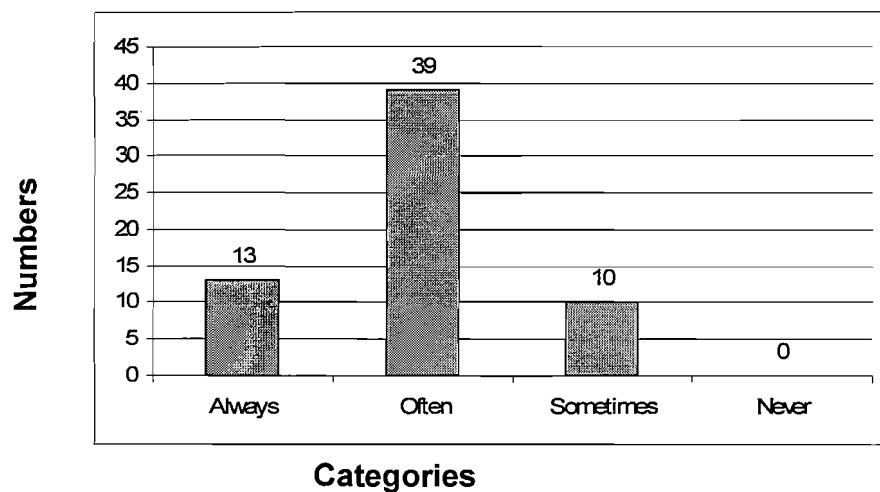


Figure 5.13 Question-answer method

Questioning is an essential method that teachers use since questions should be part of every teaching situation (Perrot, 2000:267) (cf.3.2.6). Consequently, all the respondents indicated that they make use of the question-answer method. This popular method is often used by 63% (39) of the respondents. A total of 21% (13) of the respondents always use this method during their teaching and 21% (10) of the respondents indicated that they sometimes use this method.

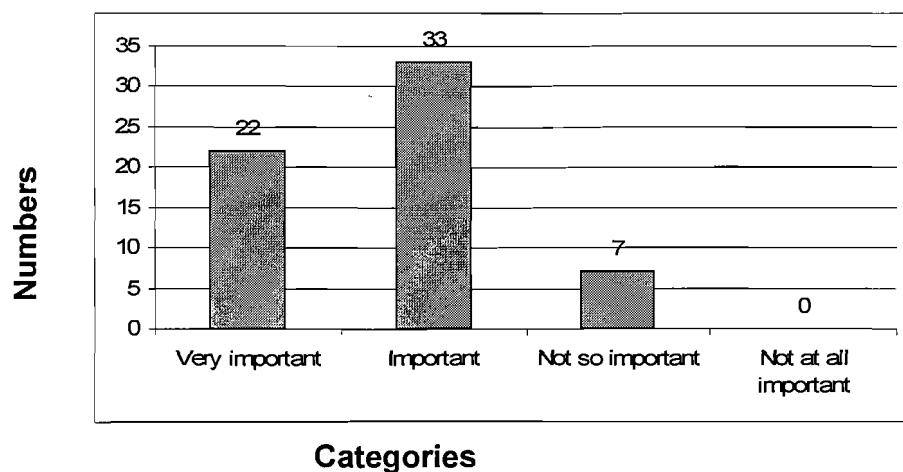


Figure 5.14 Importance of questioning to develop critical thinking skills

5.5.3.1. Importance of question-answer method in teaching of critical thinking skills

How important do you think this type of method is in the teaching critical thinking skills?

All the respondents that participated in this study use this method to teach critical thinking skills. None of the respondents indicated that it is not at all important. A total of 35% (22) of the respondents deemed that it plays a very important role and to 54% (33) of the respondents it was important in the teaching of critical thinking skills. A total of 11% (7) of the respondents felt that it is not so important. Mahaye and Jacobs (2004:188) (cf.3.2.6) explained that the teacher plays an important role to formulate questions, to avoid closed questions and to encourage critical thinking. These results showed that respondents know how to use the questions-answer method which is a very good sign for the development of ESL learners' critical thinking skills.

5.5.4 Discussion method

Please indicate if you make use of the following method and how often

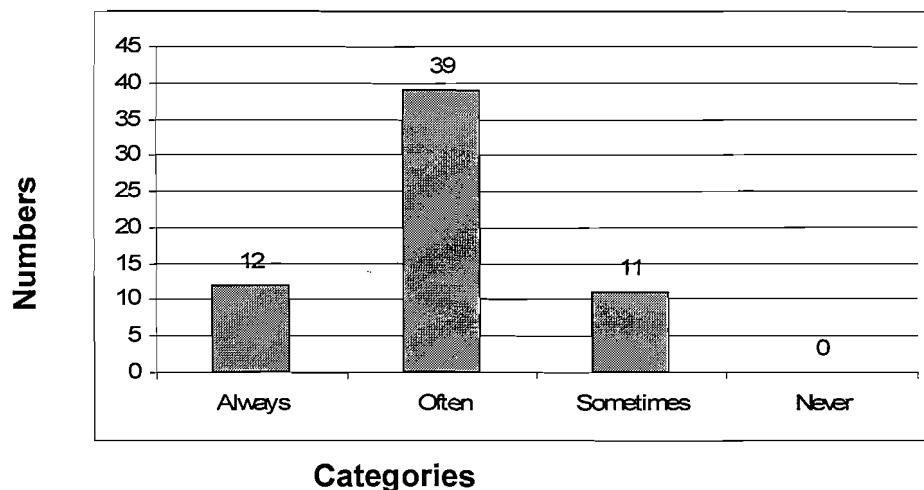


Figure 5.15 Discussion method

Shibley (2005:52) (cf. 3.2.4) stated that this method is nothing new for most teachers since it is one of the most common teaching methods that teachers use as it is such a natural activity in a classroom to enable teachers to talk about different issues (Killen, 2007:126) (c.f. 3.2.4). All of the respondents that participated in this study use the discussion method. A total of 63% (39) of the respondents use the discussion method often. 19% (12) of the respondents always use the discussion method during teaching and 18% (11) of the respondents use it sometimes. It is a good sign that teachers use the discussion method. Muijs and Reynolds (2005:48) (cf.3.2.4) assert that classroom discussion can accomplish three major learning goals: it encourages learner involvement, the ESL learners get a chance to voice their opinions; ESL learners must think before they voice their opinion as this develops better understanding; and it assists ESL learners with communication skills.

5.5.4.1 Importance of discussion teaching method in teaching of critical thinking skills

How important do you think this type of method is in the teaching critical thinking skills?

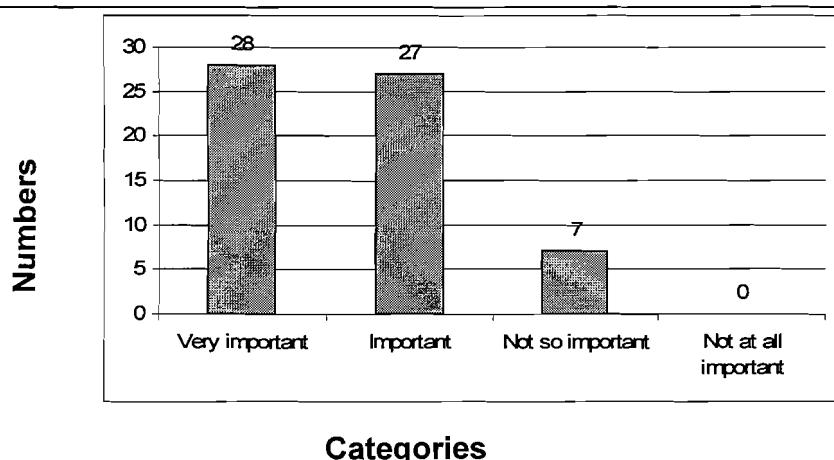
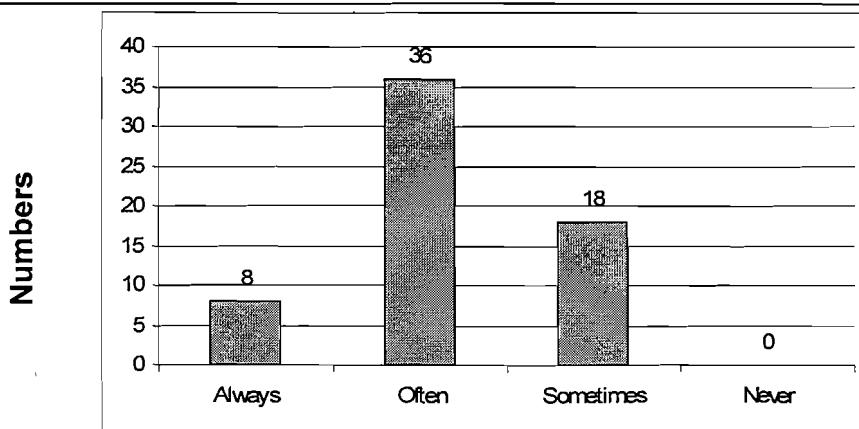


Figure 5.16 Importance of discussion method to develop critical thinking skills

11% (7) of the respondents judged this method as being not so important. Discussion is rated as very important by 45% (28) of the respondents and as important to 44 % (27) of the respondents. Teachers have the opportunity to use class discussion to promote critical thinking through class debates and discussions (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:177) (cf.3.2.4) and most of the respondents also acknowledged it and therefore this will enhance critical thinking skills of ESL learners.

5.5.5 Interactive method

Please indicate if you make use of the following method and how often



Categories
Figure 5.17 Interactive method

58% (36) of the respondent use the interactive method often and 13% (8) of the respondents always use it. A total of 29% (18) of the respondents sometimes make use of the interactive method. Vakalisa (in Jacobs, Vakalisa and Gawe, 2004:8) state that interactive method is necessary to change our learners from being passive learners, which some teachers in this study also complained about ESL learners are not yet proficient in English and this limits interaction in the classroom. Therefore, this method could take time to implement and possibly should be used in correlation with other teaching methods to develop ESL learners' critical thinking skills. The interactive method is an important method in

most classes and most respondents use the interactive method in their teaching. For ESL learners to learn to how to interact with their peers and teacher, becoming actively involved and not being passive learners this is a great method to use.

5.5.5.1 Importance of interactive teaching method in teaching of critical thinking skills

How important do you think this type of method is in the teaching critical thinking skills?

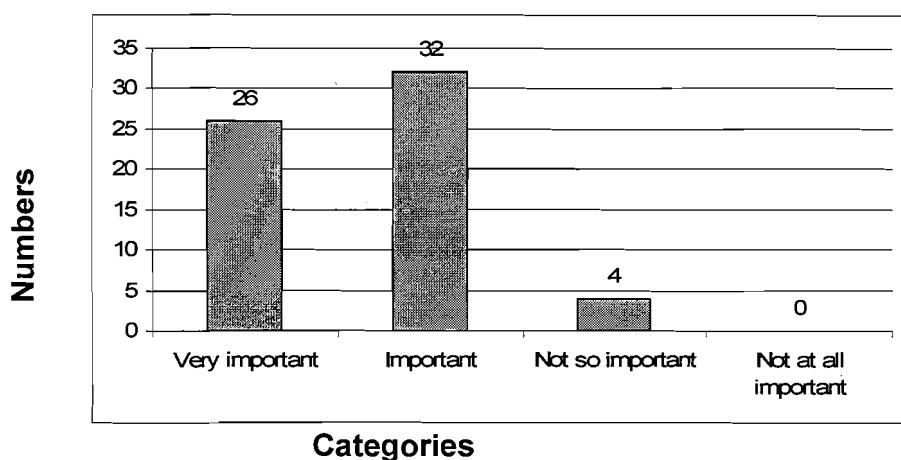


Figure 5.18 Importance of interactive teaching method to develop critical thinking skills

A total of 42% (26) of the respondents think that the interactive teaching method is very important and 52% (32) of the respondents indicated that it is important to them. Only 6% (4) of the respondents felt that it is not that important to them. Vakalisa (2004:10) stated that it is important that teachers break old habits of just using old traditional teaching methods and use these teacher-centered methods in correlation with learner-centered teaching methods, where a lot of learners were passive and not expressing their ideas. Interactive instruction is learner-centered and is the opposite of direct instruction. The learners learn by discovering information themselves (Brumbaugh and Rock, 2006:10) (cf.3.2.3)

and exploring, rather than being instructed directly by the teacher (Tilestone, 2004:68) (cf. 3.2.3). ESL learners need to get a chance to discover information for themselves and being part of this learning process will give them a sense of confidence.

5.5.6 Games

Please indicate if you make use of the following method and how often

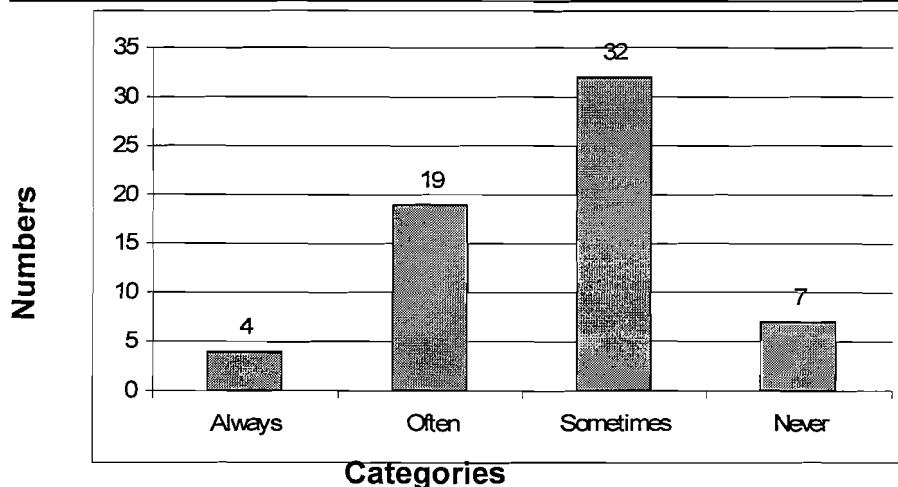


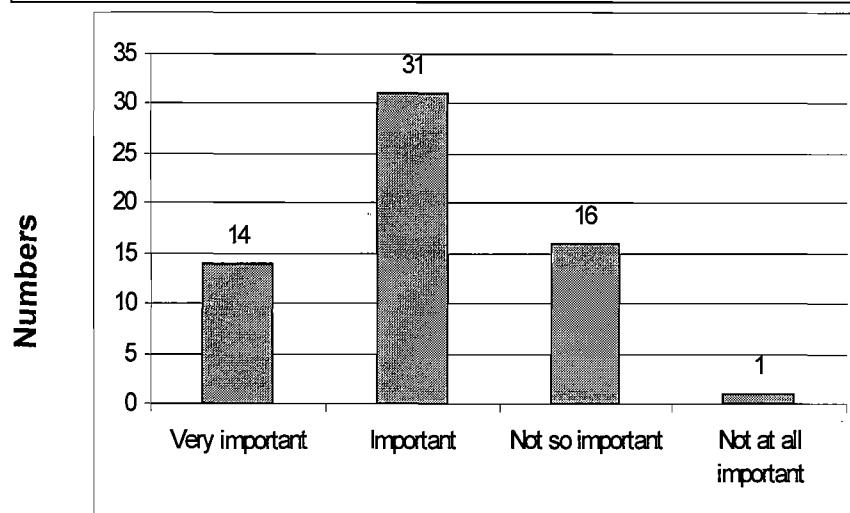
Figure 5.19 Games

A total of 52% (32) of the respondents indicated that they sometimes make use of this method. 31% (19) of the respondents often use games during their lessons and 6% (4) of the respondents always use this method. A total of 11% (7) respondents do not use this method. Most of the respondents also understand the value of games during teaching. Rooyackers (2001:1) (cf.3.2.8) state that by making lessons fun through games you will make the classroom environment more encouraging and effective for language learning. Miller (2003:54) (cf.3.2.8) as well as Law and Eckes (2000:204) (cf.3.2.8) confirm that the use of games is a good method to use in order to help ESL learners to communicate, because they simply have to talk to each other when playing. Games lower anxiety and this helps ESL learners to try to speak English more

easily and more automatically (Hirsch & Supple, 1996:12) (cf.3.2.8). Most of the respondents affirmed that they sometimes make use of games.

5.5.6.1 Importance of games in teaching of critical thinking skills

How important do you think this type of method is in the teaching critical thinking skills?



Categories

Figure 5.20 Importance of games as a teaching method to develop critical thinking skills

A total of 23% (14) of the respondents deemed that games play a very important role and is also important to 49% (31) of the respondents to teach language and critical thinking skills. A total of 26% (16) of the respondents deemed that it is not so important and 2% (1) of the respondents felt that this method is not important at all to develop critical thinking skills.

Language games are a fun way to develop vocabulary, verbal skills and general reasoning and critical thinking skills (Rooyackers, 2002:1)(cf.3.2.8) which should work well for ESL learners, since learning in a second language can be quite daunting. Word games develop language and thinking since learners need to solve problems during playing games; they also need to think about words; learn

the meaning of new words which leads to the memorization of words; and as a result it can also improve concentration span (Rooyackers, 2002:1-3) (cf.3.2.8). Most of the teachers agreed that games promote critical thinking skills in their ESL classrooms.

5.5.7 Story telling

Please indicate if you make use of the following method and how often

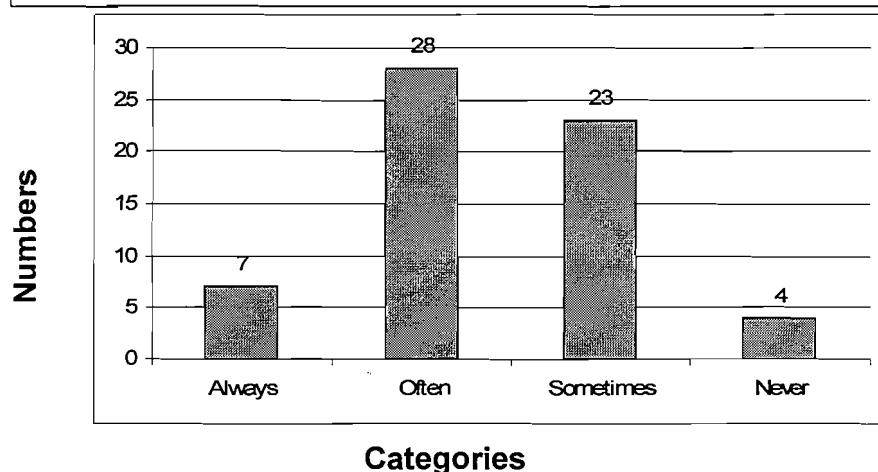
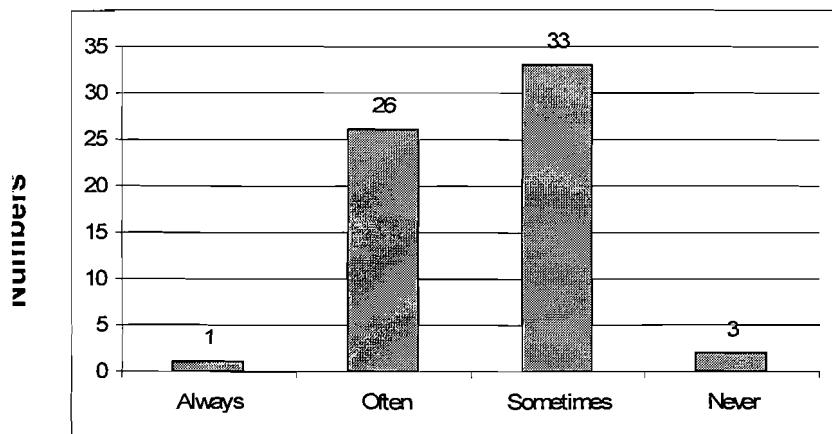


Figure 5.21 Popularity of story telling as a teaching method

A total of 46% (28) respondents often make use of story telling during their teaching. 37% (23) of the respondents sometimes use this method. 6% (4) of the respondents never use this method. 11% (7) of the respondents sometimes make use of this method. Balla (1999:14) (cf.3.2.9) also recommends story telling as a good method to develop critical thinking skills of ESL learners. According to the results most of the respondents also find story telling an effective method.

5.5.7.1 Importance of story telling as a teaching method to enhance critical thinking skills

How important do you think this type of method is in the teaching critical thinking skills?



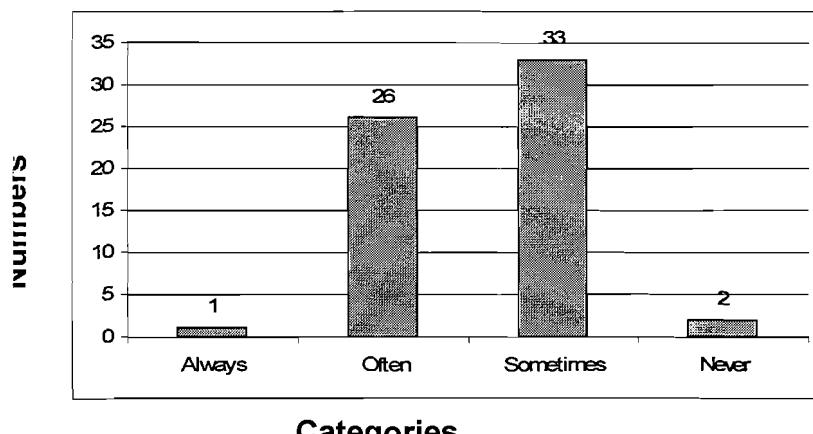
Categories

Figure 5.22 Importance of story telling as a teaching method to develop critical thinking skills

A high percentage, 53% (32) of the respondents, indicated that story telling is important to develop critical thinking skills. Another 26% (16) of the respondents think that it is very important. Story telling is not so important to 18 % (11) of the respondents and not important at all to 5% (3) of the respondents.

5.5.8 Co-operative learning

Please indicate if you make use of the following method and how often



Categories

Figure 5.23 Popularity of co-operative group work as a teaching method

Co-operative group work is often used by 42% (26) of the respondents. 2% (1) of the respondents always use co-operative group work. 53% (33) of the respondents sometimes use this method. 3% (2) of the respondents never use co-operative group work. Many teachers use cooperative teaching methods and this is very good since it teaches the ESL learner to take responsibility and ownership and to participate in his or her own learning (Larsen-Freeman, 2001:168) (cf.3.2.7). Co-operative group work methods are time-consuming, because it needs to be structured carefully and needs a lot of planning beforehand (Yearwood, 2008:68). (cf.3.2.7). Group work not only helps ESL learners to develop language, but also teaches them to use age appropriate language, because they are interacting with learners of their own age (Yearwood, 2008:68) (cf.3.2.7). Although group work is time-consuming teachers need to make time to use these methods. Most of the teachers indicated they sometimes make use of this method. Since this is a good method for ESL learners to stimulate conversation skills and also possibly critical thinking skills, teachers who never make use of this method may reconsider and spent some time on co-operative group work methods.

5.5.8.1 Value of co-operative group work as a teaching method to enhance critical thinking skills

How important do you think this type of method is in the teaching critical thinking skills?

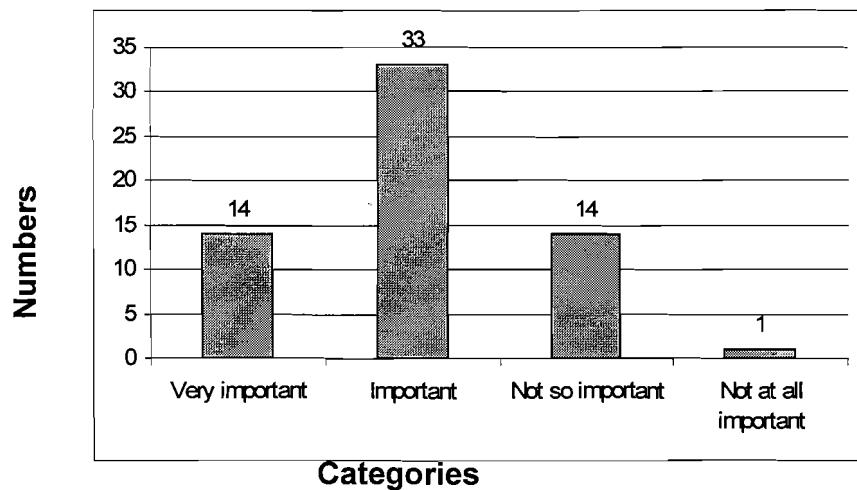


Figure 5.24 Importance of co-operative group work as a teaching method to develop critical thinking skills

As shown in table 5.24 a total of 52% (33) of the respondents indicated that co-operative group work is important and very important to 23% (14) of the respondents to develop critical thinking skills. 23% (14) of the respondents felt that it is not so important to them and the other 2 % (1) of the respondents deemed that it is not all important to them. The biggest percentage of respondents agreed that they think that group work helps to promote ESL learners' critical thinking skills. The teacher plays an important role in this method because teachers need to teach ESL learners to respect other learners' ideas and opinions and to justify their own opinions, which will also develop critical thinking skills (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:198) (cf.3.2.7).

5.5.9 Dramatisation

Please indicate if you make use of the following method and how often

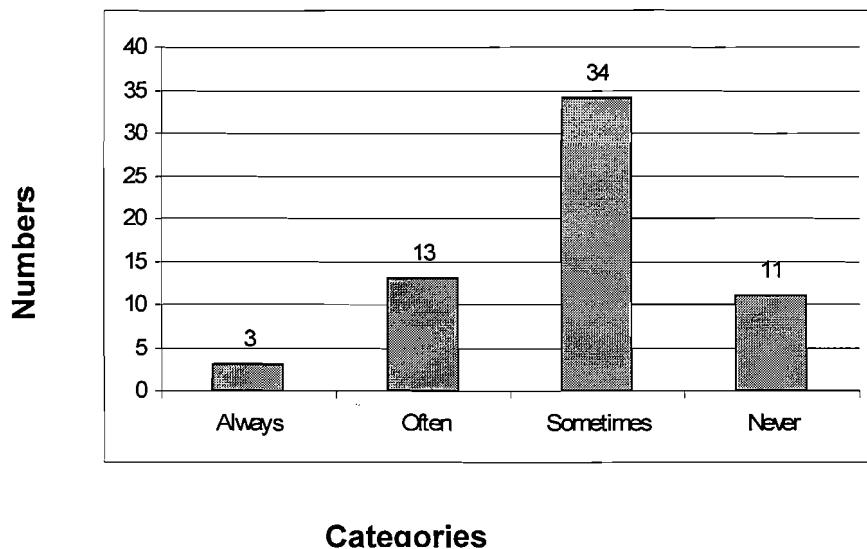


Figure 5.25 Popularity of dramatisation as a teaching method

This method is sometimes used by 56% (34) of the respondents. 5% (3) of the respondents indicated that they always use dramatisation and 21% (13) of the respondents deemed that they often make use of his method. 18% (11) of the respondents never use the dramatisation method. It is clear from these results that this is not one of the most popular methods, but as Mahaye and Jacobs (2004:198) (cf.3.2.9) explain, dramatisation is a time-consuming method and teachers must be enthusiastic and imaginative to make a success of this method. This method could be beneficial for the ESL language learner. Law and Eckes (2000:206) as well as Almond (2005:10-11) (cf.3.2.9) feel that dramatisation must be central to all curriculums and they explain the benefits for the ESL learner: It encourages spontaneous speaking; it develops basic listening skills; it develops vocabulary; it develops problem-solving; it builds confidence; and pays attention to broader communication skills such as, facial expressions, gestures and prosody (pitch, tone, volume and tempo of speech).

It is therefore, not difficult to understand why teachers don't use these methods as often as other methods, since they need to be enthusiastic and imaginative and maybe do not know how to execute this method.

5.5.9.1 Impact of dramatisation as a teaching method to enhance critical thinking skills

How important do you think this type of method is in the teaching critical thinking skills?

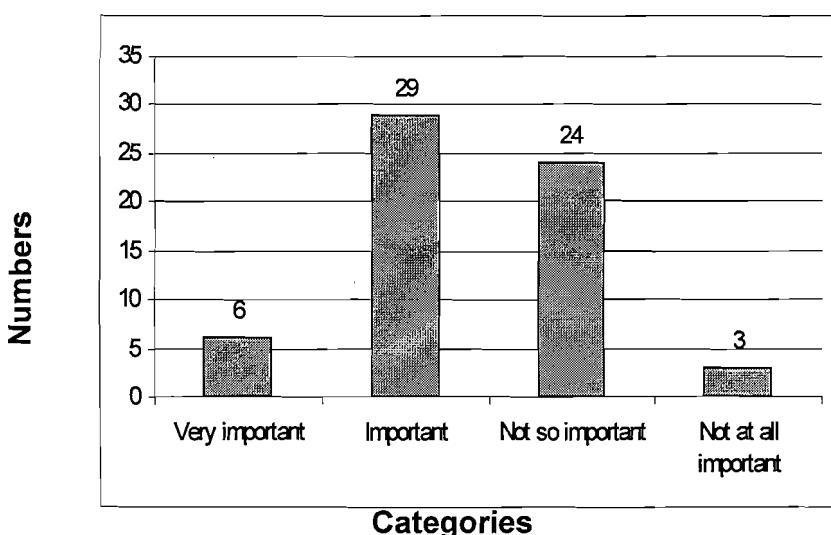


Figure 5.26 Importance of dramatisation as a teaching method to develop critical thinking skills

A total of 10% (6) of the respondents felt that dramatisation is very important to develop critical thinking skills. It is important to 46% (29) of the respondents. Dramatisation is not so important to 39% (24) of the respondents and 5% (3) of the respondents rated dramatisation as not important at all. Mahaye and Jacobs (2004:7) (cf.3.2.9) state that dramatisation sometimes fails to develop critical thinking skills, and therefore it is good that teachers don't make use of this method too often. Teachers who are comfortable with this method should use dramatisation, because it has a lot of advantages as mentioned above (cf.5.5.9). Creative and passionate teachers can make a success of this method (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:198) (cf.3.2.9) and consequently develop critical thinking skills.

5.5.10 Instructional scaffolding

Please indicate if you make use of the following method and how often

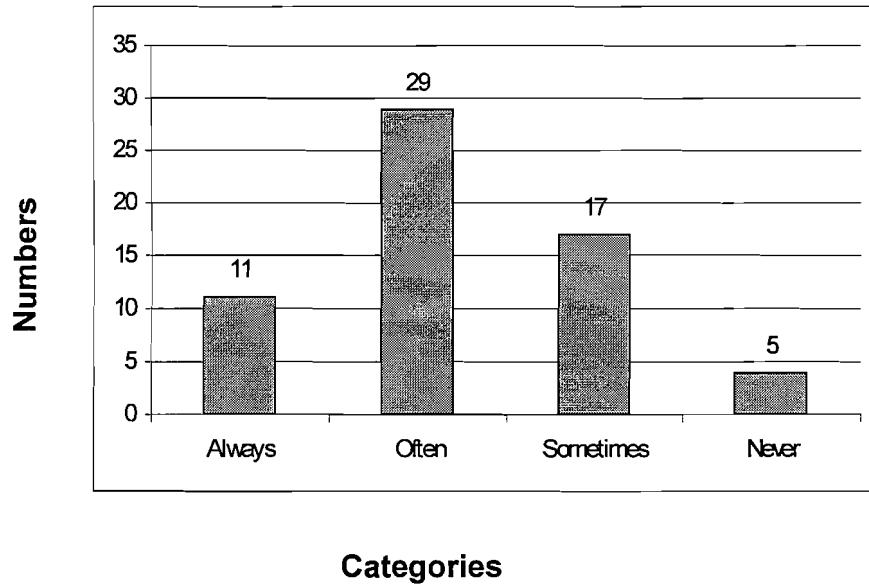


Figure 5.27 Popularity of instructional scaffolding as a teaching method

Instructional scaffolding is often used by 47% (29) of the respondents. 18% (11) of the respondents indicated that they always use instructional scaffolding. 28% (17) of the respondents sometimes use instructional scaffolding and 8% (5) of the respondents never use this method. Hartas, (2005:117) (cf.3.2.5) asserts that most teachers use instructional scaffolding without even realising it. According to most of the respondents scaffolding is important and they often use scaffolding. This is an important method to use when teaching ESL learners as Hartas (2005: 16) (cf.3.2.5) explained that scaffolding can enhance a child's communication, cognitive as well as linguistic skills. Glasgow and Farrell (2007:351) (cf.3.2.5) declare that research has shown that learners are able to master early English second language reading skills by using appropriate scaffolding (Salkind, 2004:238) (cf.3.2.5) and it appears as if teachers understand the importance of this method for ESL learners.

5.5.10.1 Importance of instructional scaffolding as a teaching method to enhance critical thinking skills

How important do you think this type of method is in the teaching critical thinking skills?

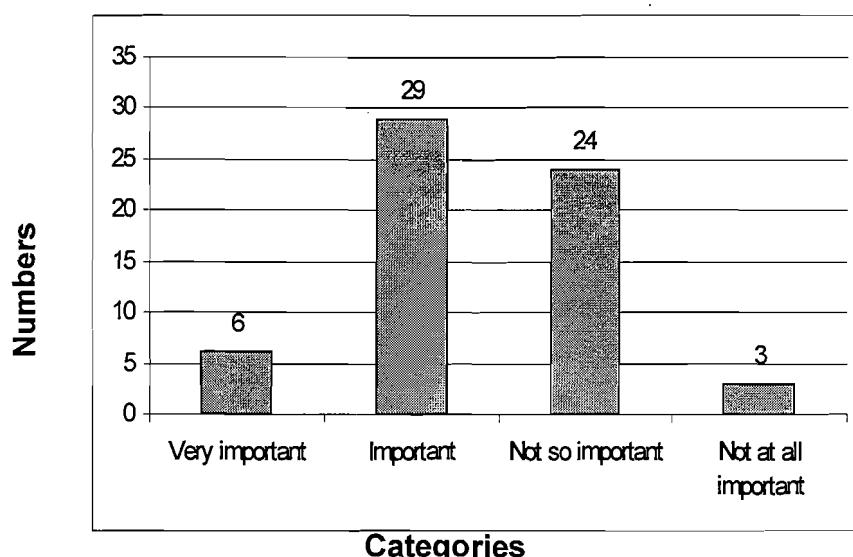


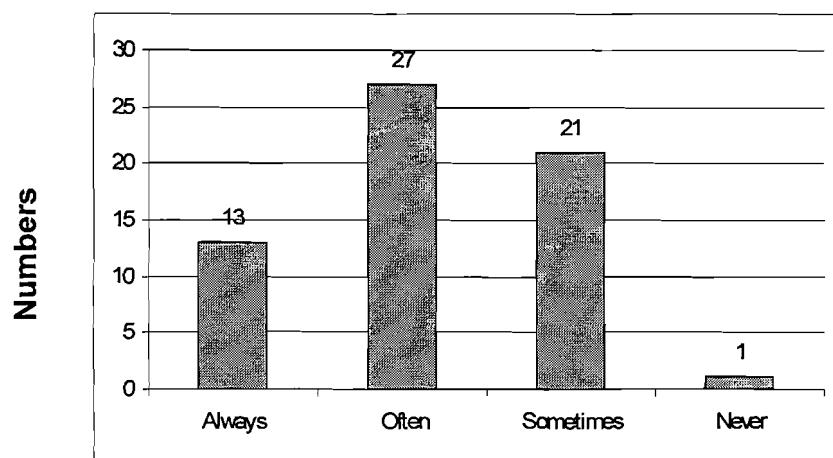
Figure 5.28 Importance of instructional scaffolding as a teaching method to develop critical thinking skills

Instructional scaffolding is very important to 35% (21) of the respondents and important to 53% (32) of the respondents. 12% (7) of the respondents think that instructional scaffolding is not so important to develop critical thinking skills. Instructional scaffolding is important to develop critical thinking skills. Zwiers (2004:30) (cf.3.2.5) state that thinking skills are abstract and difficult to teach, but this method allows the learner to break thinking down into more concrete components and to practice these components with the support of the teacher. Most of the respondents use instructional scaffolding which will definitely help to develop ESL learners' critical thinking skills because scaffolding helps the ESL learners to develop cognitive skills. However, it is important that the teacher

gradually withdraws support as the learners gain knowledge and confidence and take responsibility for their own learning (Frances, 2005:44) (cf.3.2.5).

5.5.11 Problem-solving

Please indicate if you make use of the following method and how often



Cateaories

Figure 5.29 Popularity of problem-solving as a teaching method

43% (27) of the respondents indicated that they often use problem-solving as a teaching method. A total of 34% (27) of the respondents sometimes use problem-solving methods. 21% (13) of the respondents always use problem-solving strategies during their teaching. 2% (1) of the respondents never make use of this method. Problem-solving is important to many of the respondents.

Problem-solving encourages learners to take more responsibility for their own learning and teachers need to guide ESL learners through this process (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:200) (cf.3.2.10). It is therefore good that many teachers use problem-solving strategies in their classrooms to encourage the ESL learner to take responsibility for their own learning. Research (Sousa, 2005: 109) (cf.3.2.7) has shown that learners need to engage in a great deal of oral interaction, problem solving and determining meaning if they are to achieve a high level of

proficiency in the second language. Therefore, if most of the respondents also judge problem-solving as important and uses it often ESL learners could get the opportunity to achieve a high-level of proficiency in their second language.

5.5.11.1 Importance of problem-solving as a teaching method to enhance critical thinking skills

How important do you think this type of method is in the teaching critical thinking skills?

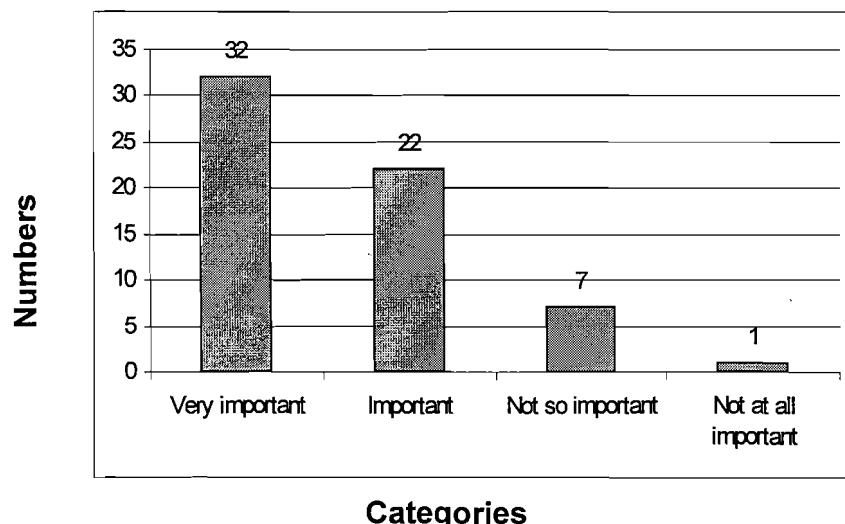


Figure 5.30 Importance of problem-solving as a teaching method to develop critical thinking skills

Problem-solving methods are important to 35% (22) of the respondents and very important to 52% (32) of the respondents. 11% (7) of the respondents deemed that is not important at all and 2% (1) of the respondents does not agree that this method is at all important to develop critical thinking skills. Problem-solving is a method that encourages reasoning as well as critical thinking skills (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:200) (cf.3.2.10) and therefore these results are very encouraging.

5.6 TIME/PERCENTAGE SPENT DAILY ON A SPECIFDIC TEACHING METHOD

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they used the specific teaching method and secondly, they were asked to indicate the percentage they spent during a day on the specific method.

Please tick the teaching method that you use during instruction. If answered yes, please indicate the percentage that you spent on this method during the day. 100%, 90%, 80%, 70%, 60%, 50%, 40%, 30%, 20% or 10%

5.6.1 Direct instruction on a daily basis

98 % (61) of the respondents indicated that they use direct instructions on a daily basis and 2% (1) respondent does not use the direct instruction method during instruction. The large percentage still using this method can be a concern, since Maney (1999:397) (cf.3.2.2) asserted that it is not the best method to develop critical thinking skills.

5.6.1.1 2% (1) respondent uses direct instruction 10% of the day. 6% (4) of the respondents use this method 20% of the day and another 6% (4) of the respondents uses direct instruction 30% of the day. 8% (5) of the respondents deemed that they use direct instruction 40% during daily instruction. 18% (11) of the respondents indicated 50%. 10% (6) of the respondents use direct instruction 60% of the time; 18% (11) respondents 70%; 19% (12) respondents 80%; and 10% (6) respondents use direct instruction 90% during daily instruction. Only 2% (1) respondent uses direct instruction 100% during daily instruction. The majority of respondents use direct instruction about 80% of their daily instruction time on the direct instruction method. Teachers need to incorporate other methods into their daily time that they have available for instruction. These results showed that

teachers are spending too much time on direct instruction. This will not give the ESL learner the necessary opportunities to participate in the learning activities, since this method is more teacher-centered (Maney, 1999:397) (cf.3.2.2). As mentioned before, this is a concern as this is not the best method to develop the thinking skills of ESL learners.

5.6.2 Indirect instruction on a daily basis

Indirect instruction is used by 87% (54) of the respondents on a daily basis and 13% (8) of the respondents do not use the indirect instruction daily. This result has positive consequences for the development of critical thinking skills of ESL learners, as indirect instruction methods promote an increase in critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Brumbaugh & Rock, 2006:10) (cf.3.2.3).

5.6.2.1 11% (7) respondents use indirect instruction 10 % of the day. 16% (10) respondents use indirect instruction 20% during their instruction time. 13% (8) respondents deemed they use indirect instruction 30% of the day. 18% (11) respondents indicated that they make use of indirect instruction 40% of the day and another 15% (9) of the respondents stated they spent 70% of their time on indirect instruction. 5% (3) respondents use indirect instruction 80% on a daily basis. Only 2% (1) respondent uses indirect instruction 90% of a day and another 2% (1) of the respondents use this method 100% during instruction. Most respondents use indirect instruction about 40% of the day. Most of the respondents use this method 70% of the day. This result is positive because the indirect instruction methods lead to the development of critical thinking skills of ESL learners (Brumbaugh & Rock 2006:10) (cf.3.2.3). Table 3.1 (cf.3.2.3) showed a comparison between traditional behavioral (Direct methods) and the cognitive approaches (Indirect methods) as well as indicated all the advantages of the indirect teaching methods which will benefit the ESL learner.

5.6.3 Question- answer method on a daily basis

97% (60) of the respondents and the other 3% (2) of the respondents do not use this method. The question and answer method is a good method to develop critical thinking skills for ESL learners, however, it must be remembered that questions must be used purposefully (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:188) (cf.3.2.6).

5.6.3.1 10% (6) respondents felt that they use the question-answer method 20% another 10% (6) of the respondents use this method 80% daily. 15% (9) respondents indicated that they use the question-answer method 30% of the day and another 15% (9) of the respondents use this method 40% of the day. Another 15% (9) of the respondents deemed that they spent 70% of their time on this method. 6% (4) respondents felt they use the question-answer method 10% and 8% (5) of the respondents uses it 50% during instruction. 13% (8) respondents deem that they use it 90% of the time; none of the respondents use this method more than 90%. 13% (8) of the respondents spent 80% of their time on the question-answer method. To ask questions seems to play a vital role in most of the teachers' daily routines and this is good. However, teachers need to focus on the kind of questions they ask their ESL learners if they want to promote critical thinking skills (McKnight & Berlage, 2007:17) (cf.3.2.6). ESL learners should be asked more open-ended questions if teachers want to promote critical thinking skills since these are the questions that do not focus on just one right answer (Perrot, 2000:267) (cf.3.2.6).

5.6.4 Discussion method on a daily basis

The discussion method is used daily by 97% (60) of the respondents and the other 3% (2) of the respondents indicated that they do not use this method. Since the discussion method is one of the better methods (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:177) (cf.3.2.4) to develop critical thinking skills this is good result and

another positive indication for the development of ESL learners' critical thinking skills.

5.6.4.1 10% (6) of the respondents spent 10% of their time on the discussion method. 10% (6) of the respondent use the discussion method 60% of the day and 10% (6) use this method 70% of the day. 8% (5) respondents use this method 20% on a daily basis and 11% (7) respondent 30%. 15% (9) respondents use the discussion method 40% on a daily basis. 8% (5) respondents stated that they use this method 50% during their instruction time. 16% (10) respondents use the discussion method 80% on a daily basis and 6% (4) of the respondents spent 90% of their day on the discussion method. None of the respondents use this method 100% of the day. Most of the respondents use the discussion method 80% of the day. Discussion is one of the methods that provides the opportunity for teachers to encourage the ESL learner to think critically, through effective questioning and class debates (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:177) (cf.3.2.4). These results are excellent for the development of ESL learners' critical thinking skills.

5.6.5 Games method on a daily basis

Games are used by 79% (49) of the respondents. 21% (13) of the respondents indicated that they do not use games daily. Since games are an informal way to stimulate communication and critical thinking it creates comfortable and safe circumstances for ESL learners to want to communicate and think in. It is therefore a positive sign that so many teachers are using this method, but the other respondents should be encouraged to use it more.

5.6.5.1 16% (10) respondents spent 10% of their time on a daily basis on games to teach their ESL learners. 18% (11) of the respondents use games 20% of the day. 11% (7) use it 30% and 11% (7) of the respondents use games 50% of the day to teach. 13% (8) use games 40% during instruction and only 2% (1)

respondent stated that this method is used 60% on a daily basis by them. 3 % (2) respondents spent 80% of their instruction time on games. 5% (3) use games 90% of their time to teach learners. Most respondents use games 20% of the day. Games are a good method to use to develop language and thinking skills of ESL learners (Rooyackers, 2002:1) (cf.3.2.8). Another advantage of games is that it lowers anxiety and this helps ESL learners to try to speak English more easily and more automatically (Hirsch & Supple, 1996:12) (cf.3.2.8). Consequently, these results are encouraging for the development of ESL language learners' critical thinking skills.

5.6.6 Story telling on a daily basis

A total of 89% (55) of the respondents indicated that they use story telling during instruction. 11% (7) of the respondents indicated that they don't use story telling during daily instruction. Storytelling is an essential method for ESL learners to develop language proficiency and critical thinking skills, especially for primary school learners (Balla, 1999:15) (cf.3.2.9). It is, therefore, an optimistic result that so many teachers are using this method. It should, however, be encouraged to be used by all teachers on a regular basis.

5.6.6.1 16% (10) respondents use story telling 10% on a daily basis. 18% (11) respondents use stories 20% of the day. 11% (7) said that they use it 30 % of their instruction time. 13% (8) respondents use stories 40% and 50% of the day. 3% (2) respondents stated that they spent 60% and 70% and 100% on telling stories. 2% (1) respondent uses this method 80% of the day and 6% (4) respondents use it 90% on a daily basis. Stories are mostly used 20% of the day. Teachers do make use of stories when teaching ESL language learners but is used and is encouraging for the development of ESL language learners' critical thinking skills. Theron and Nel (2005:237) developed an intervention support programme in story format to develop the language proficiency of ESL learners

and could be maybe introduced to those teachers that do not think that this is a good method to use to teach ESL learners.

5.6.7 Co-operative group work on a daily basis

Co-operative group work is used by 92% (57) of the respondents during instruction. A total of 8% (5) of the respondents indicated that they do not use co-operative group work on a daily basis.

Communication is an integral part of group work and, therefore, this method will help learners' thinking and listening skills to develop (Dong, 2004:210) (cf.3.2.7). This result showed that teachers use co-operative methods regularly and this is encouraging for the development of ESL learners' critical thinking skills.

5.6.7.1 Co-operative group work is used by 21% (13) of the respondents 10% of the day. 13% (8) deemed that they use this method 20% and 13% (8) use group work 40% of the day. 16% (10) respondents use this method 30% of the day, 15% (9) respondents spent 50% on group work daily. 3% (2) respondents use it 60% of the day and 6% (4) respondents 70%. 2% (1) respondent indicated that they use it 80%. None of the respondents indicated that they use group work 90% or more of the day. Most of the respondents use group work 10% of the day, but it is understandable since that this method could be time-consuming. However, a buddy-system could be implemented where an ESL learner is paired with a learner that is capable in English and who can assist the ESL learner when necessary (Lisi, et al., 2004:56) (cf.3.2.7).

5.6.8 Dramatisation on a daily basis

A total of 79% (49) of the respondents do not use dramatisation during instruction. 21% (13) of the respondents indicated that they do not use dramatization during daily instruction. Mahaye and Jacobs (2004:7) (cf.3.2.9) assert that dramatistion sometimes fails to develop critical thinking skills, but

Law & Eckes (2000:206) (cf.3.2.9) as well as Almond (2005:10-11) (cf.3.2.9) feel that dramatisation must be central to all curriculums because it has many advantages. Therefore, these results will benefit ESL learners, especially to develop a better self-esteem.

5.6.8.1 None of the respondents uses this method on a daily basis more than 90-100% during their instruction time. 3% (2) stated that they use it 70% and 80% during the day. 5% (3) of the respondents use dramatisation 60% during instruction. 2% (1) respondent spent 50% of lessons on this method. 8% (5) respondents said they use dramatisation 40% of the day and 10% (6) respondents use it 30% of the teaching time; and 16% (10) of the respondents use it 20% on a daily basis. 32% (200 of the respondents spent 10% of their daily class time on dramatisation. Dramatisation is mostly used 10% of the day. This method is not easy for all teachers to implement, because not all of the teachers have the same personalities and are not as enthusiastic and creative as other teachers may be (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:198) (cf.3.2.9). This method has a lot of advantages (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:198) (cf.3.2.9) and teachers who are comfortable using this method should continue to do so.

5.6.9 Instructional scaffolding on a daily basis

A total of 87% (54) of the respondents use instructional scaffolding daily. The other 13% (8) of the respondents do not use instructional scaffolding every day. ESL learners are expected to learn English as a language, as well as, develop critical thinking skills in English at the same time (Baker, 2007:157) (cf.3.2.5), therefore, it is so important that the teacher uses instructional scaffolding to promote critical thinking skills. According to these results teachers are using instructional scaffolding to guide and support their ESL learners and mutually develop critical thinking skills.

5.6.9.1 13% (8) of the respondents use instructional scaffolding 70% and 80% on a daily basis. 8% (5) of the respondents stated that they use it, 30%, 40% and 60% of the day. 5% (3) respondents use this method 10% of the day and 18% (11) respondents use it 20% of daily instruction. 2% (1) respondent uses instructional scaffolding 90% of the day. 3% (2) respondents feel that they use instructional scaffolding 100% of the day. Most of the respondents think that they use instructional scaffolding 20% of the day. Scaffolding in teaching refers to both the teacher and the learner “building” together and support is only removed when the learner is ready (Davies *et al.*, 2002:146) (cf.3.2.5). When teaching ESL learners, scaffolding is an excellent way of support, because the teacher builds bridges between what the learners already know and what they need to know (Salkind, 2004:283)(cf.3.2.5) These results showed that teachers know what scaffolding means and are being implemented in their teaching methods and therefore, promotes meaningful learning and critical thinking skills of ESL learners.

5.6.10 Problem-solving on a daily basis

98% (61) of the respondents use problem-solving daily during instruction. Only 2 % (1) of the respondents use this method on a daily basis. These results are excellent for the development of critical thinking skills of ESL learners. Glasgow and Hicks (2003:113) (cf.2.8) stress that it is important for teachers to provide opportunities for interesting activities to promote problem-solving and critical thinking skills of ESL learners.

5.6.10.1 10% (6) of the respondents indicated that they use problem-solving methods 30%, 40% and 90% of the day. 13% (8) respondents use problem-solving methods 10% and 18% (11) of the respondents 20% of the day. 8% (5) respondents deemed that they spent half of their day (50%) on problem-solving. 3% (2) respondents use it 70% of the day and 15% (9) respondents spent 80% of instructional time on problem-solving. None of the respondents spent 100% of

their time on this method. Problem-solving methods are generally used 20% of the day. Davis-Seaver and Davis (2000:9) (cf.2.7) state that critical thinking is the ability to think creatively, make decisions, solve problems, visualize, observe, reason, and is characterized by originality and uniqueness. Therefore, problem-solving forms a big part of critical thinking and ESL learners should get the opportunity to solve problems and take responsibility for their own learning to achieve a high level of proficiency in the second language (Sousa, 2005: 109) (cf. 3.2.7). Respondents indicated that they use problem-solving often and this will have a constructive effect on the development of ESL learners' language proficiency and critical thinking skills.

5.6.11 Recommended methods by respondents to improve critical thinking skills.

Respondents were asked to list any method that was not mentioned in this study that could improve the development of critical thinking skills. They were also asked to motivate their answer.

Are there any methods that are not listed above that you would recommend for improving critical thinking skills in ESL teaching? If yes, please motivate your answer.

Only one respondent gave the following recommendation:

The respondent suggested the implementation of the Thrass programme. "Thrass- teaching handwriting, reading and spelling skills- UK system, charts are interactive, supportive and clear for ESL learners";

The THRASS (Teaching, Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills) Absa TalkTogether Project is an educational partnership that is aiming to transform the education and learning of language in South Africa. The Project revolves around

44 songs that teachers can sing with children to help them understand the 44 sounds and 120 main spelling selections of English (Mecoamere, 2007:10).

5.7 RANKING OF DIFFERENT GENERAL STATEMENTS MADE ABOUT TEACHING METHODS AND CRITICAL THINKING.

Respondents were asked to rank each of the 15 statements made. Some of the questions were adopted from Grösser & Lombard (2004:213).

Rank the following questions to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement by using the following rating scale:

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Not sure 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

5.7.1 I ask a lot of questions in class

A total of 32% (20) of the respondents strongly agreed and 49% (30) agreed that they ask a lot of questions. Only 3% (2) of the respondents strongly disagreed and 8% (5) of the respondents disagreed that they do not ask a lot of questions. A total of 8% (5) of the respondents were not sure if they ask a lot of questions. These results confirmed the literature. According to Fisher and Frey (2007:56) (cf.3.2.6) teachers can ask between 300 and 400 questions a day, however, they need to plan their questions carefully in order to use it effectively. The largest part of the respondents affirmed that they ask a lot of questions in their classes.

5.7.2 I ask open-ended questions that do not assume the “one right answer”?

Mahaye and Jacobs (2004:188) (3.2.6) explain that teachers must formulate questions that will encourage insight and creative thinking and not just simple yes or no questions, also referred to as closed questions, which do not motivate the learners to think about the questions. The majority of teachers also concurred this. A total of 19% (12) of the respondents strongly agreed and 45% (28) of the

respondents agreed that they don't assume only one right answer to a question. 11% (7) of the respondents disagreed and 2% (1) of the respondents strongly disagreed with this statement. A total of 23% (14) of the respondents indicated that they are not sure. These results are optimistic for the development of ESL learners' critical thinking skills, since most of the teachers indicated that they ask their ESL learners open-ended questions to encourage critical thinking and avoid questions with only "one right answer". These types of closed-questions do not promote critical thinking skills (McKnight & Berlage, 2007:17) (cf.3.2.6).

5.7.3 I allow my learners to ask questions

54% (33) of the respondents strongly agreed and 37% (23) of the respondents agreed that they give their learners the opportunity to ask questions. Only 3% (2) of the respondents strongly disagreed that they don't allow their learners to ask questions. A total of 6% (4) of the respondents were not sure about this question.

Bender *et al.* (1997:72) (cf.3.2.6.) affirm that the biggest challenge teachers' face is to encourage learners to ask questions to both the teacher and the other learners in their class, especially ESL learners that feel uncomfortable with the language of communication. Therefore, it is important that teachers constantly try to allow their learners also to ask questions. Most of the respondents allow their learners to ask questions and this, therefore, is positive for the development of ESL learners' critical thinking skills.

5.7.4 I use stories to develop critical thinking

A total of 40% (25) of the respondents agreed and 15% (9) strongly agreed that they use stories to develop critical thinking skills. 13% (8) of the respondents disagreed with this statement and 7% (4) of the respondents strongly disagreed. The rest of the respondents, 25% (15) were not sure if stories develop critical

thinking skills. The literature (cf.3.2.9) confirms that stories are an excellent method to teach language to ESL learners. This is especially applicable when a story is predictable, makes use of repetition and uses vocabulary representing the school, home or things relating to them (Phenix, 2002:23) (cf. 3.2.9). There are still a lot of teachers who are unsure about the fact that stories could develop critical thinking skills and this need to be addressed. Teachers could be introduced to a supportive intervention programme in story format that has a lot of advantages for ESL learners (Theron & Nel, 2005:237).

5.7.5 Interaction encourages learners to learn from each other

A total of 27% (17) of the respondents strongly agreed and 47% (29) agreed that their interaction encourages learners to learn from each other. 8% (5) of the respondents did not agree that interaction encourages learners to learn from each other. A total of 18% (11) of the respondents were unsure about the question. Literature (cf.3.2.7) confirms that the more ESL learners communicate and interact with each other, the better the chances are that these learners' thinking and listening skills will develop (Dong, 2004:210) (cf.2.2.7). Therefore, interaction will be beneficial to ESL learners, since it allows them to learn from each other with extra support.

5.7.6 I dominate classroom interaction. Too much time is devoted to instruction.

A total of 21% (13) of the respondents agreed that they dominate classroom interaction, while 8% (5) of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement. 30% (18) of the respondents disagreed that they devote too much time to instruction and 15% (9) of the respondents strongly disagree. A total of 21% (16) of the respondents were not sure about this question. Maney (1999:397) (cf.3.2.2) affirms that direct instruction does not help with the development of

critical thinking skills, since the learners are inactive/passive recipients of information. Therefore, these results, that the majority of teachers don't dominate classroom interaction, are encouraging for the development of ESL learners' critical thinking skills.

5.7.7 Interaction develops learners' abilities to express their ideas orally and to think purposefully

A total of 59% (36) of the respondents agreed and 20% (12) strongly agreed with this statement made. A total of 3% (2) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that interaction develops learners' abilities to express their ideas orally and to think purposefully. A total of 18% (11) of the respondents were not sure about this question. Mahaye and Jacobs (2004:177) explain that conversations help learners to think about the ideas they have. It seems that most of the respondents are on the right path when they agreed or strongly agreed that interaction develops ESL learners' abilities to express their ideas orally and to think purposefully.

5.7.8 Group work and co-operative learning is an important method to encourage critical thinking

A total of 61% (38) of the respondents agreed and another 11% (7) of the respondents strongly agreed that group work and co-operative learning is important methods to encourage critical thinking. A small percentage, 3% (2) of the respondents indicated that they strongly disagreed with this statement and another 2% (1) respondent indicated that they disagreed. A total of 23% (14) of the respondents were not sure about this question. O'Donnell (2006:781) (cf.2.2.7) believes that group work is important to improve ESL learners' performance and enhance critical thinking. Since most of the respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that group work has a positive influence in promoting

critical thinking skills this is promising results for the development of ESL learners' critical thinking skills.

5.7.9 I use a variety of textbooks to teach learners

A total of 41% (26) of the respondents agreed and 23% (14) of the respondents strongly agreed that they use a variety of textbooks to teach their learners. 10% (6) of the respondents strongly disagreed and 10% (6) of the respondents disagreed that they use a variety of textbooks. 16% (10) of the respondents were not sure if they use a variety of textbooks when they teach. Mahaye and Jacobs (2004:238) explain that textbooks show a variety of different viewpoints. Consequently, like most of the respondents agreed, it is better to use a variety of textbooks if they want to promote the critical thinking skills of ESL language learners and teach them different point of views.

5.7.10 I only teach what is in the textbooks

Most of the respondents indicated that they strongly disagreed 51% (32) and 29% (18) of the respondents disagreed that they only teach what is in the textbooks. 10% (6) of the respondents agree that they only teach what is stipulated in the textbooks. A total of 10% (6) of the respondents were unsure about this question. Mahaye and Jacobs (2004:238) warn that teachers must be careful only to teach the contents of textbooks, because textbooks represent only the bare minimum of content that needs to be achieved. Meaningful learning and critical thinking requires more than what a textbook offers. Therefore, these results that teachers don't rely just on textbooks are excellent and are good for the development of ESL learners' critical thinking skills.

5.7.11 I use a variety of teaching methods in class

A total of 41% (25) of the respondents strongly agreed and 35% (22) of the respondents agreed that they use a variety of teaching methods in the classroom. A teaching method is a strategy, style or technique, selected purposefully, that teachers use to instruct learners and to connect them with the content (Tomlinson *et al.*, 2001:53) (cf.3.2.1). In contrast there were 5% (3) of the respondents that indicated that they strongly disagree and that they don't use a variety of methods. 3% (2) of the respondents indicated that they disagree. A total of 16% (10) of the respondents deemed that they were not sure if they use a variety of teaching methods in the classroom. It is important that teachers use a variety of teaching methods to enhance critical thinking skills. Sprenger (2003:68) (cf.1.1) believes that numerous teachers only use one teaching method that they prefer. Fortunately, it seems that most of the respondents differ from the literature and showed that they use a variety of methods when they teach ESL learners hence, the ESL learners could only benefit from different teaching methods used.

5.7.12 I allow sufficient time for learners to reflect on questions asked or problems posed

A total of 58% (36) of the respondents indicated that they agree and 13% (8) of the respondents strongly agreed that they give their learners sufficient time to reflect on questions they have asked. A total of 5 % (3) of the respondents disagreed and indicated that they don't give their learners enough time to reflect on questions. A total of 24% (15) of the respondents were not sure if they give their learners enough time. As mentioned in the literature by Buhrow and Garcia, 2006:30-31 (cf.3.2.6) it is important that learners and especially ESL learners need time to organize their thoughts before they can answer and, therefore, wait time is necessary to reflect on questions they were asked. Mahaye and Jacobs (2004: 192) (cf.3.2.6) suggest a pause/ waiting time of three to five seconds after asking a question for a response. These results show that most teachers encourage critical thinking since they give their ESL learners enough time to

think, structure and organise their thoughts. As a result this could only promote critical thinking skills.

5.7.13 I am not sure how to teach thinking skills or how to evaluate them

38% (24) of the respondents indicated that they disagreed with this statement and that they know how to teach and evaluate thinking skills, 23% (14) of the respondents strongly disagreed. A total of 8% (5) of the respondents agreed and 2% (1) respondent strongly agreed. Most of the respondents felt that they know how to teach thinking skills and to evaluate thinking skills. However, it is a concern that a large number of the respondents, namely 29% (18), are not sure if they know how teach and evaluate thinking skills. This issue needs to be addressed, maybe through some training, as the development of ESL learners' critical thinking skills could be negatively affected by this.

5.7.14 I teach what to think and not how to think

A total of 21% (13) of the respondents disagreed that they teach what to think and not how to think. 34% (21) of the respondents strongly disagreed. A total of 23% (14) of the respondents were not sure if they teach their learners how to think. A total of 6% (4) respondents indicated that they strongly agreed and 16% (10) of the respondents agreed that they do teach their learners what to think and not how to think. Learners will be faced with frequent choices and need critical thinking skills to guide them when making decisions now and even more in their future (Feldman, 2002:3). Therefore, it is very important that teachers teach their learners how to think. This result could have negative consequences for the development of ESL learners' critical thinking skills.

5.7.15 I seldom create a climate for thinking and show little appreciation for the individuality and openness of learners

Most of the respondents, 53% (33) of the respondents, strongly disagreed and 23% (14) of the respondents felt that they disagreed with the above statement. A total of 8% (5) of the respondents strongly agreed that they seldom create a climate for thinking and show little appreciation for the individuality and openness of learners. A total of 3 % (2) respondents specified that they agreed. A total of 13% (8) of the respondents were not sure about this question. Most of the respondents disagreed. Teachers need to create a climate for thinking and teachers need to show appreciation for individuality and openness of a learner since this promotes and develops critical thinking skills. More teachers should use learner-centered methods (cf. table 3.1.) to promote critical thinking skills of ESL learners.

5.8 SUMMATIVE CONCLUSION

It seems that most teachers know what critical thinking involves and their responses confirm that teachers are facing a problem: our generation of learners are passive and don't want to think for themselves and instead want to be spoon-fed. This could be the reason why respondents feel that their average ESL learners' critical thinking skills are poor. Learners who are not proficient in English are a major cause of underachievement in South Africa (Fleisch, 2008:112).

The reality in South Africa is that teachers will most probably have ESL learners in their classrooms and they have to make provision for these learners. Teachers must make sure that they use a variety of teaching methods to enhance the language proficiency and critical thinking skills of ESL learners. It appears that most of the teachers who participated in this study do make use of a variety of teaching methods as well as methods that promote ESL learners' critical thinking skills. It seems that the respondents have adequate knowledge about Bloom's taxonomy that could be used as a measuring instrument to develop higher-order thinking skills, such as critical thinking skills. Some teachers don't see critical

thinking skills as part of the curriculum and they need to be trained to integrate critical thinking skills into their daily lessons and planning.

In the next chapter the findings, recommendations and conclusions will be discussed.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to evaluate which methods teachers use during instruction to enhance critical thinking skills of especially of ESL learners in the primary school. Another aspect of this study focused on Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive objectives, which teachers can use to develop critical thinking skills of ESL learners. Consequently, this study also investigated what knowledge teachers have about Bloom's taxonomy.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE LITERATURE

ESL learners experience barriers to learning.	Learners who are not educated in their mother-tongue are referred to as ESL (English second language) learners. The fact that they are not educated in their mother tongue causes barriers to learning and this has an effect on their critical thinking skills (Theron & Nel, 2005:214) (cf.2.1).
Definition of language.	Baltaxe (1999:473) (cf.2.2) defines language as “ <i>a conventional system of arbitrary symbols used as a code for representing messages</i> ”.

South Africa's language in education policy	The language in education policy promotes additive multilingualism, where learners are encouraged to learn in their mother tongue and additionally learn other languages (Webb, 2002:181) (cf.2.3).
There are more disadvantages for ESL learners than advantages when learning in their second language.	Disadvantages of not learning in the mother tongue are seen to be numerous compared to the advantages (Obanya, 2004:10) (cf.2.4).
There is a link between language and cognitive development	Greathouse (2007:14) (cf.2.8) explains that every aspect of a language is important to develop effective communication and to achieve optimal learning potential in speaking, writing and reading.
What is critical thinking?	Davis-Seaver and Davis (2000:9) (cf.2.7) describe critical thinking as the learners' cognitive ability to carry out certain tasks successfully. Feldman (2002:7) explains that critical thinking skills are practiced when reasoning skills are used to carefully think about our choices we make, similar to Davis-Seaver and Davis (2000:9) who calls it "purposeful thinking".

Developing proficiency in the English language in order to develop critical thinking.	Law and Eckes (2000:284) (cf.2.8) assert that an integrated approach should be used. This approach links reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in the process of learning and does not teach them as separate skills
Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive objectives could be used as a guide to develop language proficiency of ESL learners.	As already mentioned language and cognitive development is closely connected (Hyerle <i>et al.</i> , 2004:110) (cf.2.10.1). Bloom's Taxonomy focuses on the development of cognitive skills. Language development together with cognitive skills starts at the bottom of Blooms Taxonomy (knowledge level) and aims to end at the last level (evaluation level).
What is a teaching method?	A teaching method is a strategy, that teachers use for teaching-learning activities with a purpose to achieve a desired outcomes (Tomlinson, <i>et al.</i> , 2001:53) (cf.3.2.1).
Ten teaching methods / strategies were discussed that promotes language proficiency of ESL learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct instruction (cf. 3.2.2). • Indirect instruction (cf.3.2.3). • Discussion method (cf.3.2.4). • Scaffolding (cf.3.2.5). • Questioning (cf.3.2.6) • Co-operative group work (cf.3.2.7)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Games (cf.3.2.8) • Story telling and dramatisation (cf.3.2.9). • Problem solving (cf.3.2.10).
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Table 6.1 Conclusions drawn from the literature

6.3 CONCLUSIONS

The first aim was to determine which teaching methods primary school language teachers in the D11 (Johannesburg South) district are currently using to develop critical thinking skills of ESL learners (cf. Chapter 1 par. 1.2). From the data gathered it seems that although teachers are using some methods more than others most of them are using a variety of methods to develop ESL learners' critical thinking skills. The most popular method was still the traditional direct instruction method and the least popular method was the dramatisation method. The problem solving method was also rated as very important by many teachers. Mahaye and Jacobs (2004:200) (cf.3.2.10) confirms that problem solving methods encourage critical thinking skills. Dramatisation (cf.5.5.9) was not such a popular method amongst the teachers. The dramatisation method requires that teachers need to be enthusiastic and imaginative which can be daunting sometimes. According to Brumbaugh and Rock (2006:10) (cf. 3.2.3) (cf.5.5.2.1) indirect instruction methods definitely promote critical thinking skills and most teachers agreed that this method is important. Other methods that many teachers indicated as important to develop ESL learners critical thinking skills are the question-answer method (cf. 5.5.3.1) and discussion method (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:177) (cf.3.2.4) (cf.5.5.4.1). Balla (1999:14) (cf.3.2.9) (cf.5.5.7) also recommends story telling as a good method to develop critical thinking skills of ESL learners and many teachers agreed with this. Co-operative group work (cf.5.5.8) and games (cf.5.5.6) were also indicated as popular methods. Based on the assumption that group work activities are time-consuming the results

showed that teachers do not prefer to use this method as much. Most of the respondents use instructional scaffolding (cf.3.2.5) (cf.5.5.10) which is encouraging since this is an essential method to develop ESL learners' critical thinking skills and consequently cognitive skills.

The second aim of the study was to determine to what extent do teachers possess adequate knowledge and skills to implement different teaching methods to enhance critical thinking of ESL learners in a language classroom (cf. Chapter 1 par. 1.2). Most of the teacher possesses adequate knowledge and skills of the different teaching methods. Although, it appears that some teachers still lack some knowledge and skills regarding using different teaching methods to promote critical thinking skills.

The third aim was to determine if teachers were familiar with Bloom's Taxonomy of cognitive objectives. (cf. Chapter 1 par.1.3). It seems that teachers have adequate knowledge about Bloom's Taxonomy of cognitive objectives but still needs to be trained on the use of certain levels of the taxonomy i.e. the evaluation level.

6.4 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following recommendations need to be considered:

- This study only investigated if teachers are using different teaching methods in a language classroom to develop ESL learners' critical thinking skills as well as the amount of time spent on these methods. It did not determine *how* teachers implemented these methods. Therefore, a more qualitative study in different learning areas/subjects on how teachers choose and apply these teaching methods is recommended.
- Another possible limitation was to determine what teachers needs still have with regard to knowing about different teaching methods, how to choose the most appropriate one/s for the specific lesson and how to

apply it. However, that would have made the questionnaire too tedious and can be investigated in another study.

- Although, it was assumed (through the literature study) that there could be a link between ESL learners' poor language proficiency and their critical thinking skills this study cannot confirm that there is. A scientific investigation into this issue could possibly be helpful in choosing the appropriate teaching methods for the development of both language proficiency and critical thinking skills
- This survey needs to be extended to secondary schools as well as other learning areas/subjects; and
- Further research on other taxonomies that teachers can use to develop critical thinking skills of ESL learners is needed.

6.5 ADMINISTRATIVE LIMITATIONS

- Some respondents did not want to complete the questionnaire because anonymity was assured on the questionnaire and then they were asked to sign the ethics form, which could have had a negative influence on the return rate of the questionnaire;
- Time to complete the questionnaire was indicated by teachers as problematic: some teachers simply stated that they don't have time to complete questionnaires; and
- Some teachers misplaced questionnaires.
- Possibly because of the above mentioned reasons it is acknowledged that the response rate is not high, a larger sample from a wider demographic spectrum could definitely add more information to the generalization of the findings of this study.

6.6 FINAL SUMMARY

Most of the teachers in this study agreed that one of the most important objectives of education is to teach ESL learners to think critically especially in language classrooms. Though, the development of ESL learners' critical thinking skills may take time and practice it is a crucial element of teaching to ensure that these learners' optimal potential is guaranteed. To reach these objectives teachers need to select their teaching methods carefully and critically according to the needs of the ESL learners in their class.

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NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
VAAL TRIANGLE CAMPUS

Dear teacher

I am currently busy with a Master study in Education at the North-West University, Vaal Triangle campus. My research focuses on teaching methods, primary school language teachers use to enhance critical thinking skills of English Second Language (ESL) learners. (ESL learners refer to learners that are learning in their second language, namely English). I would appreciate your assistance in this regard as the development of critical thinking is of crucial importance for optimum development.

Please note that the questionnaire is anonymous and will be handled with complete confidentiality.

Your time and co-operation is truly valued.

Mrs. Chrizelle Wright



Please answer all the questions.

DIVISION A. GENERAL

1. How would you describe critical thinking?

- 2. One of the greatest challenges facing educators worldwide today is the question of how to generate learners who are critical thinkers. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Motivate your answer**

- 3. How would you rate your English Second Language learners' average language proficiency in English?**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
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- 4. How would you rate your English Second Language learners' average critical thinking skills in English?**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor

DIVISION B. BLOOMS TAXONOMY

Benjamin Bloom (1956) developed a classification of levels of intellectual behaviour in learning. This taxonomy contained three overlapping domains: the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective. Within the cognitive domain, he identified six levels: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. These domains and levels are still useful today in developing the critical thinking skills of learners.

- 5. How would you rate the importance of each of these levels in teaching ESL learners' critical thinking skills?**

- 5.1. Level 1: Knowledge - exhibits previously learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts and answers.**

Very important	Important	Not so important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------	------------------	----------------------

Please motivate your answer: _____

5.2. Level 2: Comprehension - demonstrating understanding of facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions and stating main ideas.

Very important	Important	Not so important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------	------------------	----------------------

Please motivate your answer: _____

5.3. Level 3: Application - solving problems by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques and rules in various ways.

Very important	Important	Not so important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------	------------------	----------------------

Please motivate your answer: _____

5.4. Level 4: Analysis - examining and breaking information into components.

Very important	Important	Not so important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------	------------------	----------------------

Please motivate your answer: _____

5.5. Level 5: Synthesis - compiling information together by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions.

Very important	Important	Not so important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------	------------------	----------------------

Please motivate your answer: _____

5.6. Level 6: Evaluation - presenting and defending opinions by making judgments about information, validity of ideas or quality of work based on set criteria.

Very important	Important	Not so important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------	------------------	----------------------

Please motivate your answer: _____

6. How would you rank the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy from the most important to the least important in your teaching of ESL learners' critical thinking skills? Rank them from 1 (least important) to 6 (most important).

Level	Rank
Knowledge	
Comprehension	
Application	
Analysis	
Synthesis	
Evaluation	

DIVISION C. TEACHING METHODS

**7. a) Please indicate if you make use the following teaching methods and how often.
b) Indicate how important you consider this method in teaching critical thinking skills.**

7.1. Direct instruction (Deliver academic content in a highly structured format. Common forms of direct instruction include lectures and demonstrations)

a) How often do you use this method?

Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

b) How important do you think this type of method is in enhancing critical thinking skills?

Very important	Important	Not so important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------	------------------	----------------------

7.2. Indirect instruction (is learner-centered, the opposite of direct instruction. The learners learn by discovering information and creating, rather than being instructed directly by the teacher. Indirect instruction is also known as indirect teaching.)

a) How often do you use this method?

Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

b) How important do you think this type of method is in enhancing critical thinking skills?

Very important	Important	Not so important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------	------------------	----------------------

7.3. Question-answer method (Oral communication skills developed in a carefully graded progression, organized around question-and-answer exchanges between teachers and learners.)

a) How often do you use this method?

Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

b) How important do you think this type of method is in enhancing critical thinking skills?

Very important	Important	Not so important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------	------------------	----------------------

7.4. Discussion method (By engaging in conversations and dialogues teachers can help their learners.)

a) How often do you use this method?

Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

b) How important do you think this type of method is in enhancing critical thinking skills?

Very important	Important	Not so important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------	------------------	----------------------

7.5. Interactive method (Learners verbalise their thinking process by interacting with the teacher and the learner.)

a) How often do you use this method?

Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

b) How important do you think this type of method is in enhancing critical thinking skills?

Very important	Important	Not so important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------	------------------	----------------------

7.6. Games (The teacher uses language games to promote language development. Using games is an experiential way of introducing difficult concepts and in addition, it complements cognitive learning.)

a) How often do you use this method?

Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

b) How important do you think this type of method is in enhancing critical thinking skills?

Very important	Important	Not so important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------	------------------	----------------------

7.7. Story telling (The teacher uses stories to develop certain target language .Using this method in which learners' verb forms intrinsically develops, as the stories are retold from characters different points of view.)

a) How often do you use this method?

Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

b) How important do you think this type of method is in enhancing critical thinking skills?

Very important	Important	Not so important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------	------------------	----------------------

7.8. Co-operative group work (Co-operative learning is a method of instruction that has students working together in groups, aiming at completion of a set task.)

a) How often do you use this method?

Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

b) How important do you think this type of method is in enhancing critical thinking skills?

Very important	Important	Not so important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------	------------------	----------------------

7.9. Dramatisation (Refers to a teaching method that involves children in imaginary, unscripted, and spontaneous scenes, in which the meaning is made from the engagement and interaction between the teacher and students. In writing, they have to make appropriate linguistic choices as well as express opinions or suggest solutions.)

a) How often do you use this method?

Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

b) How important do you think this type of method is in enhancing critical thinking skills?

Very important	Important	Not so important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------	------------------	----------------------

7.10. Instructional scaffolding (is the provision of sufficient support in order to promote learning when concepts and skills are introduced for the first time. Teachers help the learners master a task or a concept by providing support. The support can take on many forms such as outlines, recommended documents, storyboards, or key questions.)

a) How often do you use this method?

Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

b) How important do you think this type of method is in enhancing critical thinking skills?

Very important	Important	Not so important	Not at all important
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7.11. Problem-solving (The teacher guides learners in order to develop skills to solve problems.)

a) How often do you use this method?

Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
--------	-------	-----------	-------

b) How important do you think this type of method is in enhancing critical thinking skills?

Very important	Important	Not so important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------	------------------	----------------------

8. Please tick the teaching methods that you use during instruction. If answered yes, please indicate the percentage that you spent on this method during the day.

100%, 90%, 80%, 70%, 60%, 50%, 40%, 30%, 20% or 10%

8.1.	Direct instruction (Direct instruction is a method of teaching that consists of a teacher's systematic explanation of a new concept followed by guided practice under the teacher's supervision.)										Yes	No
%	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100		
8.2.	Indirect instruction (is learner-centered, the opposite of direct instruction. The learners learn by discovering information and creating rather than being instructed directly by the teacher. Indirect instruction is also known as indirect teaching.)										Yes	No

%	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100		
8.3.	Question-answer method (Oral communication skills developed up in a carefully graded progression, organized around question-and-answer exchanges between teachers and learners.)										Yes	No
%	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100		
8.4.	Discussion method (By engaging in conversations and dialogues teachers can help their learners.)										Yes	No
%	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100		
8.5.	Games (The teacher uses language games to promote language development. Using games is an experiential way of introducing difficult concepts and in addition, it complements cognitive learning.)										Yes	No
%	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100		
8.6.	Story telling (The teacher uses stories to develop certain target language. Using this method learners' verb forms intrinsically develop, as the stories are retold from characters different points of view.)										Yes	No
%	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100		
8.7.	Co-operative group work (Co-operative learning is a method of instruction that has students working together in groups, aiming at completion of a set task.)										Yes	No
%	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100		
8.8.	Dramatisation (Dramatisation refers to a teaching method that involves children in imaginary, unscripted, and spontaneous scenes, in which the meaning is made from the engagement and interaction between the teacher and students. In writing, they have to make appropriate linguistic choices as well as express opinions or suggest solutions.)										Yes	No
%	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100		
8.9.	Instructional scaffolding (The provision of sufficient support in order to promote learning when concepts and skills are introduced for the first time. Teachers help the learners master a task or a concept by providing support. The support can take many forms such as outlines, recommended documents, storyboards, or key questions.)										Yes	No
%	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100		

8.10.	Problem-solving (The teacher guides learners to develop problem solving skills.)										Yes	No
%	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100		

8.11. Are there any methods that are not listed above that you would recommend for improving critical thinking in ESL teaching? If yes, please motivate your answer.

9. Please rank the following questions to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement by using the following rating scale:

(Some of the questions adopted from Grösser & Lombard, 2004:213)

- 1. Strongly disagree**
- 2. Disagree**
- 3. Not sure**
- 4. Agree**
- 5. Strongly agree**

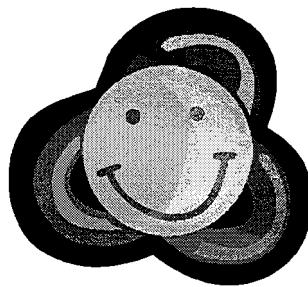
Please note:

The selection of 1 means: I strongly disagree with the statement.

The selection of 5 means: I strongly agree with the statement.

9.1.	I ask a lot of questions in the class.	1	2	3	4	5
9.2.	I ask open-ended questions that do not assume the "one right answer".	1	2	3	4	5
9.3.	I allow my learners to ask me questions.	1	2	3	4	5
9.4.	I use stories to develop critical thinking.	1	2	3	4	5
9.5.	Interaction encourages learners to learn from each other.	1	2	3	4	5
9.6.	I dominate classroom interaction. Too much time is devoted to instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
9.7.	Interaction develops learners' abilities to express their ideas orally and to think purposefully.	1	2	3	4	5
9.8.	Group work and co-operative learning is an important method to encourage critical thinking.	1	2	3	4	5
9.9.	I use a variety of textbooks to instruct learners.	1	2	3	4	5

9.10.	I only teach what is in the textbooks (prescribed curriculum).	1	2	3	4	5
9.11.	I use a variety of teaching methods in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
9.12.	I allow sufficient time for learners to reflect on the questions asked or problems posed.	1	2	3	4	5
9.13.	I am uncertain of teaching thinking skills or evaluating them.	1	2	3	4	5
9.14.	I teach what to think and not how to think.	1	2	3	4	5
9.15.	I seldom create a climate for thinking and show little appreciation for the individuality and openness of learners.	1	2	3	4	5



THANK YOU VERY MUCH

Legal Parent / Guardian

For all research and interventions on participants under the age of 21 years, the written proxy consent of the parent or legal guardian is required.

I,

Full names & Surname
(parent or legal guardian)**Relationship**
(parent or legal guardian)

of the participant mentioned above, hereby give consent for him/her to take part in this project and I hereby exempt the University, as well as any employee or student of the University, from any liability from any detrimental effect that may arise in the course of the project, unless such injury, damage or death is caused by the negligence of the University, its staff and/or its students. I furthermore declare that I have read the preceding premises in connection with the project, as discussed in **Part 1** and **Part 2** of this informed consent form, and have also heard the oral version thereof and I declare that I understand it. I have also initialled every page of **Part 1** and **Part 2**. I was given the opportunity to discuss relevant aspects of the project with the Project Head.

2	0			-			-		
c	c	y	y	m	m	d	d		

Signature of Legal Parent/Guardian**Date**

Signed at _____

Place of Signature

I,

Full names & Surname
(minor participant)**Relationship**
(participant)

minor child of the above parent/guardian, hereby give my voluntary assent to take part in the project and declare that I understand what the participation involves.

2	0			-			-		
c	c	y	y	m	m	d	d		

Signature of Minor Participant**Date**

Signed at _____

Place of Signature

_____**©Copyright 2007, North-West University, all rights retained**

PROOF OF LANGUAGE EDITING: A DADA

16 August 2009

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that I, Almarie Dada have language edited this dissertation on hard copy by the understanding that Chrizelle Wright would make the language changes required on the electronic version.

Yours faithfully

Almarie Dada