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Thesis title:

''Developing Students' Critical Thinking Skills through Task-Based Learning: A Case Study with Primary School Students in Gjilan and its Region ''

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Tetovo

''Developing Students' Critical Thinking Skills through Task-Based Learning: A Case Study with Primary School Students in Gjilan and its region''

Teza:

"Zhvillimi i aftësive të të menduarit kritik të studentëve nga të mësuarit e bazuar në detyra - Një studimi rast me nxënësit e të shkollës fillore në Gjilan dhe regjionin e tij"

Теза:

„Развивање на вештини за критичко размислување на студентите преку учење базирано на задачи. Студија спроведена со ученици од основното училиште во Гњилане и неговиот регион "

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ABSTRACT

In the context of current social developments and the expressed need to implement a comprehensive curricular reform of the education system in the Republic of Kosovo, the importance of developing critical thinking among students as future active citizens should be increasingly emphasized. Although much attention is paid to the concept of critical thinking, and also in the context of education there is an awareness of the need to develop critical thinking, the premise of this paper is that teachers do not encourage the development of critical thinking in students at the desired level (Adeyemi S., 2012). Teachers have the main role in the development of critical thinking in students.

The aim of the research was to examine the amount and efforts of developing the critical thinking in task- based teaching, among the students of primary school. In order to examine the characteristics of teaching by which teachers encourage the development of critical thinking in students, the participants in the research were students of elementary schools in the city of Gjilan. A quantitative methodological approach was applied in the research. A survey procedure was used to collect data. Consequently, a survey questionnaire was constructed, which included Likert-type assessment scales. The results showed that students attribute some values to the following characteristics of development of critical thinking: placing emphasis on understanding, analyzing and evaluating, not just memorizing and reproducing teaching content, assigning tasks to students that encourage them to consider the content of teaching from different perspectives, teaching students how to approach the solution of certain tasks, linking assignments with examples from everyday life and students' previous knowledge and experiences, appliance of forms of teaching cooperation (pair work, group work, team work, etc), placing emphasis on interactive teaching and active learning, giving students enough time to explain their thoughts and justify their views, explaining to students why an answer is correct or incorrect, giving

students constructive feedback on their work, conducting written essay type exams readiness to answer students' questions.

Key words: development, critical thinking, students, teaching, learning.

PËRMBLEDHJE

Në kontekstin e zhvillimeve aktuale sociale dhe nevojës së shprehur për të zbatuar një reformë gjithëpërfshirëse kurrikulare të sistemit arsimor në Republikën e Kosovës, rëndësia e zhvillimit të mendimit kritik midis nxënësve si qytetarë të ardhshëm aktivë duhet të theksohet gjithnjë e më shumë. Megjithëse shumë vëmendje i kushtohet konceptit të të menduarit kritik, dhe gjithashtu në kontekstin e edukimit ekziston një vetëdije për nevojën e zhvillimit të të menduarit kritik, premisa e këtij punimi është se mësuesit nuk inkurajojnë zhvillimin e mendimit kritik tek studentët në nivelin e dëshiruar (http://www.kec-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Standardet-dhe-Manuali-per-certifikim.pdf). Mësuesit kanë rolin kryesor në zhvillimin e të menduarit kritik tek nxënësit. Qëllimi i hulumtimit ishte të shqyrtojë sasinë dhe përpjekjet për zhvillimin e të menduarit kritik në mësimdhënien e bazuar në detyra, midis nxënësve të shkollës fillore(https://voilokmaikop.ru/sq/priem-zigzag-na-urokah-himii-priem-zigzag-ili-metod-pily.html). Në mënyrë që të shqyrtohen karakteristikat e mësimdhënies me të cilat mësimdhënësit inkurajojnë zhvillimin e mendimit kritik tek nxënësit, pjesëmarrësit në hulumtim ishin nxënës të shkollave fillore në qytetin e Gjilanit. Në hulumtim u aplikua një qasje metodologjike sasiore. Për mbledhjen e të dhënave është përdorur një procedurë e sondazhit. Si pasojë, u ndërtua një pyetësor anketimi, i cili përfshinte shkallët e vlerësimit të tipit Likert. Rezultatet treguan se nxënësit u atribuojnë disa vlera karakteristikave të mëposhtme të zhvillimit të të menduarit kritik: vënia e theksit në të kuptuarit, analizimin dhe vlerësimin, jo vetëm memorizimin dhe riprodhimin e përmbajtjes mësimore, caktimin e detyrave nxënësve që i inkurajojnë ata të marrin parasysh përmbajtjen e mësimdhënies nga perspektivatë ndryshme, mësimi i nxënësve se si t'i qasen zgjidhjes së detyrave të caktuara, lidhja e detyrave me shembuj nga jeta e përditshme dhe njohuritë dhe përvojat e mëparshme të studentëve, zbatimi i formave të bashkëpunimit mësimor (punë në dyshe, punë në grupe, punë në ekip, etj), duke i dhënë theks

mësimdhënie ndërvepruese dhe të mësuarit aktiv, duke i dhënë nxënësve kohë të mjaftueshme për të shpjeguar mendimet e tyre dhe për të justifikuar pikëpamjet e tyre, duke u shpjeguar nxënësve pse një përgjigje është e saktë ose e pasaktë, duke u dhënë nxënësve reagime konstruktive për punën e tyre, duke kryer gatishmëri të provimeve të tipit të esesë për t'iu përgjigjur pyetjeve të nxënësve(https://mon.gov.mk/stored/document/Koncepcija%20-%20albanski%20jazik.pdf).

Fjalët kyçe: zhvillim, mendim kritik, studentë, mësimdhënie, mësimnxënie

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Chapter 1

1. INTRODUCTION

The Critical Thinking Community defined critical thinking as "the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action" (https://louisville.edu/ideastoaction/about/criticalthinking) .Critical thinking is the concept we are encountering more and more lately. It is defined as a self-regulated, deliberate judgment, the result of which is analysis, evaluation and conclusion, as well as explanation of evidence, conceptual, methodological, criteria or contextual considerations on which judgments are based (Facione P., 1990). This MA Thesis describes different definitions of the term, critical thinking, and will argue the importance of critical thinking in various aspects in learning English. Measuring critical thinking is very complex and it is difficult to achieve its satisfactory reliability. However, there are many methods available. There is no doubt that critical thinking is of great importance and should be developed among students. However, previous research on the development of critical thinking has not shown such clear results. The imperative imposed on English language teachers over the years is that the student "should not be a quiet sheep" and the question arises as to how to do it in a place where students are not even asked to think! It is actually about critical thinking that needs to be developed and used in it. One of the definitions of critical thinking says that this is not the thought, with which we were born, but we must learn and practice and it contains some elements, such as: Active listening, which means focusing on listening and thinking. Second element is the observed analysis, i.e. evaluating notions, sentences or phrases that are heard or read. Finding reason is the third element that reveals why something is said, where and how. The fourth element turns out to be reserved to take the position according to what has been said, and the last element includes the ability to express clearly and without conflict and to emphasize the position. Only one thing is more difficult to learn to think critically - try to define that concept in an understandable way (M. Guillot, 2004).

The need for critically thinking individual is great and one of the reasons for this is today's amount of information that goes far beyond the former. Paul, R, and Elder, L. (2007), state that the danger of their mere adoption lies precisely in the amount of information and media manipulation of information. Critical thinking thus becomes a means of ensuring that an individual can more successfully distinguish valid information from invalid information. Furthermore, the development of a democratic society shows the need for active citizens who think critically because only those who think critically about themselves and the world around them become active participants in the social community (Paul, R, and Elder, L. 2007). Also, active participants in the social community know their rights and obligations and know which way to direct social change. Freedom of Education Forum (2016) states that the institutions of a democratic society are based on a well-informed, rational citizen who reflects and reconsiders his decisions, attitudes and behaviors as well as social models and patterns, and the same defines critical thinking as the most important outdoor art, and a democratic society that teaches young people how to solve problems, critically review situations, and make thoughtful and informed decisions. One of such institutions is the educational institution, in this context, and the bearers of change are teachers. Given the importance of critical thinking in a modern society, the aim of this paper is to examine the characteristics of developing critical thinking at the elementary schools and not only in the Republic of Kosova, and to examine the characteristics of teaching that university teachers encourage critical thinking in students at the elementary schools of Kosova. In addition, to learning about the role of teachers in the development of critical thinking in students, this paper seeks to determine which features of teaching critical thinking at the elementary schools of Kosova are more developed, and which contain space for improvement and progress.

1.1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The application of random and routine techniques and methodology on teaching English to students sometimes seems to be inappropriate and unsuccessful, thus through proper methods of strict appliance of developing students' critical thinking skills by task based learning, teacher's target should be necessarily reached by combining conventional and contemporary English teaching (Zhou Q., Huang Q. & Tian H., 2013) methods with extra knowledge of the field in where the course is being prepared and held, with of course including the candidates knowledge and needs as well.

1.2. Research aim

The aims of the research were to:

- Investigate the most efficient strategies and methods to apply for increasing critical thinking skill among students;

- Combine these strategies with students' needs;

- Develop awareness among teachers about creativity needed when applying different strategies.

1.3. Research questions

1. How is the cooperation between teachers and students managed when, applying the developing students' critical thinking skills through task-based learning activities in the teaching/learning process?

2. What is the outcome of task-based teaching in developing students' critical thinking skills?

3. What is the effect of task-based teaching in developing students' critical thinking skills strategy on students?

1.4.   Research Hypothesis

H1 - Through application of appropriate teachniques for developing students' critical thinking skills through task based learning, students will become way more efficient in English language learning.

H2 - Through application of specific methods, the methods itself will become more usable and redefined according to needs.

H3 - General knowledge in certain fields will also become expanded, always in relation to English Language, among our society.

1.5.   Procedures

This research is based on explication of developing students' critical thinking skills through task based learning (Zhou Q., Huang Q. & Tian H., 2013). Through this research students will become able to apply certain various methods freely in future learning English, as far as concerning the critical thinking application. The elementary schools chosen to conduct this research were three elementary schools in the city of Gjilan, elementary school "**Thimi Mitko**" (grade 8 students), elementary school "**Dardania**" (grade 9 students) and elementary school "**Rexhep Elmazi**" (grade 9 students). The total number of the students surveyed was 45 of them, and from all the students on chosen schools who were involved on this research, we think that there was collected enough information about developing students' critical thinking skills through task based learning. Students were from both genders.

Therefore, considering the above given data, we tempt to achieve as clear as possible situation concerning the application of critical thinking methods and strategies of teaching and learning English among the above mentioned schools students, in order to be able to give proper general conclusion to this paper, and to recommend appropriately as well.

Chapter 2

Chapter two is a summary of the significant previous works related to our research topic, We have discussed about the origin of our research topic, we have listed numerous authors that have conducted studies and researches in critical thinking methods, most appropriate techniques for successfully application of the same.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The origin of the systematic study of the development of critical thinking

Critical thinking is often related to the needs of modern society, within the concept of modern education, etc., but in fact has its foundations at the beginning of the development of society. Socrates (469 for 399th B.C.) has developed a method of teaching that incorporates elements of critical thinking. Socrates' first stage of teaching methods - Irony, involves dialogue through which the "*Student*" is confronted with his own ignorance in a way that shows that his previous knowledge is often based on prejudices and uncontrolled claims. The second stage, involves the dialogue in which 'student' makes question and/or directs his/her need, like… "*Teacher I have come here to acquire*". This was the analysis of the request, finding justification for the claims, spotting the shortcomings of the individual requests and the active attitude of the students towards elements of knowledge and critical thinking that is being seen in Socrates' method of teaching (Buchberger, I., (2012). The four scientists who are most deserving of defining and promoting the concept of critical thinking are: John Dewey, Edward Glaser, Robert Ennis, and Richard Paul. Although their understandings of critical thinking are somewhat different, they now stand in the background of their current understanding of the concept of critical thinking. The one, who called critical thinking reflective, can be considered John Dewey. Dewey introduced the concept of active information processing versus passive acceptance, emphasizing the opinion that should be given to critical thinking and analysis (Dewey. J, 2008).

Critical thinking is a term that has a broad meaning. We often use it in everyday speech, in the process of problem solving and decision making, so there are a handful of its different

interpretations that are not always uniform. Dewey, states several reasons for the absence of an unambiguous definition of the concept of critical thinking. These are primarily problems of the definition and context in which the term critical thinking is used. In other words, the definition and aspects of critical thinking can be adapted to a specific context of use or a specific area. Furthermore, the primacy of practice over the theoretical foundation of the concept of critical thinking is also problematic. Namely, it was the wide applicability of critical thinking that sampled the accelerated development of practice over theory. Likewise, the complexity of the concept as well as the problem of evaluating critical thinking have influenced the absence of a deeper and more serious conceptualization of the concept to this day. Grozdanic (2009) states that in addition to the problem of diversity in defining the concept of critical thinking and the problem of measuring and assessing the ability of critical thinking, there is also the problem of equating this concept with the concept of criticism and the problem of ways and consequences of teaching critical thinking (Grozdanic, V. 2009). Although there are a handful of different definitions of the term critical thinking for the purposes of this MA Thesis are the understanding of the concept of critical thinking by some of the most important theorists who have dealt with it will be listed. The first is John Dewey (1859-1952), who defined reflexive thinking in the early 20th century, as an; active, persistent, and careful consideration of beliefs or presumed forms of knowledge in light of the reasons that, support them and the further conclusions they lead to, (https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching-guides/assignment-design/Documents/definitions-of-critical-thinking.pdf). In other words, such an opinion is an opinion that encompasses a process of seeking reasons that will support beliefs and analyzing the possible consequences of those beliefs. Although called reflective thinking, Dewey is considered the founder and father of modern critical thinking (Buchberger, 2012). Somewhat later, in 1991, Robert Ennis defines critical thinking as logical, reflective thinking that focuses on deciding what to believe and what to do (Ennis, 1991). In addition to the definition of critical thinking, Ennis also lists the competencies that critical thinking encompasses. These are: distinguishing facts and values, assessing the reliability of source 8 or allegations, accuracy of allegations or claims, distinguishing between supported and unsupported claims, revealing the position or perspective of an opinion, distinguishing between stated and unspoken assumptions, knowledge of illogicality and determining the strength of arguments (Ennis, 1962). Part of the recent work also refers to the author David Klooster. Klooster (2001) offers a comprehensive definition of the

notion of critical thinking in five points. Primarily, critical thinking is defined as independent thinking in the sense that each person forms their own ideas, values, and beliefs. The condition for the formation of independent opinion is the freedom of opinion and independent decision-making on complex issues. Furthermore, he presents the information we receive as starting points, not targets, thinking that critical thinking is above mere acceptance of the facts. Klooster also states that critical thinking begins with a problem situation that must be examined in order to arrive at its solution. In order to solve the problem situation, it is necessary to support the solutions with good arguments and convincing reasons, bearing in mind that it is possible to reach a solution from different points of view. Given that there are different solutions to the problem situation, critical thinking is always social thinking as well (Klooster,D. 2001). In other words, it always takes place in interaction with others where ideas are tested, supplemented and perfected. By discussing, reading, agreeing, and refuting claims, we take and give to others a portion of our ideas while becoming part of a process of deepening and redefining our own views. The next theorist whose area of interest is critical thinking is Richard Paul, according to whom critical thinking is the intellectual process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing and/or evaluating information gathered from (or generated by) observation, experience, reflection, reasoning or communication (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_thinking). They serve as a guide for beliefs and action. He also states that the basis of critical thinking are, universal intellectual values such as; clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, clear evidence, good reason, depth, breadth, and honesty (Paul and Elder, 2007). On the other hand, as intellectual values that critical thinking encourages, Buchberger (2012) also cites consistency, coherence, logic, and objectivity. Citing the most important theorists of critical thinking, it is important to mention Matthew Lipman (1922-2010) who is most responsible for the promotion of critical thinking as an indispensable concept in the educational process in the form of philosophy for children (Buchberger, 2012). Given the comprehensiveness of the above concepts of critical thinking, but also the recentness, for the purposes of this paper, the definition of the notion of critical thinking according to Buchberger (2012) will be followed. The author states that critical thinking is a complex and often difficult process. It is the result of analyzing and evaluating claims, finding justifications for those claims, comparing them with other claims but also those that contradict them, and generating objections to those claims. The end of the process is characterized by taking a certain

position. In order for critical thinking to be applied in life, it is necessary to find adequate space but also time to teach it. Given that the education systems of many countries highlight critical thinking as a valuable outcome of modern education, educational institutions are becoming bearers of teaching for critical thinking (Almeida and Rodrigues, 2011).

2.2. Critical thinking and education

Upbringing and education is imposed as the dominant space for the application of critical thinking (Buchberger. I, 2012). Buchberger, believes that critical thinking as an educational concept forms an important part of the positive development of upbringing and education that meets the needs of the individual and society. This is supported by the fact that critical thinking in developed countries is presented as a goal of education and as one of the imperatives of modern society (Buchberger. I, 2012). In relation to the quality and applicability of knowledge, the focus changes from the process of adopting information to the development of opinion. What is becoming important in educational institutions today is the ability to learn and solve specific problems, and not a mere reproduction of teaching content, which replaces the traditional approach to the educational process with modern ones. Reproductive thinking, unlike critical thinking, is a process of basic adoption and understanding information without further questioning (Buchberger,I. 2012). In support of the fact that there are significant differences between reproductive thinking and critical thinking, their characteristics are listed below.

Reproductive thinking	Critical thinking
Basic understanding as a learning goal	Basic understanding as a starting point for learning
Not linking information into a meaningful whole	Linking information and creating a whole
Failure to question the above	Questioning and "filtering" information
Repetition of what is thought or what someone thinks	Reflexive and "own" opinion

Development of convergence which implies viewing the situation from one perspective and includes searching for one exact solution	Development of divergence which implies viewing the situation from several different perspectives and includes the possibility of several different solutions to the questions asked

Table 1. Comparison of reproductive and critical thinking (Buchberger,I. 2012).

Given the accelerated world of change in which knowledge is increasingly losing its value, critical thinking skills are presented as a tool that can help an individual to achieve better success in school and professionally (Freedom of Education Forum, 2016), believe that the complexity of the tasks facing society and individuals today requires the acquisition of higher mental level competencies, and in such circumstances it is the responsibility of teachers to help their students adopt learning strategies that will be useful to them after completion schooling. Having in mind the changes in the Kosova education system (comprehensive curricular reform, Bologna process), we notice a change of focus from teaching to teaching aimed at students (Freedom of Education Forum, 2016). The basic questions posed to the academic community and university teachers are how to help students develop skills that go beyond the acquisition of scientific content and how to prepare them for independent work that will enable them for lifelong learning.

On the other hand, it is especially important for future teachers to be taught critical thinking skills, because in this way they will be able to transfer teaching for critical thinking into the framework of their classrooms. So, not only it is important to teach students about critical thinking skills, in order to upgrade them to become more competent for their jobs and professional lives, it is already important to teach them critical thinking in order to know what skills their students need to master (Haber J., 2020), assuming that one day they will be teachers. However, although there are requirements to encourage students to think critically, they are often at odds with the requirements of school programs that focus more on the breadth than depth of the material to be adopted (Noddings, N. 2004). This is supported by the fact that the Bologna system poses a paradoxical situation to school programs: at the same time it emphasizes the importance of the need for critical thinking among students, while leaving little room for

achieving this goal (Gojkov et al., 2015). School teachers seem to realize that critical thinking is important, moreover, they cite critical thinking as a learning outcome in most performance programs, but they do not have the time or competence to teach students to think critically. The next chapter will analyze the role of teachers as a factor in the development of critical thinking in students and will provide an overview of relevant domestic and foreign research on this topic.

2.3. Teachers as crucial factors in the development of critical thinking

Although teachers are aware that students need to be taught critical thinking skills, research results (Chee Cho S., 2012) show that teachers do not know how to do this effectively so they minimally insist on critical thinking in their students. Consequently, students are deprived of the opportunity to develop critical thinking in college (Choy & Choy 2012). Grozdanic (2009) states that if we want to encourage students to think critically, it is necessary to provide sufficient time in teaching to practice it, but also to train teachers to teach it. In this context, Grozdanic states that students should be taught how to learn effectively and build attitudes and meet the need for learning as a lifelong development process (Grozdanic, V. 2009). He concludes that teaching students to think critically, means teaching them to consider information carefully, thinking independently, accessing information from different points of view, and judging and evaluating information, as well as teaching them to use it optimally and effectively. On the one hand, it is the teacher who introduces different ideas about reality into the classroom and provides students with support and guidance in adopting and placing new knowledge in their own world of meaning. On the other hand, the teacher actively models and adapts his teaching to the students, while he himself learns (Bosnjak, Z. 2009). He examined their usefulness and level of student satisfaction with such a way of teaching by researching critical, creative and logical thinking in students and applying active teaching methods and various communication and collaboration skills. Student assessments indicated high results on the scales of usefulness and satisfaction with the activities carried out. The results of the research showed that students are satisfied with the teaching process, which is active, collaborative, practical, critically oriented and creative. Furthermore, the results of the research also confirmed that students find this active way of teaching useful in terms of contributing to problem solving through different procedures, enhances teamwork and critical attitude to the material, then enhances research and creative work, memory information and benefits their longer storage. Nevertheless, there is a

significantly larger number of foreign studies on the role of teachers in the development of critical thinking in students. The results of research conducted by Burkhalter and Shegebayev (2010) show that given teachers' familiarity with the concept of critical thinking and the methods they can use to teach students critical thinking, the tendency for teachers to replace their traditional teaching methods with more modern ones is growing to students and the development of their critical thinking skills (Ralston.P, & Bays.C, 2015).

Authors (Chee Choy S. & Cheah P., 2009) conducted research on the ways in which university teachers perceive critical thinking starting from the assumption that different understandings of critical thinking will affect the way they teach students and their ability to encourage such form of thinking among students. The results showed that teachers feel they are teaching students critical thinking and that they believe that critical thinking will encourage learning, but they themselves are not entirely sure what critical thinking is (Chee Choy S. and Cheah P., 2009)). It becomes clear how critical thinking as a concept can be effectively taught by those teachers who have extensive knowledge of critical thinking and ways to permeate critical thinking through their lectures (Chee Choy S. and Cheah P., 2009). Thus, students, and especially future teachers, must be taught critical thinking skills in order to know how to teach these skills to their students.

Tsui (1999) analyzed the self-assessed change in critical thinking ability of more than 24,000 students in their final year of schooling. The obtained results showed that the following teachers' actions (Tsui, 1999) made the greatest contribution to self-assessments of developing critical thinking skills: teacher feedback on written works, conducting independent research, group project work, group presentations and written essay exams type. On the other hand, multiple choice tasks were negatively associated with the development of critical thinking. Tsui also states that the results showed that the correlation is highest when certain teaching content is combined with appropriate teaching methods. Tsui, researching critical thinking, came to the conclusion that the following teachers' activities contribute to the development of disposition for critical thinking: analysis of problems from everyday life, teaching based on solving a certain problem, i.e. problem teaching, then verbalizing evidence to support arguments or decisions, extensive writing, the teacher's attention to the classroom atmosphere, and encouraging group work in and out of the classroom.

2.4. Teaching for critical thinking

Teaching for critical thinking can be approached in two ways. Ennis, (1989), state that the first approach is infusion, an approach in which critical thinking skills are taught in parallel with the course content, while the second approach is a built-in approach in which critical thinking skills are encouraged indirectly without it says anything explicitly about it. There are authors who believe that critical thinking skills should be taught separately (Ennis, R. 1989), but it is still considered that the best way to develop and master critical thinking is to incorporate critical thinking into the curriculum, i.e. that it is most effective when integrated into teaching about specific knowledge and skills (Behar and Niu, 2011). The Freedom of Education Forum (2016) provides recommendations to teachers for the successful integration of critical thinking into the content of teaching and they include the following settings: teachers should provide time and opportunity to practice critical thinking which means that students should use their thoughts and justification of their views, teachers should allow students to think and theorize, or encourage them to discuss in lectures. Also, teachers should accept a variety of reasoned ideas and opinions, or attitudes of students, while students should be provided with a risk-free environment without the possibility of ridicule. Likewise, teachers should encourage students to give their personal opinion and critical review of the teaching content. Furthermore, teachers should promote the active involvement of students in the learning process by placing emphasis on interactive teaching and active learning, and should encourage students to ask each other questions and give answers in the course of teaching. Finally, teachers should express confidence in the ability of all students to make critical judgments and ultimately value critical thinking in students. In the following chapters, attention will be paid to the characteristics of teaching for critical thinking - collaborative learning and a stimulating teaching atmosphere, and teaching methods that can be applied in teaching to encourage the development of critical thinking in students.

2.4.1 Collaborative learning and a stimulating teaching atmosphere

In order for a modern teacher to be as successful as possible in his work, i.e. to encourage the development of competencies that emphasize learning, communication, critical thinking, setting life goals, problem solving, team spirit, computer literacy, entrepreneurship and responsible

behavior, Paul and Elder (2007) states two levels of competencies: pedagogical and didactic. Pedagogical competencies can be divided into eight dimensions: personal, communication, analytical (reflective), social, emotional, intercultural, developmental and problem-solving skills, and didactic into five dimensions: selection and application of the methodology of building the subject curriculum, organizing and conducting educational process, determining student achievement in teaching, developing a model of educational partnership with parents and shaping the classroom-teaching atmosphere. Speaking of the social competence of teachers, the emphasis is on collaborative forms of learning. Collaborative forms of learning contribute to greater student participation in teaching, better encourage thinking and work, contribute to the development of communication skills and social learning. Furthermore, the knowledge acquired through collaborative learning is more operational, applicable and lasting (Paul, R. & Elder, L. 2007).They also define collaborative learning as a model of teaching and working in groups in which each member of the group participates by personal participation in the common result of the group. The result of the group thus becomes a reflection of the diversity of its members making it richer, more efficient and more creative. They describe collaborative learning as an active learning process in which academic and social skills are nurtured through student interaction, individual responsibility and positive interdependence and list five elements of collaborative learning:

1. Positive interdependence - students, yes in order to succeed, they must depend on each other, they must feel that their (failure) means (failure) of everyone in the group. This means that everyone in the group must invest the maximum, help and complement each other and that there is no giving up.

2. Direct interaction - students must communicate and cooperate with each other when solving tasks, help and teach each other, agree on the approach to a given problem and how to solve it, and how to learn.

3. Individual and group responsibility - each student, when creating a group task, is assigned a certain obligation and responsibility within the group. Successful implementation of the set task of each individual results in the success of the group.

4. Collaborative skills - the skills selected for teaching depend on age. In the academic context, these are receiving and giving different opinions, valuing themselves and others but also groups, leading, communicating, deciding, accepting, building trust and resolving possible disagreements and conflicts, etc.

5. Group processing - group discussion students assess quality the work of each individual and the behavior within the group. The Freedom of Education Forum (2016) states that the results of collaborative learning are better success and extended memory, deeper understanding, more frequent thinking and critical thinking, greater concentration while working in small groups and less indiscipline in teaching, greater motivation to learning and better grades, better communication between students, more positive and tolerant relationships with colleagues, better social skills, a more positive attitude towards oneself and better psychological health, more positive attitudes towards the subject and institution and a more positive attitude towards teachers.

Given the constant interaction that arises through collaborative learning between students but between students and teachers, and in order for the exchange of information and knowledge to be effective, Kadum (2012) believes that it is necessary to create a positive and motivating atmosphere in teaching. A pleasant, working and supportive teaching atmosphere can be achieved when students and the teacher communicate with each other, support each other and help each other, mutually accept and take into account mutual needs and goals (Kadum, S. 2012).In order to achieve such an environment, he states that, among other things, teacher support is important, which includes encouraging and encouraging students, optimistic expectations, acceptance of individual characteristics of students, showing calmness and patience, maintaining a moderate distance to students and presenting to see positivity and provide an opportunity for students to correct their eventual mistakes. The following section outlines some of the active teaching methods for encouraging critical thinking.

2.4.1. Teaching methods to encourage critical thinking

Brainstorming is a teaching method of freely and creatively generating many ideas on a topic in a short time, whereby the teacher creates a teaching atmosphere that encourages students to freely present ideas to solve a particular problem or topic. This teaching method is most often chosen to encourage students to interact, create a positive work atmosphere and interest them in the topic. The teaching atmosphere should be such that no one's idea is criticized, and that each student contributes.

Insert method and guided reading Insert method (Interactive Notating System for Effective Reading and Thinking) is a teaching method of reading. The Freedom of Education Forum (2016) defines it as a way of immersion in the text. The insert method consists of marking individual parts of the text according to pre-agreed markings. Thus, students can tick the information they have known before, a plus can indicate information that is new to them, and a minus can indicate information that is contrary to what they previously knew or thought they knew. A questionnaire usually refers to information that is confusing or information that you want to know more about. With this teaching method, students follow their understanding while reading (Halpern, F. D. 1999). It is not necessary to label every term in the text, but the labels should be a reflection of each individual's attitude towards the information provided in the text. Accordingly, the number of marks will vary depending on age and maturity, given the purpose of reading and experience in implementing this teaching method, or experience with the text marking system (Freedom of Education Forum, 2016). Guided reading is also a teaching method of reading that is conducted in such a way that the text to be analyzed or studied is first divided into several smaller parts, then students read part by part, and after each part the teacher asks questions about the text. Most often, questions are asked about what happened so far, during which students reflect on what they have read, then questions are asked about the topic itself, and before resuming reading, the teacher asks questions that students are expected to predict what will happen next in the text (Freedom Forum education, 2016).

The Freedom of Education Forum (2016) states that four factors are important in this teaching method:

- **Anticipation** - it motivates and directs the student's purpose of reading and thinking and seeking answers,

- **Coherent opinion plan -** text processing plan and teaching content and guidelines for discussion,
- **Breaks -** where in the text the teacher should stop and ask a question to students,
- **Behavior of teachers and students -** the teacher does not comment on students' answers but moderates and encourages discussion among students.
-

2.4.2. Clusters and rotating inspection

Clusters are a teaching method of teaching that encourages students to think freely and openly about a particular topic. The purpose of this teaching method is to systematize knowledge about a certain concept or topic, to connect it with previously acquired knowledge from the area being taught, from another subject or from everyday life. Freedom of Education Forum (2016) states that there are no rules according to which a cluster is made, except that the student should follow his own flow of thoughts. However, the process of making a cluster, brain writing, is carried out in the following steps (Freedom of Education Forum, 2016):

1. The key word, term or phrase is written in the middle of the paper or board,

2. Students write down the words or phrases associated with that topic,

3. Students connect all the concepts that are in any connection,

4. New concepts are added until the time runs out or the idea runs out,

5. Students and the teacher make an analysis or a common cluster on the board.

Rotating examination is a teaching method that is suitable only for group work. The teacher divides the students into groups and asks each group one question on paper. Group members write their answers or ideas on paper in the form of clues. When the time expires, the question sheets rotate to the next group. Each subsequent group reads the hints of the previous one and completes the list with their ideas. The goal of this teaching method is to exchange opinions on a topic or issue. The rotation stops when all groups receive a question sheet with which to start. After that, each group reads all the answers to their question, summarizes the answers and presents them to colleagues (Freedom of Education Forum, 2016).

Collaborative learning and a stimulating teaching atmosphere as well as the application of active teaching methods are the basis of the so-called EUR system for teaching (Freedom of Education Forum, 2016). The EUR system as an example of an approach to teaching for critical thinking can be applied to teaching at the higher education level. It is a system in which through evocation (E), understanding the meaning (U) and reflection (R) by applying active learning, the student learns from his own experience, understands what he has learned and applies what he has learned in his own words, in new situations (Freedom of Education Forum, 2016).

In other words, students can thus incorporate new knowledge into existing ones, actively engage in a new learning experience, while thinking about how new knowledge affects their understanding. The following is an overview of this approach. The first phase - the evocation phase, corresponds to the introductory stage of the lesson. It is a phase in which the teacher asks the students to recall what they already know about a particular topic. The assumption of the first phase is that learning will be more successful if students manage to connect what they already know about an existing topic with new information. The best way to achieve this goal at this stage is to arouse students' curiosity and interest in a particular topic, or to motivate them. Thus, appropriate to this phase will be those methods that encourage prior knowledge and raise motivation for the material being taught. The second phase - the phase of understanding the meaning corresponds to the stage of processing the teaching content. This is the stage where the teacher confronts students with new information that they should adopt. The aim of this phase is to retain the interest of the students from the previous phase while encouraging students to follow their understanding of the topic. By encouraging interactive learning and collaborative relationships, the teacher can teach students by reading a text, watching a movie, or performing an experiment. It is also desirable to encourage discussion and asking questions. The third phase - the reflection phase, corresponds to the last phase of the lesson in which the teacher asks the students to think about what they learned in the previous phase and to connect the knowledge they had with the newly acquired. At this stage, students can discuss what they have learned and compare what they have understood (Freedom of Education Forum, 2016).

Thus, for the evocation phase, an active teaching method of teaching is suitable - brainstorming or ideas, for the phase of understanding the meaning of insert method and teaching method of guided reading, and for the reflection phase, cluster teaching methods and rotating examination

are suitable. Of course, it depends on the teacher which teaching methods he will apply in his work with regard to the goals and content of teaching or the time available. Ultimately, these teaching methods can be implemented in teaching without following the described phases of the EUR teaching system.

2.5.   Conceptualization of teaching for critical thinking

Based on the previous knowledge of teaching for critical thinking, it can be conceptualized through the following groups of characteristics. The first group of teaching features for critical thinking relates to teaching met cognitive skills and learning strategies (Halpern, 1999, Jensen 2003). They involve the process of monitoring and regulating the learning process, and include the following activities of teachers: emphasizing understanding, analysis and evaluation, not just memorizing and reproducing teaching content, encouraging consideration of teaching content from different perspectives, teaching how to approach learning or solving certain tasks, encouraging them to give their own opinion and critical review of the teaching content, encouraging the connection of teaching content from different courses, connecting the content with examples from everyday life and previous knowledge and experiences of students, encouraging independent taking notes and organizing content and encouraging monitoring and checking work and progress. The following is a feature of attaching importance to critical thinking (Forum for Freedom of Education, 2016, Klooster, 2001). Giving importance to critical thinking means appreciating critical thinking code students and accept the student's diverse argumentative views. The next group of teaching features for critical thinking refers to forms of work (Tsui, 1999). Forms of work as a feature of teaching for critical thinking refer to the application of collaborative forms of work in teaching (pair work, work in research groups, teamwork, etc.). Teaching methods are the next group of teaching features for critical thinking (Tsui, 1999). These include the following activities of 22 teachers: the application of various active teaching methods in teaching (brainstorming / ideas, insert methods, guided reading, etc.) and encouraging discussions within the lecture. The next group of characteristics of teaching for critical thinking refers to interaction in teaching (Bradley and Bradley, 2005, Forum for Freedom of Education, 2016, Jensen 2003). It involves emphasizing interactive teaching and active

learning, then providing sufficient time to explain the student's thoughts and justify his or her views, and encouraging students to ask each other questions and answers. Furthermore, a group of teaching features for critical thinking related to teacher feedback follows (Tsui, 1999). It includes the following teacher activities: explaining why an answer is correct or incorrect, and providing constructive feedback on student work. The following is a feature of teaching critical thinking related to encouraging presentations in front of a group (Miller 2003) and conducting written essay-type exams (Buchberger, 2012, Kooster, 2001, Miller 2003) and the teaching atmosphere (Miller 2003) which refers to the relationship of respect and acceptance, relaxed and tolerant work atmosphere and the willingness of teachers to answer students' questions.

Chapter 3

In this chapter it is shown the research methodology we have chosen to conduct this research by giving the detailed information about quantitative and qualitative instruments used.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of developing students' critical thinking skills through task based learning involves three stages. The first stage includes identifying different theories of educational development and how this development approach provides learning proficiency, then, generalizations are made from them to specific factors which are useful as methods to influence developing students' critical thinking skills through task based learning and finally, results are given and used to give recommendations. This chapter provides an account of the methodology used for the purpose and the procedure of the analysis.

3.1. Quantitative instruments

The study has used a combination of qualitative and quantitative instruments to gather data. The instrument used for the quantitative part of the study was a questionnaire through which we have conducted the physical research on the above given education institutions (see appendix A). It consists of twenty (20) multiple choice questions, which required students, to choose among four answering alternatives. It was designed to elicit students' perceptions with regard to developing students' critical thinking skills through task based learning.In this research there have been 45 students involved (30 of them were from city schools **"Thimi Mitko"** and **"Rexhep Elmazi"** in Gjilan city and 15 of them were from school **"Dardania"** in the village of Llashtice, Gjilan municipality), all of them attending **8th and 9th** grade of elementary school. Students were of genders, males and females.

3.2. Qualitative instruments

The qualitative instruments of the study were interviews with teachers (**see appendix B**). The teacher interviews were conducted with four teachers and they were asked to respond on using their perspective and/or their point of view in developing students' critical thinking skills through task- based learning, among students. Teacher participants on this research were three English Language teaching colleagues from all three above mentioned schools. One of them was a female teacher, and the others two were male teachers.

Chapter 4

In this chapter we have provided the obtained data gathered from the research conducted in the two educations institutions, which we have shown in the charts through dividing the answers for each chosen alternative by the participants in the proper diagrams.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS
4.1. Analysis of research results

As it can be seen below, we have listed all the outcome data from the questionnaire by listing the answers for each research options of our paper, and by commenting each one of them appropriately. For every given research option/statement below, we have also provided a separate conclusion.
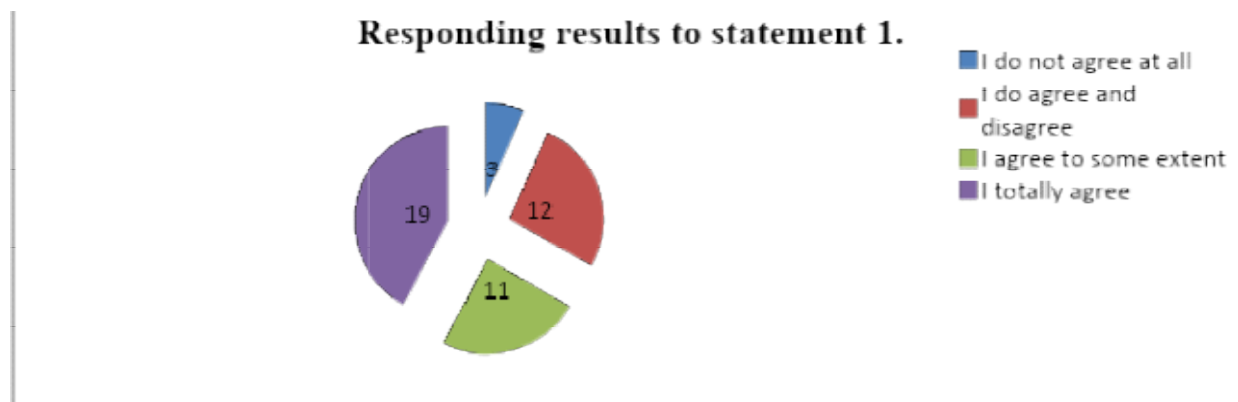

Figure 1. Statement 1 results

In the above statement shown in Figure 1, that; the English teacher puts the emphasis on comprehension, analysis and evaluation, and not just on memorizing and reproducing the learning content, the results we have gained from the respondents' answers are quite interesting, in which case; 19 out of 45 respondents in the research have chosen the alternative "I totally agree", then 11 of the respondents have chosen the alternative "I agree to some extent" which gives us to understand that the English language teacher in the schools we researched In this paper, pay attention to this form of incentive or stimulation of critical thinking by students during the elaboration of different English language teaching units. On the other hand we also

have 12 respondents who have somehow turned out to be volatile in some form, selecting the alternative "I agree and disagree" and we also have a small number of 3 respondents who have selected the alternative "I do not agree at all". Considering the results obtained from the above statement, it is not that with high certainty we can conclude that in the respective schools where we did the research, there is indeed a serious and successful attempt by English language teachers to develop and cultivate critical thinking among students, but at the same time we cannot, by no means deny the same thing!
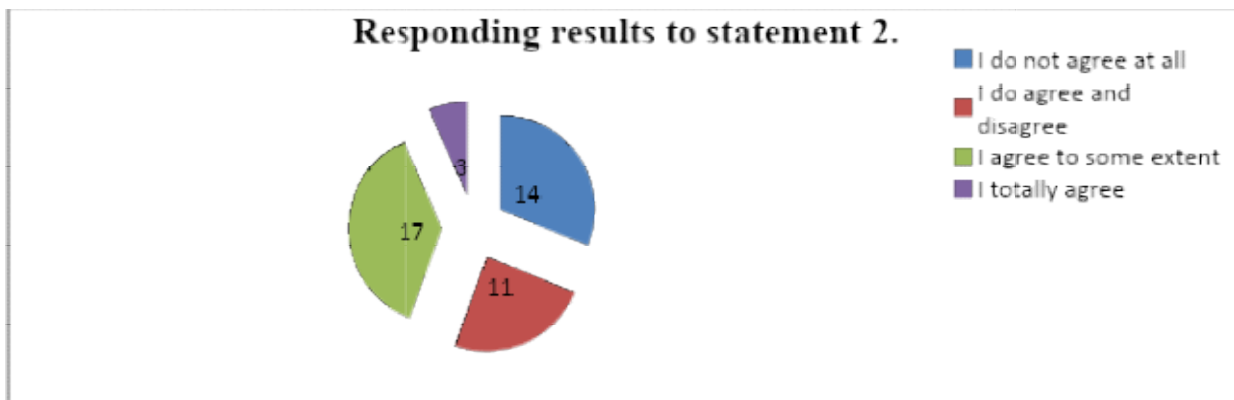

Figure 2. Statement 2 results

In the above statement which says; The English language teacher assigns the tasks to the students and encourages them to consider the content of the teaching from different perspectives, the results we have obtained from the respondents are as follows: 3 of the respondents have chosen the alternative "I totally agree", 17 of the respondents have selected the alternative "I agree to some extent", which brings us closer to 50% of respondents with a selection of positive acceptable alternatives. At the same time, fourteen respondents have chosen the option "I do not agree at all" while 11 respondents have selected the option "I agree and disagree". Looking at these results again we cannot be sure at the conclusion that English language teachers encourage students to consider the content of the lessons from different perspectives as a method which would reinforce critical thinking in students, getting them up to task! In fact, at the same time we can conclude but without a high degree of certainty, that there are nevertheless attempts by English language teachers to do the same.
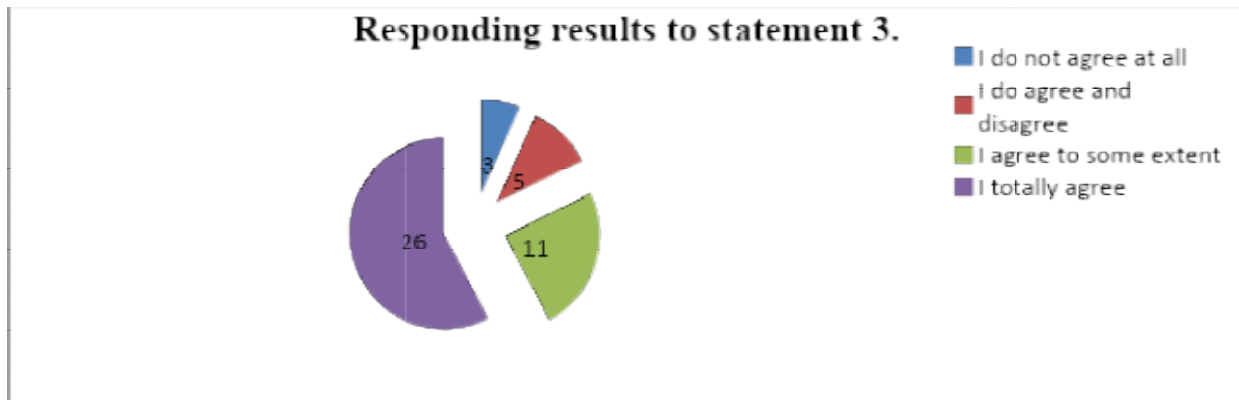
Responding results to statement 3.

- I do not agree at all
- I do agree and disagree
- I agree to some extent
- I totally agree

Figure 3. Statement 3 results

In the above statement; "English language teacher teaches students how to approach the solution of certain tasks", we received very interesting answers as follows: 26 respondents have chosen the option "I totally agree", while 11 respondents have selected the alternative "I agree to some extent" which gives us an unshakable basis to come to the conclusion that English language teachers in the respective schools where we conducted the research, help students to approach correctly in the solution of certain tasks. At the same time, we have 5 respondents who have selected the option "I will agree and disagree" and we also have 3 respondents who have selected the option "I totally do not agree". Considering the results obtained, we can freely conclude that in the respective schools English language teachers, through the form chosen to help in certain cases of certain tasks where students could potentially have difficulties, help them to approach correctly through the selection of appropriate forms, which turns out to be a kind of help in the development of critical thinking in students.
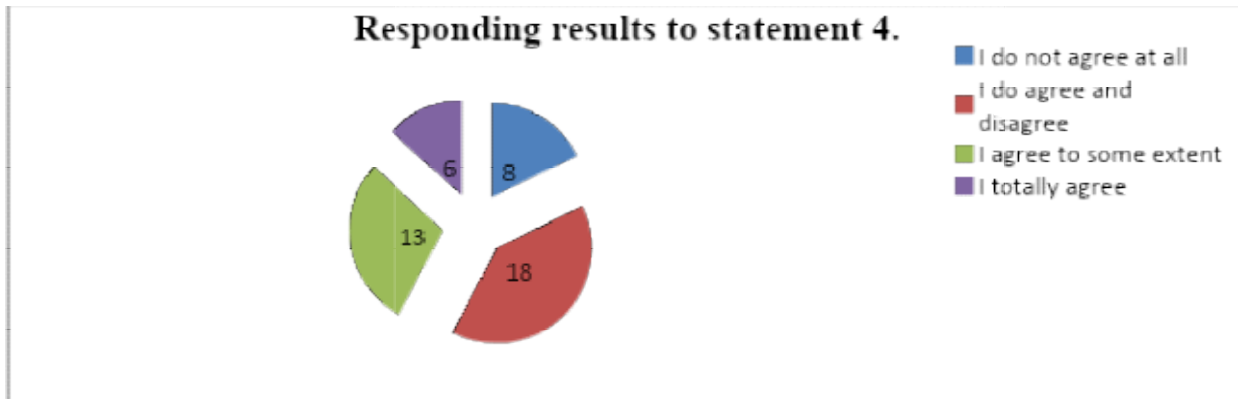
Figure 4. Statement 4 results

In the above statement, that the English teacher encourages students to give their personal opinions and critical analysis on assignments, the results we obtained from the respondents' answers are as follows: 8 of the respondents have selected the alternative "I do not agree at all ", while 18 respondents have selected the alternative" I agree and disagree ". Looking at these results it turns out that 26 respondents out of 45 in total, which in percentage appears to be more than 60% of respondents, it turns out that in the respective schools there is no encouragement of students by English language teachers to push them to develop critical thinking in this form, but this does not give us a high certainty in the conclusion, because at the same time 6 of the respondents have chosen the alternative "I totally agree" and 13 of the respondents have chosen the alternative "I agree to some extent", which then reflects to us that there is nevertheless an attempt by English language teachers in the respective schools where we conducted the research to develop critical thinking through this form of which we have spoken above
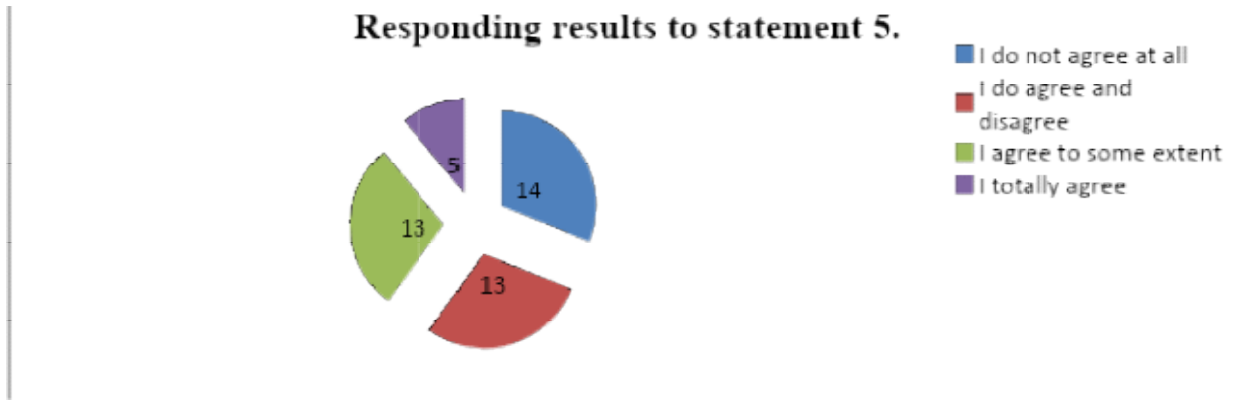
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Figure 5. Statement 5 results

In the aforementioned statement that students are encouraged by English language teachers to link content from different subjects, the answers we received from the respondents are as follows: 14 respondents selected alternative "I do not agree at all" while 13 respondents have selected the alternative "I do agree and disagree" results these which give a fluctuation in determining that teachers choose this form to encourage critical thinking among students. On the other hand we have 5 respondents who have selected the option "I totally agree" while 13 respondents have selected the option "I agree to some extent" which gives us a good basis to see that the English teachers of the respective schools researched from us, select this form to encourage students to make the connection between different topics as a very good form for the development of critical thinking, through tasks.
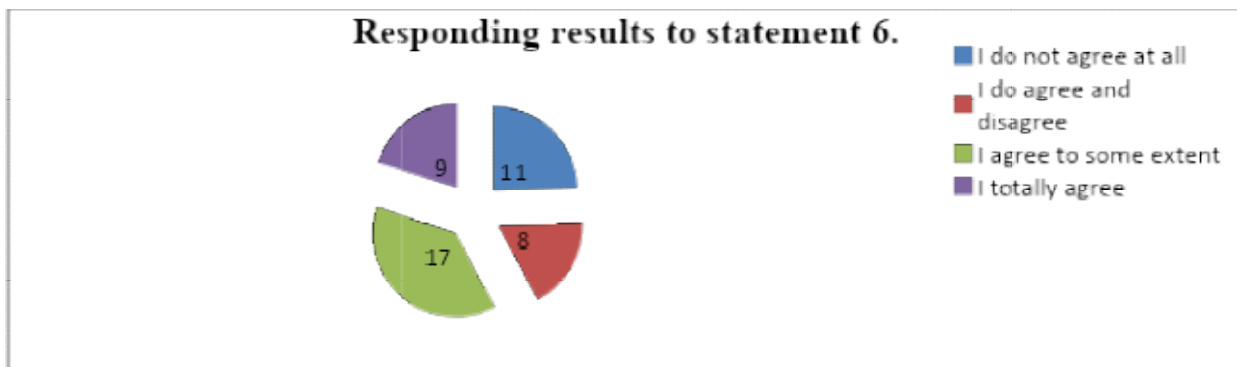

Figure 6. Statement 6 results

In the above statement which had to do with the interconnection of examples from everyday life during the design of tasks by the English language teacher, the answers we received from the respondents turned out to be quite interesting, as follows: 11 respondents selected the alternative "I do not agree at all", while 8 respondents have selected the alternative "I do agree and disagree", while on the other hand with the selection of alternatives in a positive aspect by the respondents, we have the following results: 17 respondents have selected the alternative "I agree to some extent "while 9 respondents have selected the alternative" I totally agree ". The result of the answers to this statement turns out to be interesting, because the selection of positive alternatives by the respondents gives us some certainty through which we can state that, to a certain significant degree the English language teachers of the researched schools use examples from everyday life to wreath the same with the design of tasks for students, a form which is quite appropriate to develop critical thinking in students.
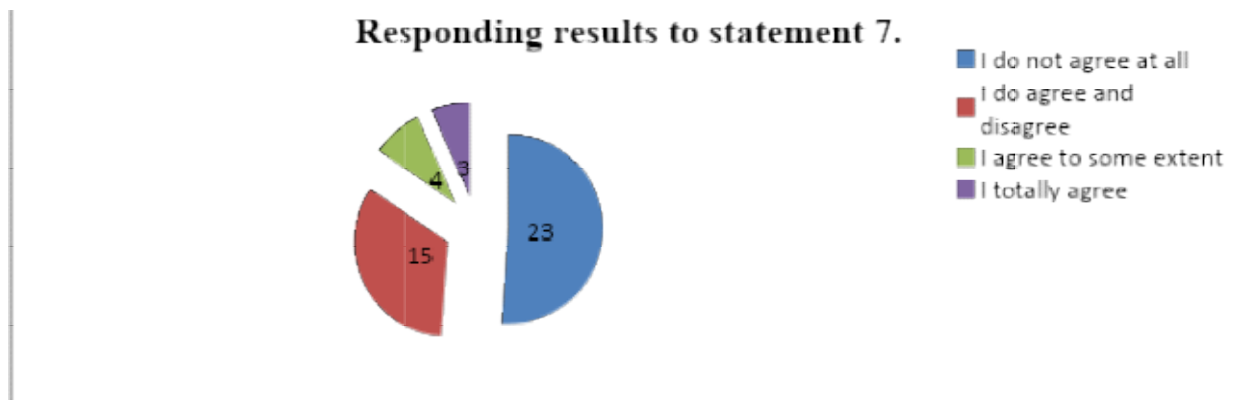
Figure 7. Statement 7 results

In the above statement, which says: "English language teacher encourages students to monitor and control their work and their progress (e.g. to notice and correct mistakes, check the solution they have reached)", the answers from the respondents are as in following: 23 respondents chose the alternative "I do not agree at all", while 15 respondents chose the alternative "I will agree and disagree", and only 4 respondents chose the alternative "I agree to some extent" respectively 3 respondents chose the alternative "I totally agree". Considering the results we have received from the respondents in this statement, it is clear that teachers rarely encourage students to monitor their work and their progress, which then somehow thwarts any attempt to motivate or stimulate critical thinking to the students!
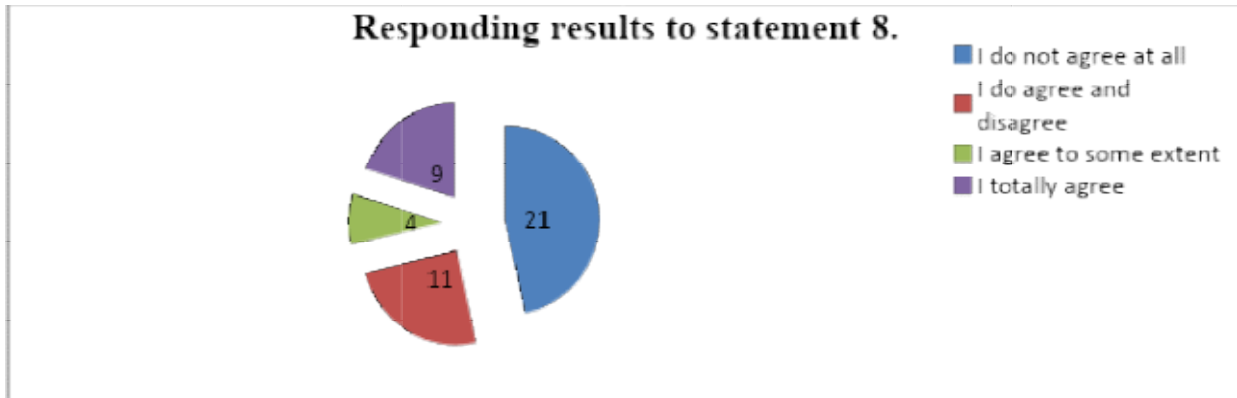
Figure8. Statement 8 results

In the next statement which says: "Our English language teacher values students' critical thinking" the respondents answered strangely as follows: 21 respondents chose the alternative "I do not agree at all" while 11 of them chose the alternative "I do agree and disagree" which expresses a kind of indignation regarding the evaluation of critical thinking by teachers for students, in English language lessons. On the other hand, a relatively small number of respondents chose the alternative "I agree to some extent" alternative which was selected by 4 respondents, while 9 respondents chose the alternative "I totally agree", but which is a non-significant number to give us the opportunity to freely conclude that English language teachers in the respective schools surveyed, value critical thinking in general through student assignments!

Figure 9. Statement 9 results

In the above statement which had to do with the acceptance by teachers of different views from students on certain topics, the results are as follows: 29 respondents selected the alternative "I do not agree at all", 11 respondents selected the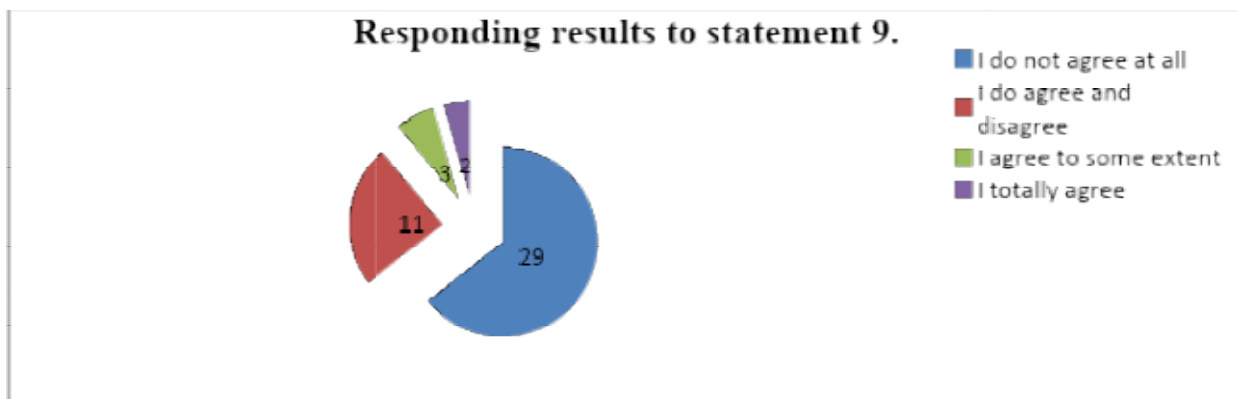 alternative "I agree and disagree", 3 respondents chose the alternative "I agree to some extent" while only 2 respondents chose the alternative "I totally agree". Considering the results in relation to the assertion in question, we can freely conclude that the teachers of the respective schools researched in this paper, clearly do not accept to a large extent, the different views from the students on certain topics. This consequently gives us to understand that in this particular form of encouraging critical thinking, it is clearly lameness in all the schools researched in this paper.

Figure 10. Statement 10 results

Regarding the above statement, the answers we received from the respondents are as follows: 19 respondents have selected the alternative "I totally agree", 4 respondents have selected the alternative "I agree to some extent", 11 respondents have selected the alternative "I do not agree at all" while 11 respondents have selected the alternative"I do agree and disagree". These results again make us unclear the idea of an undoubted conclusion, because while we want to conclude that teachers apply different forms of teaching and tasking forms that stimulate critical thinking, at the same time we do not have sufficient certainty to conclude a such thing, taking into account the results obtained by the respondents!

Responding results to statement 11.

Legend:
- I do not agree at all
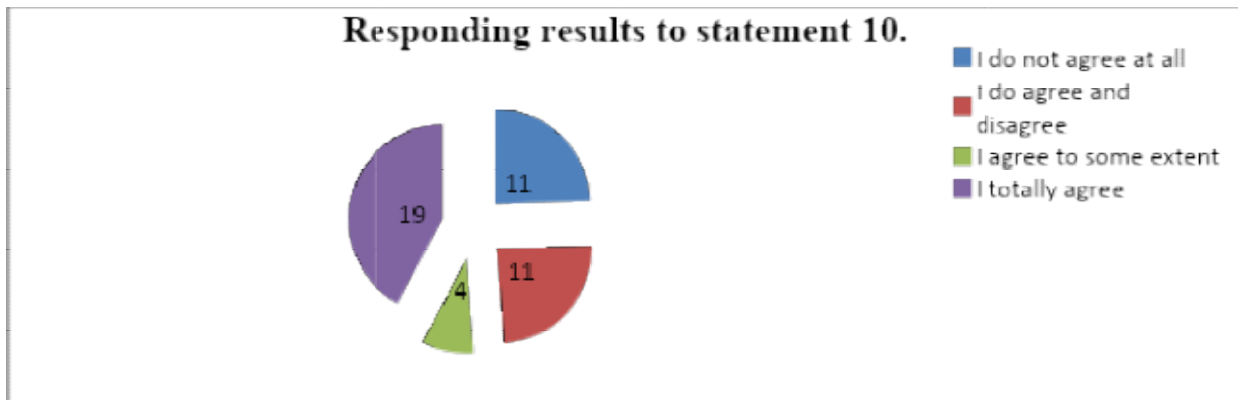- I do agree and disagree
- I agree to some extent
- I totally agree
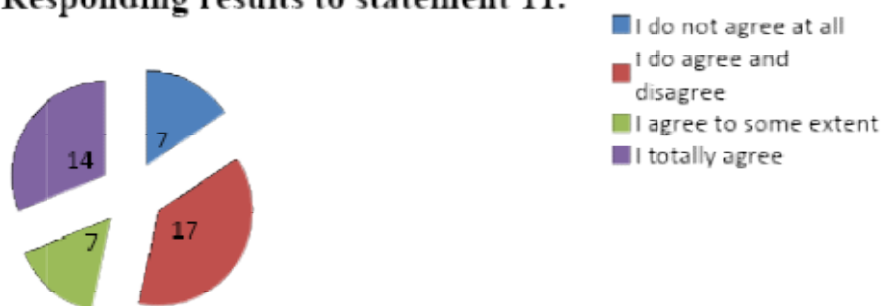
Figure 11. Statement 11 results

In the above statement, the answers we received from the respondents are as follows: 7 respondents chose the alternative "I do not agree at all", 17 respondents chose the alternative "I do agree and disagree", while 14 respondents selected the alternative "I totally agree" and 7 respondents have selected the alternative "I agree to some extent". Consequently, the results obtained by the respondents in the above statement, give us to understand that, to some extent, English language teachers have a variety of application of different teaching methods, as one of the forms of developing critical thinking to the students. We can't say that in this issue there are no attempts by teachers to do the same, but the results obtained do not give us the certainty to conclude positively about the same.

Responding results to statement 12.

Legend:
- I do not agree at all
- I do agree and disagree
- I agree to some extent
- I totally agree
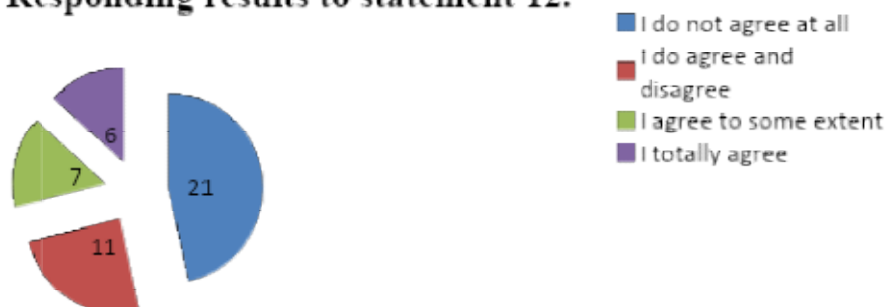
Figure 12. Statement 12 results

40

In the above statement, the results obtained by the respondents, however, give us relatively high certainty that we can conclude that the English language teachers of the respective schools are not applying the method of encouraging students to work in units, method this known as quite effective of fostering critical thinking through tasks. We state alike considering the fact that: 21 respondents have chosen the alternative "I do not agree at all" and 11 of them have chosen the alternative "I agree and disagree"! At the same time, 7 respondents have selected the option "I agree to some extent" and 6 respondents have selected the option "I totally agree", a result which does not give us the certainty to conclude positively regarding the above statement.
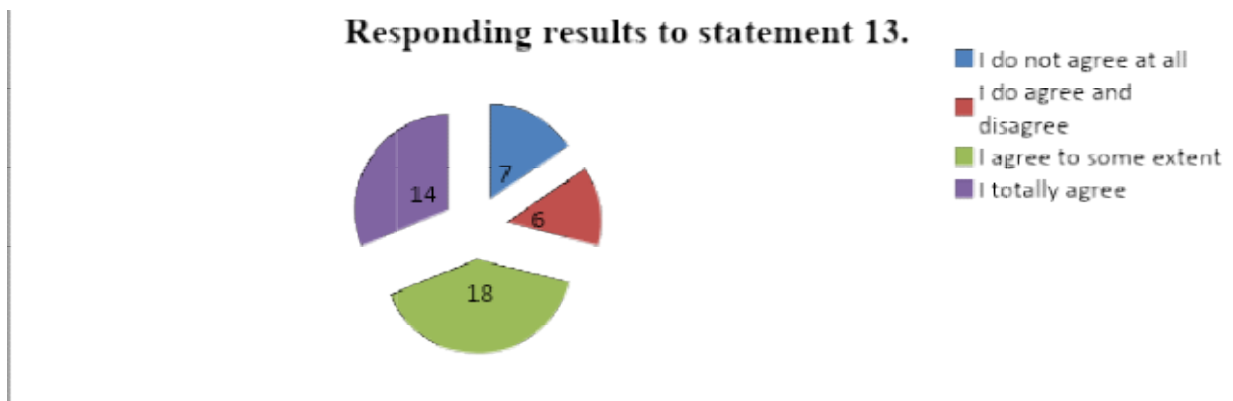
Figure 13. Statement 13 results

In the above statement, the results obtained are as follows: 18 respondents have selected the option "I agree to some extent" and 14 respondents have selected the option "I totally agree", which gives us the right or sufficient security to positively conclude that, English language teachers in the respective schools place emphasis on interactive teaching and learning, a very prominent form of developing critical thinking in students. At the same time 7 respondents have selected the option "I do not agree at all" and 6 respondents have selected the option "I do agree and disagree".

Responding results to statement 14.

Legend:
- I do not agree at all
- I do agree and disagree
- I agree to some extent
- I totally agree
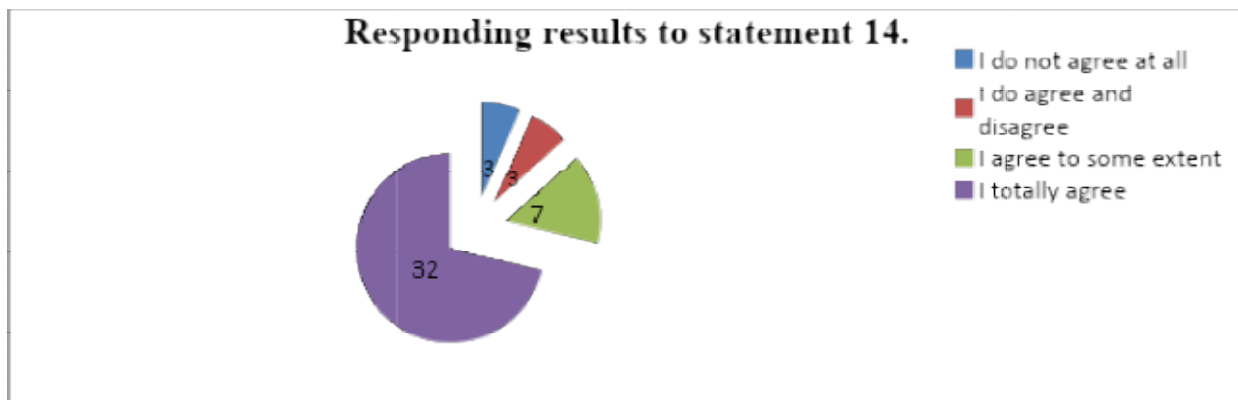
Figure 14. Statement 14 results

In the above statement that: "English language teacher gives students enough time to explain their thoughts and justify their views", the results from the respondents are as follows: 32 respondents have chosen the alternative "I totally agree" while 7 respondents have chosen the alternative "I agree to some extent "which gives us real assurance to freely conclude that the teachers of the respective schools give enough time to their students to explain their opinions and at the same time to justify their views, while this appears to be a very important form of developing critical thinking. On the other hand a number of 3 respondents have chosen the alternative "I do agree and disagree" while 3 respondents have selected the alternative" I do not agree at all ".

Responding results to statement 15.

- I do not agree at all
- I do agree and disagree
- I agree to some extent
- I totally agree

4
5
5
31
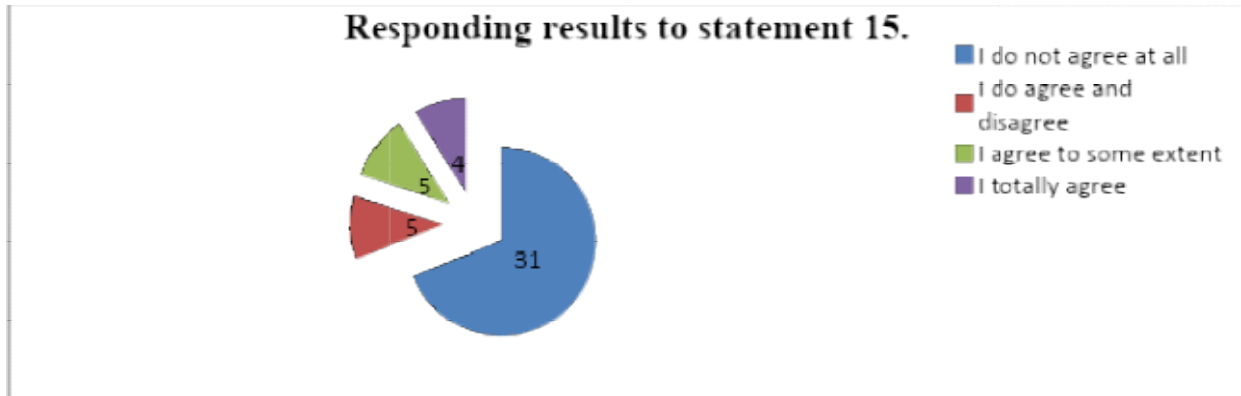
Figure 15. Statement 15 results

In the next statement that "English language teacher encourages students to ask each other questions during class", 31 respondents have selected the option "I do not agree at all" while 5 respondents have selected the option "I do agree and disagree", and such a large number of respondents allows us to conclude with great certainty that English teachers of the respective schools do not encourage students to ask each other during English class, which is another form of developing critical thinking. On the other hand we have a very small number of respondents who have chosen other alternatives, in which case 5 respondents have selected the option "I totally agree" while 4 respondents have selected the alternative "I agree to some extent".

Responding results to statement 16.

- I do not agree at all
- I do agree and disagree
- I agree to some extent
- I totally agree

1
4
14
26
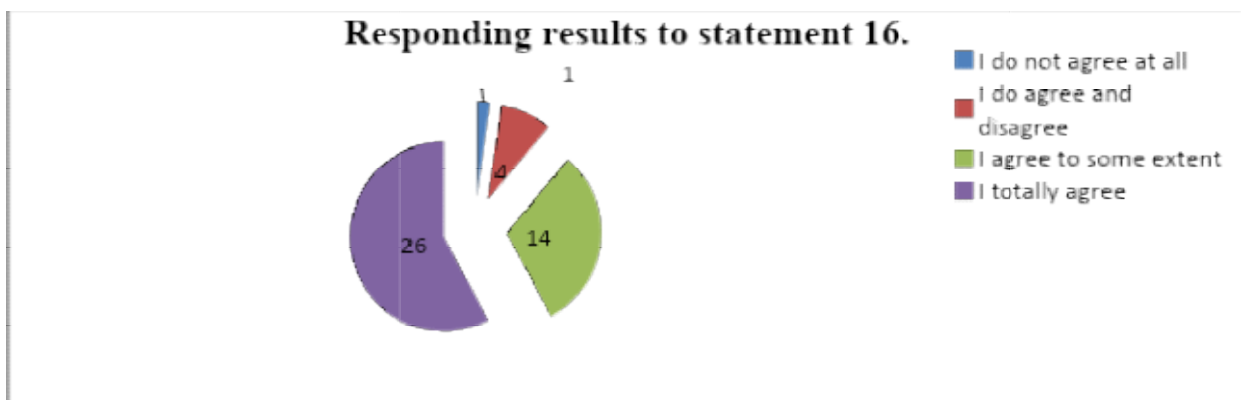
Figure 16. Statement 16 results

In the above statement: "English language teacher explains to students why an answer is correct or incorrect", the majority of respondents respectively 26 of them have chosen the option "I totally agree" while 14 respondents have selected the option "I agree to some extent". On the other hand, only one respondent selected the option "I do not agree at all" while 4 respondents selected the option "I will agree and disagree". Looking at these results we can freely conclude that the English language teachers of the researched schools always give explanations to their students in cases when their choice of tasks or answers are correct or incorrect. Even in this case, teachers turn out to be quite creative in developing critical thinking in students.
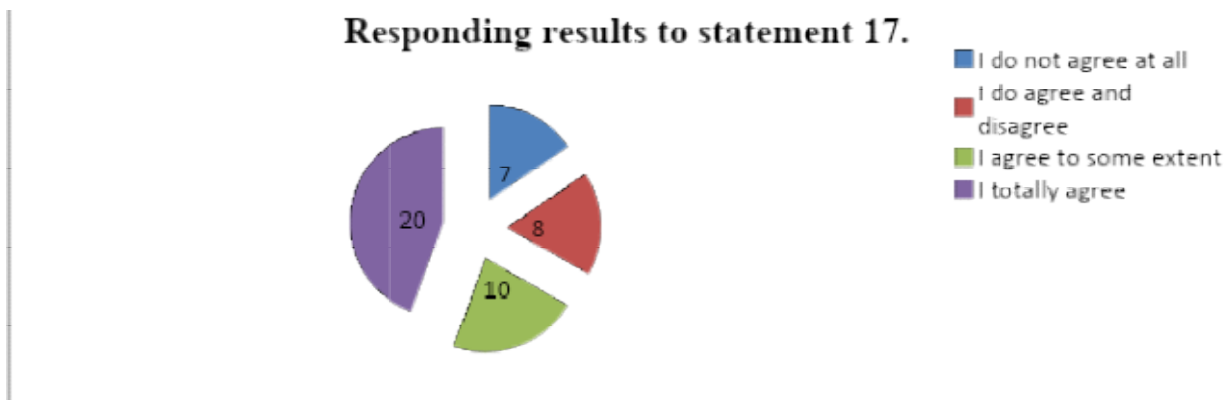
Figure 17. Statement 17 results

In the statement: "English language teacher gives students constructive feedback on their work", 20 respondents chose the alternative "I totally agree", and while 10 respondents chose the alternative "I agree to some extent". On the other hand, 8 respondents have selected the option "I agree and disagree" and 7 respondents have selected the option "I do not agree at all". Considering the results obtained from the respondent regarding the statement in question, we freely conclude that English language teachers in the respective schools always give constructive feedback to their students, as one of the acceptable forms of encouraging critical thinking in students.
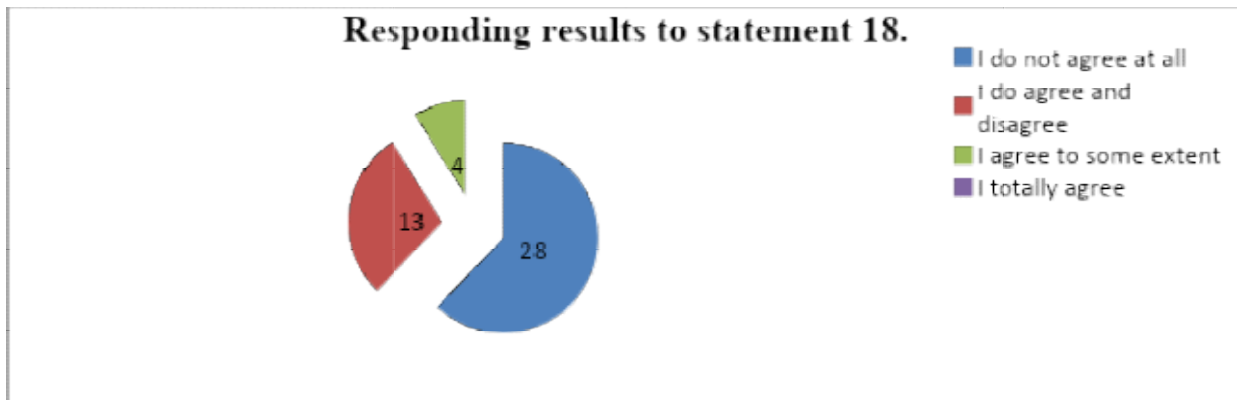
Figure 18. Statement 18 results

In the above statement: "English language teacher encourages students to make group presentations", 28 of the respondents have chosen the alternative "I do not agree at all" while 13 of the respondents have chosen the alternative "I agree and disagree" making us unshakable concluding that in the respective schools English language teachers do not apply, at least frequently or perhaps never, the group presentations of certain tasks in English, and consequently it turns out that this very good form of encouraging critical thinking among students, is not applied by the respective teachers. On the other hand we have only a number that is almost negligible in terms of the impact on the above conclusion, where only 4 respondents have selected the option "I agree to some extent" while no respondent has selected the option "I totally agree".
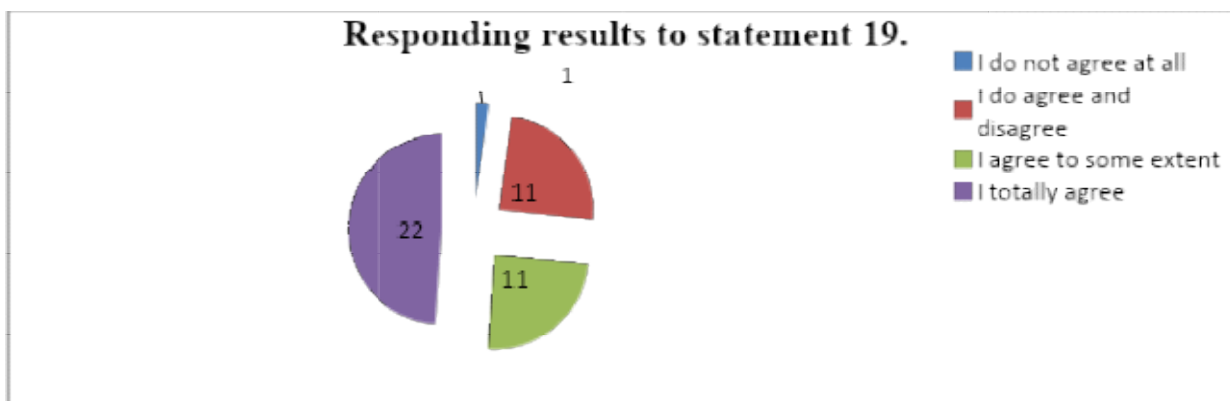
Figure 19. Statement 19 results

In the above statement, "English language teacher conducts written essay type exams", the answers of the respondents are as follows: 22 respondents have selected the alternative "I totally agree", 11 respondents have selected the alternative "I agree to some extent" giving us assurance concluding that, the English language teachers of the respective schools where we conducted the research, always use one of the methods which is quite effective in promoting critical thinking among students and which has to do with written essays . On the other hand, only one respondent selected the option "I do not agree at all" and 11 others selected the option "I agree and disagree", which does not influence our conclusion above.
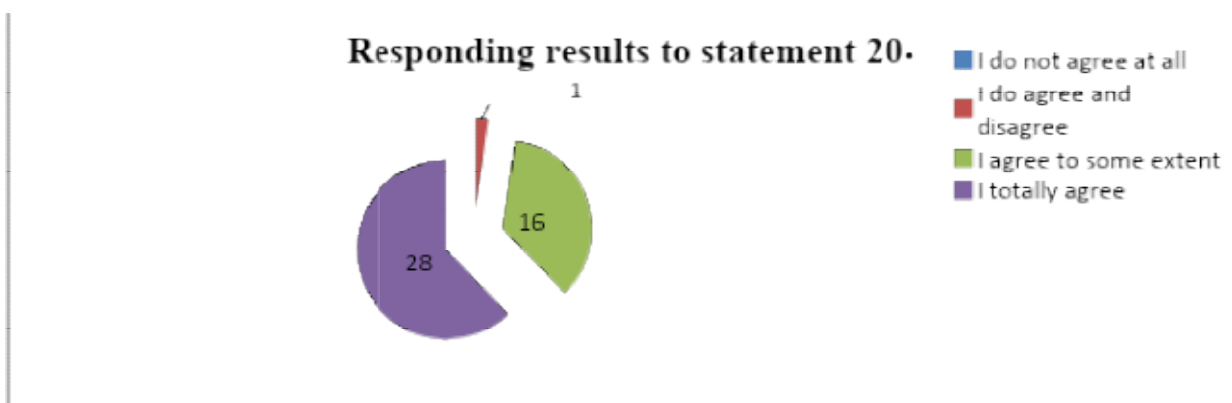
Figure 20. Statement 20 results

In the last statement selected in our questionnaire in the schools we researched which says: "English language teacher is ready to answer students' questions", the results we received from the respondents are as follows: 28 respondents have selected the alternative "I totally agree", 16 respondents chose the alternative "I agree to some extent", while only 1 respondent chose the alternative "I do agree and disagree". No respondent selected the option "I do not agree at all". Looking at these results in relation to the assertion in question, and then we firmly conclude that the English language teachers of the respective schools are always able to give explanations to the students in their eventual questions related to certain topics, which obviously encourages critical thinking in students.

4.2. Interviews with teachers

In the interviews we conducted with English language teachers (total of 3 teachers) as part of this research, we received more or less approximate answers from their point of view regarding the degree or level of applicability of appropriate methods in relation to the development of critical thinking in students, task-based.

These following excerpts are interview responses:

Q1: Do you as English language teachers; apply proper teaching methods that would encourage the increasing of critical thinking among your students?

To the above question, the English language teacher from the elementary school "Rexhep Elmazi" gave the following answer: Despite the fact that in many cases during the teaching of English I apply methods which are methods that encourage critical thinking among students, It seems that this is not so successful because in my opinion, teaching English is necessarily related to teaching other subjects, and I have the impression that in other subjects not all teaching methods are applied which would encourage critical thinking. among students.

The other teacher from the elementary school "Thimi Mitko" gave the following answer: I, as an English teacher, pay attention to the application of different teaching methods, and among them also those that encourage critical thinking in students, but am observed stagnation in students in this approach, and in my opinion, this comes as a result of lack of interaction between teachers of other subjects, regarding the application of appropriate teaching methods, which would encourage critical thinking in students.

The third in a row English teacher from the elementary school "Dardania", in the above question, and answer as follows: I apply methods which encourage interactivity in students and consequently forms and methods which encourage critical thinking in students , but often encounters a kind of fear in students, to express their critical opinion!

Summarizing all three teacher responses on the first question, even though they apply the appropriate teaching methods to a considerable extent, they cannot conclude with high certainty that the same methods would highly encourage the increasing of critical thinking among

students! In particular there are some lessons that do this but still there are many other lessons and methods which are not that encourage the increase of critical thinking among students. Another point that they have highlighted is that, despite the increase in the level of teaching, various trainings, raising the level of awareness among our students and society in general, they emphasized that we still unfortunately live in a society with many clichés, where autonomous thinking and especially critical thinking, are seen as somewhat forbidden, especially for young people, and in our case for our students. However, over time, all these setbacks are being avoided and things are going in the right direction, that is, in the direction of increasing the level of critical thinking among our students.

Q2: If you do apply proper teaching methods for attempting to increase critical thinking among your students, do other subject teachers do the same?

To the above question, the English language teacher from the elementary school "Rexhep Elmazi" gave the following answer: As in the response to the first question, espite the fact that in many cases during the teaching of English I apply methods which are methods that encourage critical thinking among students, It seems that this is not so successful because in my opinion, teaching English is necessarily related to teaching other subjects, and I have the impression that in other subjects not all teaching methods are applied which would encourage critical thinking among students.

The other teacher from the elementary school "Thimi Mitko" gave the following answer: I, as an English teacher, pay attention to the application of different teaching methods, and among them also those that encourage critical thinking in students, but am observed stagnation in students in this approach, and in my opinion, this comes as a result of lack of interaction between teachers of other subjects, regarding the application of appropriate teaching methods, which would encourage critical thinking in students.

The third English teacher from the elementary school "Dardania", to the above question, gave the following answer: As I have stated in the response to the first question, I randomly apply methods which encourage interactivity in students and consequently forms and methods which

encourage critical thinking in students, but unfortunately this appears not to be the case with the colleagues of other subjects!

As mentioned in the first question, they as English language teachers are inevitably connected with teachers of other subjects and of course also with society and the everyday life of our society in general, and consequently all this affects the applicability of proper methods and appropriate teaching techniques which would increase the level of critical thinking among our students. Emphasizing the particular question, they regret to note that the relationship with teachers of other subjects in terms of increasing critical thinking is not at a satisfactory level, because the level of application of appropriate methods and techniques which will increase the level of critical thinking among students in other subjects is of a very small extent or of an inappropriate level, and consequently this directly affects the learning of English or the increase of the level of critical thinking in the subject of English.

Q3: What is the degree of cooperating between you as English language teacher with your colleagues of other schools (English teachers) in the sense of exchanging creative ideas about teaching that would foster creative thinking among your students?

In the above question, the English language teacher from the primary school "Rexhep Elmazi" underlined that he has contacts with English language teachers from other schools, but his emphasis is on cooperation with Albanian and German language teachers in the same school, in order to achieve a coordination in the application of appropriate methods as well as in the improvement and advancement of teaching in general. In fact, there are no meetings in which teachers of the same subject would present and exchange creative ideas related to this issue!

The teacher from the elementary school "Thimi Mitko" underlined that, sometimes he meets with English language teachers from other schools, but it is not that they talk specifically about the topic in question! We meet more with the Albanian and German language teachers of the same school and we cooperate more in the coordination of the topics respectively the curriculum, in order to achieve a higher quality and level of learning in general.

To the same question, the English teacher from the school "Dardania" gave the answer as follows: Since I work in the village, I emphasize my coordination with native and German

language teachers, so that we exchange creative ideas about increasing the quality of teaching in our subjects.

Consequently there is a more pronounced relationship with teachers of mother tongue and second foreign language (German language) and the level of this relationship can be said to be satisfactory to some extent, but on the other hand with other teachers of other subjects, as well as with the teachers of English from other schools, they could not say that it is of the desired level, of the level which would guarantee success in raising the level of critical thinking among their students.

With teachers of other languages, whether native or German language, they often discusses creative ideas in general and there are discussions of ideas that encourage the increase of level of critical thinking. They also say that even with colleagues teaching other languages, there should be a much greater increase in cooperation on many topics, and especially in the exchange of creative teaching ideas.

Q4: Is there cooperation between you as English language teacher with your colleagues of other subjects in the sense of exchanging creative ideas about teaching that would foster creative thinking among your students?

To the above question, the English language teacher from the elementary school "Rexhep Elmazi" gave the following answer: Despite the fact that in many cases during the teaching of English I apply methods which are methods that encourage critical thinking among students, even though there have been many attempts from my side to increase the level of cooperation with the teachers of other subjects, I have the impression that in other subjects this doesn't appear to be the case, at least not to the satisfactory level!

The other teacher from the elementary school "Thimi Mitko" gave the following answer: I, as an English teacher, pay attention to the application of different teaching methods, and among them also those that encourage critical thinking in students, but beside with teachers of native and German language, with other teachers of other subjects there is a lack of cooperation to this issue!

The third English teacher from the elementary school "Dardania", to the above question, gave the following answer: I randomly apply methods which encourage interactivity among students and consequently forms and methods which encourage critical thinking among students, and as I have stated in one of the answers given above except the closer cooperation to some extent with the teachers of Albanian and German language, with the teachers of other subjects I cannot certainly state that there is productive cooperation in this matter!

As it can be seen in the answers given, there is a subject matter relationship and cooperation with teachers of other languages, but not with teachers of other subjects such as natural or social sciences, so that through that cooperation they would directly influence the increase of quality and in selecting and fostering the use of appropriate teaching methods and techniques which would encourage an increase in the level of critical thinking among their students!

Q5: Is there cooperation between you as English language teacher with your students' parents in the sense of informing them accordingly about the proper ideas that they could apply at home and or exchanging creative ideas about teaching that would foster creative thinking among your students?

In the above question, the English language teacher from the primary school "Rexhep Elmazi" underlined that, there are always attempts on his part to talk to parents and consequently sensitize them about the methods that should be applied at home with students / children, in order to increase the autonomy in thinking and consequently the level of critical thinking among students / children, but the problem lies in the willingness of parents to do the same, and also with the level of education that most parents have.

In the above question, the English teacher from the elementary school "Thimi Mitko" underlined that, in some of the meetings with parents he tried to raise awareness about the methods that should be applied at home with students, in order to increase the level of thinking. critical to students, but the problem lies in the willingness of parents to do the same, but also in the level of education that the vast majority of parents possess.

In the above question, the English teacher from the elementary school "Dardania" underlined that, with her encounters with parents, she constantly tries to sensitize them about the methods that should be applied at home with students / children, in order to grow autonomy in thinking

and consequently the level of critical thinking in students / children, but the problem lies in the willingness of parents to do the same, but also in the level of education that most parents have.

As a result, from their point of view as English teachers, through the occasional contacts they have with the parents of their students, there are discussions about topics which may be related to encouraging the increase of critical thinking, but this then depends directly on the level of education of the parents, their intellectual degree, willingness to cooperate, etc. In this case, with deep regret it should be noted that excluding sporadic cases, most parents do not turn out to be cooperative in this matter! All three English language teachers in the respective schools where we conducted the research told us that they agree that the degree or level of application of appropriate and varied methods which are productive in developing students' critical thinking based on assignments is not at the right level and the reasons for this, according to them are:

1. Inadequate cooperation with teachers of other subjects!

2. Non-cooperation at the desired level with the students' parents.

3. Impossibility of applying many methods which are essential for the development of critical thinking in students, due to the lack of necessary infrastructure in some of the schools.

4. Low level of education, in which work is done with the respective students (alluded to in primary school)!

5. Lack of appropriate and continuous training for English language teachers, where they would develop their creativity and gain additional knowledge, about the appropriate methods for developing critical thinking in students, based on tasks, etc.

In general, according to the current situation, we have the impression that some of the reasons that were mentioned above, and which were given to us by the English language teachers in the respective schools where we conducted the research, are not reasons that do not stand, but the problem, in our opinion, lies in the non-insistence of the media to consistently improve the current situation, which, as can be seen from the results of the confusion, is not a satisfactory situation or at the desired level, related to the research topic.

5. CONCLUSION

No rule or way of listing thoughts and ideas from any group of people can answer which teaching idea is best in a given circumstance. Working together works to bring about real improvements in student learning, this should be sustainable and should last a lifetime. Much has been written about critical thinking (Grauerholz L. & Holtrop Sh., 2003). For people who think critically, the basis of understanding information is more the starting point than the end of learning. Developing critical thinking critically involves absorbing ideas and examining their impact, presenting them in an elaborate way by balancing them against opposing views, building credible systems to try them out, and undertaking an attitude based on these structures. Critical thinking is a complex process of incorporating ideas and resources creatively, reconceptualizing and restructuring concepts and information. It is a cognitive, action-packing and interactive process that occurs simultaneously at many levels of thinking. A theoretical review of the literature confirms how important teaching is to critical thinking and how useful it is, but its effectiveness still depends on the teacher's competencies. English language teachers in particular, but also teachers of all other subjects in general, in addition to the substantive aspect of teaching, must find time and opportunity to practice critical thinking, it depends mainly on themselves, their creative ideas in teaching and the learning goals and outcomes which they place in front of their students.

The results of the research conducted in a sample of 45 students attending two schools in the city of Gjilan and a school in the vicinity of Gjilan, about the characteristics of teaching critical thinking, the role of English teachers in the development of critical thinking, aims to create a stimulating learning atmosphere for learning, while having the lowest appreciation for the teaching features of critical thinking. The teaching characteristics of critical thinking are mainly underdeveloped, i.e. English language teachers do not encourage enough or to the extent that it would be desirable to develop critical thinking among students in Gjilan schools and the surrounding area. Regardless of the results of this research, it is very necessary to carry out a higher quality and a much broader basis of research to make the results as accurate and objective as possible. Critical thinking is a very sophisticated way of thinking. It happens in those cases when one thinks of something in which students can be involved and not only. The results

showed that students attribute some values to the following characteristics of critical thinking development:

- Emphasis on understanding, analyzing and evaluating, not just memorizing and reproducing learning content,
- Assigning tasks to students that encourage them to consider the content of teaching from different perspectives, teaching students how to approach the solution of certain tasks,
- Linking assignments with examples from everyday life and students' previous knowledge and experiences,
- Implementation of forms of teaching cooperation (pair work, group work, team work, etc.),
- Emphasis on interactive teaching and active learning,
- Giving students enough time to explain their thoughts and justify their views,
- Necessary explanations to students why an answer is correct or incorrect,
- Giving students constructive explanations for their work,
- Willingness to design essay type assignments.

Students at the same time attribute the least value to the following characteristics of teaching critical thinking:

- Encouraging students to give their personal opinion and critical review of assignments,
- Encouraging students to relate the learning content from different courses, encouraging students to monitor their work and their progress (e.g. to notice and correct mistakes, check the solution they have reached),
- Evaluation of students 'critical thinking, acceptance of students' different argumentative views,
- Implementation of various active teaching methods in teaching (ideas, presented method, guided reading),
- Encouraging students to discuss in units,
- Encourage students to ask each other questions during class, and ...
- Encourage students to make group presentations.

Consequently, given the results of this research, we note that the hypotheses raised in this paper have been confirmed.

Of course, regardless of the positive results in some of the teaching methods which promotes the development of critical thinking among students in schools in Gjilan and the surrounding area but also in all primary schools throughout the Republic of Kosovo, teachers of all subjects in general and English language teachers in particular should be continuously encouraged to develop the most creative methods and forms possible depending on the situation, in order to further promote the development of critical thinking among our students.

Therefore considering the research questions we have listed in our research, the findings for each one of the questions are given below.

Regarding the first research question: 1. *How is the cooperation between teachers and students managed when, applying the developing students' critical thinking skills through task based learning strategies in teaching/learning process?*, the results obtained and the analyzing of the same, provides us with information which leads us to the conclusion that, the same cooperation level is poor and it is poorly maintained also, and that there should be taken immediate actions toward changing the same, in order to increase as much as possible the same cooperation level, in order to finally and successfully increase the complete teaching and learning process of English language among students of the education institutions in where we have conducted the research.

Concerning the second research question; *What is the outcome of task-based teaching in developing students' critical thinking skills?*, all three teachers we have interviewed more or less have given their statements which says that, the outcome if naturally and normally conducted as it should be, than the results will unavoidably be better, statements these that encourages and gives hope to us that in the near future hopefully the stalemates and difficulties that are currently present in their teaching process shall be avoided, and the proper critical thinking methods shall to be applied among students in teaching/learning process.

Regarding the third research questions: *What is the effect of task-based teaching in developing students' critical thinking skills strategy on students?*, the responding or the answers from the interviewed teachers led us to understand that they undoubtedly appreciate the same techniques

and methods, but as they listed in few of the research statements in where they have listen numerous issues that prevent them to do so, the same results are being impossible to be reached upon them, currently.

5.1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Teaching in general in the schools of the Republic of Kosovo in recent years has made good progress, but this at the same time does not mean that we should be complacent as a society because there are many shortcomings which are identified every school year, especially in primary schools or rather in the primary level of education in our country, and not only because there is a degradation in other levels of education such as secondary and higher level as well!

Considering this undeniable fact and also taking into account that in this current bad situation it is not only the teachers who have contributed but not leaving aside the other social factors that have also contributed and continue to contribute fortunately bad, and then you should as soon as possible:

- ➢ To provide adequate means for teachers to carry out the highest quality work in our schools.
- ➢ Teachers should generally be given back the competencies that belong to them
- ➢ Teachers must inevitably be left alone with politics and nepotism
- ➢ Teachers should participate actively and continuously in: trainings, seminars, workshops, etc.… which aim at creativity and fostering creativity for a teaching which should have a special emphasis on the promotion of critical thinking in our students.
- ➢ Teachers generally need to work actively and continuously with each student, to promote his / her personal autonomy first, so that as a next step he / she is encouraged to think critically about learning.

To achieve the above, teachers as an essential factor in this process, definitely need the support of peers and all social factors, including the leading levels of education in the Republic of Kosovo, but also the broad popular mass as an active and integral part of the fair and quality learning process of our students.

It should be seriously considered that through the strict application of appropriate teaching techniques and methods which would increase the level of critical thinking among students, we would definitely strive for the following:

> Increase students' ability to think critically and take responsibility for their own learning, shape their own, independent opinion and respect other people's opinions,

> Build healthy and responsible individuals who know how to cooperate with others and are able to learn all their lives.

> Teach students to work independently and apply what they have learned in everyday life (Chee Choy S. & Cheah P., 2009).

> Encourage collaborative learning.

> Present practical teaching methods based on philosophically consistent, theoretically based assumptions.

5.2. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As the main limitation of this study research paper we would list the presence of the **Covid -19** Pandemic which prevented us to furthermore enlarge and widen the research subject, meaning that the same research would undoubtedly and unavoidably be more explanatory and clearer, if let us say for instance the same would have been conducted in 5 education institutions and with at least 200-hundred students and at least 15 to 20 English language teachers.

Another limitation in this research would be that it could be, the short time of explanation and clarification addressed to the students what exactly and in detail they will face during their answers about the research statements selected by us, always in the sense that until somewhere considering some of the results based on the alternatives selected by, I think they have such precisely because of the lack of time for a more detailed explanation and with a longer time on our part, which unfortunately does not has been made possible for many reasons!

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7. APPENDIX A

South East European University – Tetove.
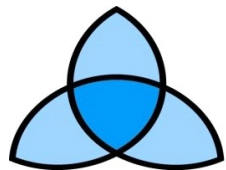
Study questionnaire for the diploma thesis of master in English Language Teaching, by the candidate:
AlbanaSelmani

General data about student: 1. Genre: a) female b) male

Student's name, age and class attending: _____.

Note: Put the **"√"** mark on one of the options provided.

QUESTIONNAIRE STATEMENTS

1.English language teacher places emphasis on understanding, analyzing and evaluating, not just memorizing and reproducing teaching content.

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

2. English language teacher assigns tasks to students that encourage them to consider the content of teaching from different perspectives.

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

3. English language teacher teaches students how to approach the solution of certain tasks.

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

4. English language teacher encourages students to give their personal opinion and critical review of assignments.

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

5. English language teacher encourages students to link learning content from different courses.

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

6. English language teacher links assignments with examples from everyday life and students' previous knowledge and experiences.

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

7. English language teacher encourages students to monitor and control their work and their progress (eg to notice and correct mistakes, check the solution they have reached).

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

8. Our English language teacher values students' critical thinking.

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

9. English language teacher accepts students' different argumentative views.

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

10. English language teacher applies forms of teaching cooperation (pair work, group work, team work, etc.).

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

11. English language teacher applies various active teaching methods in teaching (ideas, introduced method, guided reading, etc...).

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

12. English language teacher encourages students to discuss in units.

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

13. English language teacher places emphasis on interactive teaching and active learning.

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

14. English language teacher gives students enough time to explain their thoughts and justify their views.

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

15. English language teacher encourages students to ask each other questions during class.

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

16. English language teacher explains to students why an answer is correct or incorrect.

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

17. English lamguage teacher gives students constructive feedback on their work.

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

18. English language teacher encourages students to make group presentations.

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

19. English language teacher conducts written essay type exams.

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

20. English language teacher is ready to answer students' questions.

ALTERNATIVE	Please select only one alternative by marking with "√"
I do not agree at all	
I do agree and disagree	
I agree to some extent	
I totally agree	

8. APPENDIX B

South East European University – Tetove.

UNIVERSITETI I EJL
ЈИЕ УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ
SEE UNIVERSITY

Study questionnaire for the diploma thesis of master in English Language Teaching, by the candidate: **AlbanaSelmani**

General data about teacher: 1. Genre: a) female b) male

Teachers's name, age and education level: _____.

1. Do you as English language teacher; apply proper teaching methods that would encourage the increasing of critical thinking among your students?
2. If you do apply proper teaching methods for attempting to increase critical thinking among your students, do other subject teachers do the same?
3. What is the degree of cooperating between you as English language teacher with your colleagues of other schools (English teachers) in the sense of exchanging creative ideas about teaching that would foster creative thinking among your students?
4. Is there cooperation between you as English language teacher with your colleagues of other subjects in the sense of exchanging creative ideas about teaching that would foster creative thinking among your students?
5. Is there cooperation between you as English language teacher with your students' parents in the sense of informing them accordingly about the proper ideas that they could apply at home and or exchanging creative ideas about teaching that would foster creative thinking among your students?