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Effects Of Critical Thinking Strategies On Students' Written Composition Performance In Colleges Of Education Of Kano And Jigawa States, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
This paper focuses on effects of critical thinking strategies on students' written composition performance in Colleges of Education of Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria. The paper investigated the effects of using critical thinking strategies in developing essay writing among students in Colleges of Education of Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria. For the purpose of this study three research objectives, three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated. The sample of the study consisted of two groups the experimental with 57 students while the control with 56 students. The instrument used was essay question. Both validity and reliability were checked by the researcher. The study may be significant to students, Teachers, curriculum planners. The study covers only Colleges of Education of Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria). The study used chi – square to test the research hypotheses at alpha level of 0.05 between the experimental and the control groups.
Keywords: Critical thinking, written composition, students, essay writing

INTRODUCTION

English language has four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. These four basic skills are interconnected and are all germane to the English language proficiency. This is particularly so because the four skills aid effective communication. Effective communication entails the following instructions after reading what has been written conversing, giving and receiving feedbacks which involve speaking and listening skills.

Perin (2007) stated that learning the four basic skills can be a satisfying and mind expanding activity to those who have acquired them; but a frustrating and experience when the skills are lacking. For most people however, writing skill is often viewed as the most difficult of the skills. This is because it does not just involve, presentation of words graphically; but development and presentation of ideas in an organized way. According to Kolawole (2003), writing skill occupies a more prominent position among other skills. Writing skill is particularly very important in academic advancement. Little wonder Muodumogu and Unwaha (2013) viewed it as foundational to success in academic in the word place and in the global economy. It can be concluded from Muodumogu and Unwaha's view that the writing skill is an indispensable skill in educational advancement.

Writing is the act of communicating one's idea, opinion and thoughts through the inscription of signs and

symbols. It is an activity that humans do not acquire naturally but learn formally and consciously regardless of their geographical location. Writing is best viewed as a continuous of activities that range from more mechanical or formal aspect of 'writing down' on the one hand, to complex act of composing on the other hand (Omaggio,2013). According to Bahajide; (1996); writing is the act of expressing one's thoughts or feelings through the use of words and punctuation marks on the surface of the paper. Ahmed (2010) defined writing as a reflective activity that requires enough time to think about the specific topic and to analyze and classify any background knowledge.

Individuals needs writing skill in their day to day activities. As individuals mature and become working adults, competence in writing continues to be essential (Fakeye and Ogunyemi, 2010). Essay writing is a way of testing students' competence in writing. However, writing skill is not limited only to essay writing; it is needed in other aspect of English language examination such as comprehension and summary writing. If students cannot write effectively. They would not be able to put answer across effectively in comprehension they would not be able to writer correct sentence in summary writing and they would not be able to take down lecture note in class.

Essay writing involves such practices as garnering content materials for the essay, organizing the materials into logical order (paragraphing); using appropriate expression terms of appropriate vocabulary and sentences construction and mechanics punctuation, capitalization, spelling and grammar (Fakeye 2002. Igubor 2015). As a skill, essay writing types include the development of the art of writing letters, memos and minutes of meetings, articles for publications reports and speeches. Others include description of various things, situations and experiences, narration or accounts of happening and presentation of reasoned persuasive thoughts. All of these skills are needed not only in order that the students to pass examinations, but also that he/ she may navigate successfully through the chaos of existence. Essay writing therefore can be a way of synthesizing meaning out of the chaos of existence.

Essay writing requires conscious efforts and practices in composing, developing and analyzing ideas. Compared with students writing in their native language (L1). Students writing in second language (L2) have to also acquire proficiency in the use of language as well as writing strategies, techniques and skills

Writing among NCE students, writing is vital to students developing literacy skills. There were some factors why the students have negative perception towards writing namely lack of time to practice in the class, the ineffective writing course guide and resources to write critically and also over crowdedness in class. Grammar at the sentence level is fundamental for the writing of composition in English language. The teaching of grammar has little or no effect on students because majority of students still find it difficult to write meaningful and simple sentences in a composition.

Problem statement/justification

The paper aim to identify effects of critical thinking strategies on students' writing composition performance in written composition with particular reference to Colleges of Education of Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria.

At tertiary institutions we have students who always struggle with academic writing. Writing requires many skills for example, brainstorming, creating, generating and communicating idea at tertiary level, students need to write more complex texts and they need to know and use more cognitive skills. Writing is both cognitive and emotional activities, so it has useful effect on all phases of writing process and therefore, the teachers have to know more about the students' skills and capabilities in generating meaning in addition to their ways of comprehending topic and the amount of lexical items they have through adopting innovative teaching strategies to improve the students' writing performance. Essay writing is an important aspect in the learning as students' competence in English language would go a long way in helping them pass all their academic courses successfully. However, studies have shown that students have poor essay writing skill and this account for their poor performance in English language. As a way of addressing the problem, researchers have concentrated efforts on different strategies of teaching essay writing and inspire of the contribution of these studies on teaching and learning of essay writing the problem of poor performance still persist.

It is in view of this fact that, the presents study intends to conduct an experimental study in which tertiary

institution students with particular reference to North West zone, Nigeria. Students will be trained on critical thinking strategies as well as refining their attitudes towards applying these strategies for effective writing composition. This will finally indicate whether the treatment given to them will have effects on writing composition or otherwise through the results analysis.

Objectives of the study

The major objectives of the study are to:

1. To investigate the effect of critical thinking strategies on organization in the essay writing performance of students in Colleges of Education of Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria.
2. To assess the effect of critical thinking strategies on expression in the essay writing performance of students in Colleges of Education of Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria;
3. To evaulate the effect of critical thinking strategies on Mechanical accuracy in the essay writing performance of students in Colleges of Education of Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria.

Research questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study as follows:

1. What is the effect of critical thinking strategies on organization in the essay writing performance of students in Colleges of Education of Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria?
2. What is the effect of critical thinking strategies on expression in essay writing performance of students in Colleges of Education of Kano and Jigawa, Nigeria?
3. What is the effect of critical thinking strategies on mechanical accurcacy in the essay writing performance of students in Colleges of Education of Kano and Jigawa, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The study formulated the following research hypotheses that will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1. There are no significant effects of critical thinking strategies on organization in essay writing performance of students in colleges of education of Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria.

Ho2. There are no significant effects of critical thinking strategies on expression in essay writing performance of students in colleges of education of Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria.

Ho3. There are no significant effects of critical thinking strategies on mechanical accuracy in essay writing performance of students in colleges of education of Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Conception of Critical Thinking

In the conception of critical thinking, there are different interpretations and definitions due to its abstract nature. Since critical thinking is regarded as a significant skill in education and in real-life situations, it is important to explore the various ways in which the term is used. Critical thinking can be defined from multiple perspectives, including philosophical, psychological, and educational. Some definitions are broad, while others are narrow.

One of the earliest definitions of critical thinking was developed by John Dewey, an American philosopher, psychologist, and educator who is known as the "father" of the modern critical thinking tradition (Fisher, 2001). He defines it as an "active, persistent, and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds which support it and the further conclusions which it tends" (Dewey 1938:9). In this definition, Dewey emphasizes reflective thinking, asking oneself questions about what to believe, evaluating reasoning, and considering the implications of one's beliefs. Edward Glaser, the co-author of one of the world's most widely used tests of critical thinking, the Watson Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal defines critical thinking as (1) an attitude of being disposed to consider in a thoughtful way the problems and subjects that come within the range of one's experience, (2) knowledge of method logical inquiry and reasoning, and (3) some skills in applying those methods (Glaser 1941:5). Compared to Dewey's definition, which stresses the act of thinking, Glaser identifies three elements of critical thinking: having an attitude of being thoughtful when dealing with problems, knowing and being able to apply the methods of logical inquiry and reasoning.

Since critical thinking is so significant in education and the real world, it is worth exploring the different ways in which the term is used. However, like all abstract concepts, critical thinking is difficult to define and can result in different interpretations in different contexts. Despite this, there are many other definitions of the concept of critical thinking, generally indicating that it encompasses both cognitive and affective domains.

Critical Thinking and Writing

Brookfield (1997:18), cited in Norshidrah & David (2012), claims that critical thinking is inherently context-bound, and learning to think critically is an irreducibly social process. This statement supports the idea that the concept of critical thinking is shaped by the context in which it is applied. Critical thinking involves thinking critically about a specific subject, and the level of critical thinking required is influenced by that subject. Critical thinking can be promoted through interactive feedback and is considered one of the most important skills to acquire in tertiary education. It provides a set of tools to consider ideas presented by others and to present one's own ideas in a clear and judicious manner.

In social cultural theory, writing is seen as the linguistic organization of thinking (Lantolf, 2000). Vygotsky (1987), as cited in Sardi (2011), defines writing as written speech, which externalizes human thinking through the use of language (Sardi, 2011). Therefore, the development of thinking and the improvement of writing cannot be separated. Once the process of critical thinking is complete, it is necessary to transfer it into written form, as writing is often seen as a more reinforcing skill compared to oral discussion (Wade, 1995:25), cited in Heya & Rahma (2014). Wade further explains that in a classroom setting, oral discussion of covered material does not guarantee retention or analysis because discussions are not self-reflexive enough. What has been said cannot be retracted, effectively silencing those who were unable to participate in the discussion due to time constraints, personal choice, or other classroom restrictions (Wade, 1995:24), cited in Heya & Rahma (2014).

Writing involves an exploratory and cognitive process through which writers discover and reconstruct knowledge, information, and ideas to approximate their meaning (Lei, 2008; Zamel, 1983; Vygotsky, 1987). It is argued that writing is a means of interactive expression and understanding. The writing process involves understanding relevant knowledge, information, and thoughts, and using them to interact with potential readers or oneself, ultimately expressing the results through language. Sorrell, Brown, Silva, and Kohlenberg (1997) clarify that writing requires connecting ideas from internal and external sources, critically thinking about these ideas, and then inferring a generalization that gives coherence to separate pieces of information (p.14). Paul and Elder (2007) claim that the purpose of writing determines how one should write, and thus determines the kind of cognitive processes that writers should engage in. Writing, which focuses on decision-making, problem-solving, and the expression of arguments and explanations of opinions, may involve a process of critical and creative thinking. This helps the writer compare choices, seek solutions, provide support, and clarify ideas. Engaging in writing can therefore be seen as practicing relevant thinking and cognitive skills, which in turn influences the development of relevant mental processes.

Writing is also a process of metacognition which can promote effective thinking (Larkin, 2009). Cognitive skills are used to complete tasks, and metacognitive skills can be used to reflect on the process of cognition and serve as monitors and regulators of this mental process later on (Flavell et al., 2002). Hacker et al. claim that writing can be seen as applied metacognition, stating that activities such as reading, re-reading, reviewing, editing, drafting, idea generation, word production, translation, diagnosing, and revising are all strategies for monitoring and controlling our own thoughts. The monitoring and control of our thinking is metacognition (Hacker et al., 2009:161). In light of this, critical writing is a process that involves utilizing a range of writing skills as well as personal qualities. Paul and Elder (2007) state that during writing, writers need to adjust and monitor their thinking in order to seek useful information and assess its relevance and significance for achieving their writing goals. Therefore, the process of writing encourages students to think and rethink their ideas and gradually acquire more effective ways of adjusting and controlling their thoughts. Metacognition is also important for improving

writing. Metacognitive skills help writers find better and more effective ways of thinking about their writing, developing ideas, and learning from others (Paul & Elder, 2007).

Moreover, most people find critical writing challenging but also creative. When students better understand the skills, Olson (1992), cited in Norshidrah (2013), argues that thinking can be defined through pre-writing, writing, revising, and editing activities. This means that as a writer engages in the writing process, they use their judgment to evaluate their own text and make any necessary changes to express their ideas clearly and confidently to readers. Therefore, engaging students in critical thinking during academic writing classes is very important, but it can only be achieved if the writing assignment facilitates such work (Reynolds & Moskovitz, 2008). Thus, the ability to think outside a piece of writing involves not only understanding the writer's message but also deciding whether the message is valid or not.

Critical Thinking Strategies

Utilizing the five-step process of critical thinking skills can eliminate much of the worry and anxiety of problem-solving (The American Scientific Affiliation, 2017). These steps represent a plan to solve a problem in sequential progression towards a solution. The author highlights the five steps in critical thinking, which include: first, identifying the problems to be solved; second, seeking information in the form of data on the problem; third, subjecting evidence to evaluation; fourth, suggesting optional or alternative solutions; and finally, implementing the chosen solution. Critical thinking is an approach to thinking in which a person visualizes an idea and then goes about the tasks necessary to reach a conclusion. It involves research, investigation, evaluation, conjecture, and implementation. Having the ability to think critically is vital to many professions in today's information society.

The problem-solving steps outlined in the passage are as follows:

1. Identify the problem: The first step in critical thinking is to clearly define and specify the problem at hand. It is important to understand the scope and significance of the problem, as well as the potential consequences of not taking action. Additionally, determining who should be involved in the problem-solving process is important.
2. Gather information: To effectively solve a problem, it is crucial to gather relevant information. This involves conducting research and investigating all potential possibilities. It is important to not merely accept the information at face value. Consider opinions, perspectives, and views from various sources while ensuring the validity and reliability of the information.
3. Evaluate the evidence: Once information has been collected, the next step is to evaluate the evidence. This involves assessing the accuracy of the information, confirming its sources from multiple unbiased and reliable sources, and determining whether the information is based on fact or opinion. It is also important to explore and consider different interpretations of the evidence.
4. Consider solutions: The fourth step in critical thinking is to suggest possible solutions to the problem. This involves formulating hypotheses based on the conclusions reached from evaluating the evidence. It also requires weighing the strengths and weaknesses of different perspectives and considering short- and long-term outcomes. Reflecting on past precedence and similar problems can also be helpful in choosing the most suitable solution.
5. Choosing and implementing a solution: The choice of a solution to a problem is often a critical process. For this reason, the author proposes three guiding factors, which include considering the degree of risk involved, the practicability of the solution, and the existence of competing alternative priority problems that need to be addressed. Since the choice of a solution greatly affects decision-making, implementing the decision requires follow-up and oversight. These exercises are three factors to consider when determining the level of risk involved with the solution. The second factor is the practicality of monitoring the results of the implemented solution.

Empirical Studies

In a different study by Kettler (2014), the relationship between critical thinking and the cognitive ability of students was explored. The results of the study demonstrated that the development of students' critical thinking abilities begins as early as the fourth grade, which aligns with Piaget's theory of cognitive development. Piaget's theory suggests that children go through different stages of cognitive maturity, and their understanding of their own capabilities and the world around them evolves as their brains naturally mature. Myers and Dyer (2006) conducted a study investigating the effect of students' learning styles on their critical thinking skills. The study involved 135 students enrolled in agriculture and life sciences leadership courses at the University of Florida. The students' preferred learning styles were assessed using the Gregorce Style Delineator, and a critical thinking test was administered. The study found that there were no differences in critical thinking skills between male and female students. However, students with deeply embedded abstract sequential learning style preferences exhibited significantly higher critical thinking scores. No significant differences were found in critical thinking ability among students with other learning styles.

These studies provide insights into the relationship between different instructional strategies, cognitive development, learning styles, and critical thinking skills. By understanding these relationships, educators can better tailor their instructional approaches to promote the development of critical thinking and enhance learning outcomes.

Similarly, Campbell's (2002) study showed that children were able to provide more reasons to explain their opinions and were more willing to speak in front of the class, while also demonstrating tolerance for the ideas of others. Miri et al (2007) focused on promoting higher-order thinking skills in high school science classes. A comparison of the California Critical Thinking Skill Test (CCTST) and the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI) revealed that the experimental group showed greater improvement in both critical thinking skills and the disposition to use critical thinking compared to the control group. In another study by Lizarrage et al (2016), instruction focusing on actively thinking in an academic context was implemented in a social science class with high school students. The results indicated that this instruction enhanced reasoning, creativity, and academic achievement.

These studies provide evidence of the positive effects of teaching thinking skills in both L1 and high school contexts. The findings highlight improvements in academic performance, critical thinking abilities, reasoning skills, confidence levels, and tolerance towards others' ideas. Such instructional approaches have the potential to enhance students' overall learning experiences.

In Kocoglu's (2010) study titled "Web Quests in EFL reading/writing classroom," the aim of the experimental study was to explore the effectiveness of using Web Quests in enhancing the writing and reading performance of EFL students. The study analyzed the variables of Web Quest use, reading performance, and writing performance through descriptive statistics and independent sample t-tests. The study employed strategies such as digital storytelling, cast discussion, and multimedia, which are relevant to the present study, except for digital storytelling. The writing process followed a chronological order, flashback order, and reflective order. The findings indicated that the experimental group achieved higher reading scores compared to the control group. However, both groups scored equally on writing scores. These studies are related in terms of investigating the effects of Web Quests on writing, as well as considering the differences between male and female participants. It is worth noting that the subjects of the study were drawn from universities, whereas the current study is limited to tertiary institutions.

In Marwa's (2012) study, the focus was on the WebQuest program and its impact on first-year preparatory stage students' writing skills and attitudes towards writing. The study employed strategies such as pre-writing, writing, post-writing, elaboration, organization, collaboration, and discussion, which will also be adopted in the present study. However, strategies like encouraging and rewarding students to report substantive errors will not be utilized. The findings of the study demonstrated the effectiveness of the WebQuest program in improving writing skills and attitudes towards writing.

The study recommended integrating WebQuest activities such as interaction and brainstorming into the learning curriculum. One weakness of the study was its failure to conduct multiple tests before the post-

test. Additionally, it did not treat different types of essays separately to identify the specific areas of weakness for students.

This study differs from the present study as it focuses solely on students' writing skills and their attitude towards writing, while the present study examines the effect of idea generation, critical thinking strategies, and attitude on students' performance in written composition among tertiary students in the North-west Geo-political zone.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

For this study, a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test was adopted. This design involved three groups: one experimental groups and one control group.

Population of the Study

The population of this research consists of all public tertiary institutions and their students in North-Western, Nigeria. It comprised of seven states, all of which have universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, nursing schools, and other institutions classified as tertiary.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample for this study consists of two state-owned Colleges of Education (COEs) from the seven in the North-western, Nigeria, with a total of 273 students across the Colleges of Education of Sa'adatu Rimi College of Education, Kano and Jigawa State College of Education, Gumel for the experimental and control groups.

Instrumentation

A reliability analysis was conducted on the perceived value scales of the instrument. The results indicated that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the instrument was 0.72, which suggests a reliable instrument. The researcher used Essay Question to measure For the Written Composition Performance of the students. This was administered to both the experimental and control groups.

Procedure for Data Collection

The data collected was in two folds pre and post test with the support of 2 research assistants. Sa'adatu Rimi College of Education, Kano for the experimental group was given pre test within 1 week and the control group of Jigawa State College of Education, Gomel. Was given the same 1 week. However, treatment package was given to the experimental of Sa'adatu Rimi College of Education, Kano while the control group was thought using conventional method after that post test follows immediately.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected in this study, which focused on the effects of critical thinking strategies on students' written composition performance in Colleges of Education of Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria, was analyze using descriptive statistics; means and standard deviations, to answer the research questions while t-test was use in testing null hypotheses. By employing these statistical methods, the researcher aim to gain a comprehensive understanding of the data and assess the variables under investigation.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Hypothesis One: There is no significant effect on critical thinking strategies and Lecture method on organization in the essay writing performance of students in tertiary institutions in North – Western, Nigeria

Table 1: Independent T-test Statistic on the Difference between Critical Thinking and Lecture Method on Organization in the Essay Writing Performance of Students in Tertiary Institution of North Western, Nigeria.

Study Group	N	Mean	Std	df	Mean difference	t computed	p
Critical Thinking Strategies	29	4.8276	.75918	83	.8454	4.804	0.000
Lecture method	56	3.9821	.77439				

P = 0.000 > 1.96, t computed =4.804 < 1.96 t critical at df 83

Result of the table shows the comparison between critical thinking and the lecture methods on organization in the essay writing performance of students. The P value of 0.000 lower than 0.005 alpha level of significance while it computed value of 4.814. This implies that critical thinking of the experimental group performance significantly than the lecture method. Consequently, the null hypothesis that state that there is no significant difference between critical thinking and lecture method on organization in the essay writing performance of student in colleges of education of Kano and Jigawa, States, Nigeria is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis two: There is no significant effect on critical thinking strategies and Lecture method on expression in the essay writing performance of students in tertiary institutions of North- Western, Nigeria.

Table 2: Independent T-test Statistic on Difference between Critical Thinking and Lecture Method in the Mean Expression Performance of the Essay Writing of Students in Tertiary Institutions in North Western, Nigeria

Study Group	N	Mean	Std	df	Mean difference	t computed	P
Critical thinking	29	8.2414	1.61809	83	2.152	7.299	0.000
Lecture method	56	6.0893	1.08337				

P = 0.000 > 1.96, t computed =7.299 < 1.96 t critical at df 83

The result of the table above showed the comparison between critical thinking and lecture method on expression. The P value 0.000 showed significant difference exist among critical thinking and lecture method. The hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference between critical thinking and lecture method is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant effect on critical thinking strategies and Lecture method on mechanical accuracy in the essay writing performance of students in tertiary institutions in North – Western, Nigeria

Table 3: Independent T-test Statistic on Difference between Critical Thinking and Lecture Method in the Mean Mechanical Accuracy Performance of the Essay Writing of Students in Tertiary Institutions in North Western, Nigeria.

Study group	N	Mean	Std	Mean difference	df	t computed	P
Idea generation	29	1.0000	.88041	.42857	83	2.856	0.005
Lecture method	56	4.7857					

P = 0.005 > 1.96, t computed =2.856 < 1.96 t critical at df 83

Result of the table above showed the comparison between critical thinking and lecture method on mechanical accuracy. The P value of 0.005 for mechanical accuracy showed significant difference exist among critical thinking and lecture method. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained and accepted.

Table 4 (b): Differences between Critical Thinking and Lecture Groups on Each of the Components of the English Essay Writing

Variables	Study groups	N	Mean	STD	df	Mean Difference	T computed	P	Remarks
Organization	Critical thinking	29	4.8276	.75918	83	.8454	4.804	0.000	Significant
	Lecture	56	3.9821	.77439					
Expression	Critical thinking	29	8.2414	1.61809	83	2.152	7.299	0.000	Significant
	Lecture	56	6.0893	1.08337					
Mechanical accuracy	Critical thinking	29	1.0000	.88641	83	. .42857	2.856	0.005	Significant
	Lecture	28	4.7857	.91721					

Results of the table above showed the comparison between Critical thinking and the lecture methods on each of the three components of English writing. The p value of 0.000, 0.00, 0.000 and 0.005 for organization, expression and mechanical accuracy respectively showed significant differences exist among critical thinking and lecture method. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

Summary of Findings

The following are the summary of the major Findings of the Study:

i. There is no significant difference between critical thinking and lecture method in the organization performance of the essay writing of students in tertiary institutions in North West
ii. There is no significant difference between critical thinking and lecture method in mean expression performance of the essay writing of student in tertiary institution of North Western, Nigeria. Their mean expression performance for critical thinking and lecture method were P=0.000< 1.96, t computed 7.299 > critical at df 83.
iii. There is no significant difference between critical thinking and lecture method in the mean mechanical accuracy in the essay writing performance of students in tertiary institution of North-Western, Nigeria. Their mean mechanical accuracy performance for critical thinking and lecture method were P=0.005 > 1.96, t computed 2.856 >, t critical at df 83.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that critical thinking strategies significantly improve students' essay writing performance in Colleges of Education in Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria. The findings revealed that

students who received instruction through critical thinking strategies outperformed those taught using the traditional lecture method in three key areas: organization, expression, and mechanical accuracy. The use of critical thinking in teaching enhanced students' ability to structure their essays more coherently, express their ideas more effectively, and maintain better mechanical accuracy, suggesting that these strategies foster deeper engagement with the writing process. Furthermore, the results indicated that critical thinking strategies provide a more student-centered approach to writing instruction, allowing students to better analyze, generate, and organize ideas, which are crucial for written composition at the tertiary level. The outcomes of this study emphasize the necessity of integrating critical thinking into writing instruction, especially in academic settings where students are expected to produce more complex and sophisticated written work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To effectively recommend the implement critical thinking strategies in the written composition curriculum of tertiary institutions, Nigeria, several steps can be taken:

1. Professional development for educators : Train teachers and instructors in critical thinking methodologies and how to integrate these into their teaching of written composition. This can include workshops, seminars and ongoing professional development opportunities.
2. Curriculum design: Incorporate critical thinking exercises and analyzing complex texts, engaging in debates, and writing essays that require students to apply critical thinking skills.
3. Clearer organization and structure: Critical thinking involves logical organization and the ability to see the big picture. Students learn to outline thoughts before writing, ensuring their essays have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion. Each part of their composition is purposefully crafted to support their thesis, leading to more structured and effective writing.
4. Better problem- solving skills : Writing often involves solving complex problems, whether it's developing a thesis, organizing information, or addressing counterarguments. Critical thinking equips students with problem – solving skills that help them navigate these challenges more effectively, resulting in more polished and well- thought – out compositions.
5. Improved clarity and precision: Critical thinking strategies emphasize clarity and precision in thought and expression, students learn to choose their words carefully, avoid vague language, and ensure their writing is clear and concise.This improves the overall readability and effectiveness of their compositions.

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