

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CRITICAL THINKING SKILL TO VOCATIONAL STUDENTS: STRATEGIES AND BENEFITS

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### Abstract

*Critical thinking is one of the skills that are emphasized in 21st-century learning. This ability aims to make students competent at finding solutions and innovations to every problem they face in everyday life. Critical thinking teaches students to be prepared to be tough individuals and to find solutions to challenges that occur in their surroundings. Therefore, this study aims to explain how to promote the critical thinking skills of vocational students through various strategies and activities that can develop critical thinking skills as well as benefit learning. This research was carried out using qualitative methods through a library approach. The data in this study were obtained by collecting information from various sources, such as articles, books, and journals related to the application of critical thinking in learning, as well as documentation. Data analysis was carried out in three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusions. Teachers can develop students' critical thinking skills in a variety of fun ways, both individually and in groups. Through improving critical thinking skills, students can become tough individuals who are ready to become responsible problem solvers. Teachers need to improve students' thinking skills by providing activities that can solve problems so that students can be more courageous in providing ideas and innovation from the activities they carry out.*

### Keywords:

*Critical thinking; vocational; strategies; benefits.*

### Abstrak

Berpikir kritis merupakan salah satu kemampuan yang ditekankan pada pembelajaran abad 21. Kemampuan ini bertujuan agar siswa memiliki kompetensi yang baik dalam mencari solusi dan inovasi dari setiap permasalahan yang mereka hadapi dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Berpikir kritis mengajarkan peserta didik untuk siap menjadi individu yang tangguh dan solutif terhadap tantangan yang terjadi dilingkungan sekitar. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan bagaimana mempromosi kemampuan berpikir kritis siswa vokasi melalui berbagai strategi dan kegiatan yang dapat mengembangkan kemampuan berpikir kritis serta benefits dalam dalam pembelajaran. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif melalui pendekatan kepustakaan. Data dalam penelitian ini didapatkan melalui pengumpulan informasi dari berbagai sumber seperti artikel, buku dan jurnal yang berkaitan dengan penerapan berpikir kritis dalam pembelajaran, serta dokumentasi. Analisa data dilakukan melalui tiga tahap yaitu data reduksi, data display, dan kesimpulan. Guru dapat mengembangkan kemampuan berpikir kritis siswa melalui berbagai cara yang menyenangkan baik secara individu maupun berkelompok. Melalui peningkatan kemampuan berpikir kritis siswa bisa menjadi individu yang tangguh dan siap menjadi problem solver yang bertanggung jawab. Guru perlu untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berpikir siswa secara baik melalui pemberian aktivitas yang dapat memecahkan masalah sehingga siswa dapat lebih berani dalam memberikan ide dan inovasi dari kegiatan yang mereka lakukan.

### Kata Kunci:

*Berpikir kritis; vokasi; strategi; manfaat.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Mastery of English is one of the most widely spoken foreign language skills at this time. English has long been an international liaison language and has an important influence in shaping global community interactions. Through good mastery of English, a person will have wider opportunities to obtain information and carry out many activities. With good English skills, it will also form individuals who are better prepared to capture information from outside. This is the important point for a person's ability to get a bigger job opportunity ([Hutamy et al., 2021](#)). According to Prayudha ([2023](#)) revealed that mastery of the English language is now an important skill in doing many things. Many things can be obtained and done if someone has the ability to master the English language, for example being able to have the opportunity to get job and understand many terms in English. Especially now that almost all aspects of life sometimes have terms in English. We can find many words and statements forms in English everywhere, such as in advertisements, on social media, in technology, engineering, health, agriculture, even on the street and so on. These English terms can be said as specific terms in certain fields ([Prayudha, 2023](#)). From here, it is necessary to note that mastery of English needs to be mastered because in the line of life we often encounter terms in English. Of course this will be easier when someone has good mastery and understanding of English in interpreting the intent and purpose of the word or sentence.

Through English, it will also encourage a person to become more aware of the environment around, where when faced with an announcement or a warning in English, the person will more easily understand the recommended instructions. Unfortunately, not everyone has good English comprehension skills. There needs to be learning in the acquisition of this second language ([Prayudha, 2021](#)). In Indonesia, it is well known that English is one of the subjects taught in schools, starting from the elementary level up to tertiary institutions. This is an effort made by the government and schools so that Indonesians are able to have good English communication skills. However, even though learning English has been taught from elementary schools, sometimes the mastery of using the language is still very low in understanding by the majority of Indonesian people. This is evidenced by the low interest in reading English in Indonesian society, especially from the results of learning assessments, there are still many students with low English scores. Even though the ability to communicate using English can already be a part of everyday life where we often encounter terms and their use in our daily lives.

Considering that today's world is not limited in establishing a relationship, the use of English as a lingua franca is a right that must be emphasized for students at school. Schools are important institutions in creating generations who have the skills and understanding of various knowledge, including English ([Prayudha & Solihah, 2023](#)). Schools are also institutions filled with professional people called teachers who have the competence and ability to provide instruction to students. The teacher has an important role in shaping the character and knowledge of students through well-designed teaching in the classroom. Therefore, it is important for teachers to have the ability to provide quality teaching in order to encourage students to be able to achieve a learning goal. Furthermore, the teacher also needs to have a good understanding of the character of 21st century learning where the teacher must have knowledge that is appropriate to how he will deliver his teaching in the classroom.

Currently, learning may be different from previous learning where the teacher was at the elementary or secondary school level. Now learning is more dynamic and already uses maximum technology integration to support more modern learning ([Zubaidi et al., 2021](#)). This is certainly a good thing where the role of technology is an indicator of the progress of the times. Schools today are much better at using technology compared to 20 years ago where there is still a lack of use of technology in the classroom. Fortunately, nowadays technology is increasingly sophisticated and the teacher's role is not only to provide conventional teaching, but how to design learning through appropriate learning technology that is able to encourage students to be actively involved in participating in all activities to improve the quality of education. Then, seeing the changes and developments of the times in various aspects of the teacher's life, it is necessary to encourage students to improve their abilities in accordance with the progress of the times at this time, namely encouraging students to be able to improve critical thinking skills. Critical thinking is a way of thinking more broadly related to the topic being studied. Critical thinking provides students with the opportunity to think deeply regarding how they overcome problems while studying. Critical thinking is one way to find solutions to every problem encountered in everyday life ([Kurnianto & Haryani, 2020](#)). Critical thinking is one of the skills needed in the 21st century where an individual needs to be able to do responsible problem solving through critical thinking. Critical thinking also enables individuals to find good and appropriate ways related to the learning conditions faced by students. In addition, having good critical

thinking skills can form a strong personality in determining or dealing with future possibilities and of course will encourage innovation and creativity in determining a solution.

Teachers need to provide teaching and activities that can spur students to improve critical thinking skills through understanding the material and assignments given during learning. In this study, English teachers can use various ways to encourage students to have good critical thinking skills. At school, especially in vocational schools, students learn many things in practice. Vocational students have a tendency to learn more in practice compared to theory so that the implementation of learning requires activities that encourage students directly through assignments and examples compared to prolonged theoretical exposure. Vocational students also have more major specifications than high school students. Vocational school majors are more varied so that they require better and greater mastery of abilities to encourage them to be more prepared to enter the field. This means that students in their vocational school are more likely to encounter real situations in accordance with the major they are studying. They need the ability to think bigger and more so they can carry out various activities properly and responsibly ([Loy et al., 2022](#)). Here, in learning English, teachers can implement various activities that support students to be able to improve critical thinking in carrying out various activities. English teachers can apply varied learning in order to encourage students to solve problems that occur during learning by using critical thinking ([Woldt & Nenad, 2021](#)). This needs to be improved by English teachers because basically vocational students will have to deal more with technical terms in English that are different from the use of English in general. They will face the use of specific term English so that needs to be fostered and encouraged through good mastery of English.

Therefore, to help vocational students become better and familiar with these specific terms, English teachers need to provide various activities that can encourage critical thinking in various ways, one of which is through online presentations using certain themes and topics. The use of this strategy will train vocational students to be more prepared to deal with wider situations both locally and globally by emphasizing the use of technology and English and will also prepare them to become more resilient human beings with changing times and the need for diverse lifestyles. . Thus this research will provide new insights to readers regarding how to promote students' critical thinking skills through online presentations both from the strategy and the benefits of its implementation.

## 2. METHOD

The current study is qualitative through library approach. Qualitative research is a type of research that examines data about an explanation of the object being studied descriptively without involving numbers and calculations. In qualitative research the most important instrument is the researcher himself where he can manage the conduct of the research he is conducting. Then, the literature approach is presented in easy-to-understand language and refers to the theoretical concept approach and examples of its application ([Evanirosa, et al. 2022](#)). The library approach is an approach that allows researchers to examine a collection of information related to the topic being discussed from various sources. In addition, this approach is a way to collect data by comparing available information to create a new study. In this research, the researcher used this approach because he wanted to collect various references and sources related to critical thinking, strategies and their benefits. In this study, the researcher studied various reference books and the results of previous similar studies that were useful for obtaining a theoretical basis for the problem to be studied. The researcher focuses on the topic of critical thinking skills in for vocational students from strategies and benefits. Research libraries should use library reference sources that use primary sources, derived from the results of scientific research reports, research seminars, and research journals. Primary sources are references derived directly from the source, as opposed to the opinions of primary sources cited by others in a written work. Primary sources in this research refer to main data and information related to critical thinking. The criteria for looking for primary sources are themes that are relevant to the research and year of publication in the last ten years. In this research, the researcher collects documents from related research articles and books about critical thinking skills in learning English from national and international journals. After the data was collected, the researchers analyzed data by using data reduction, data display, and data describe. The data that has been obtained will be described to get related data (information) on the critical thinking for vocational students: strategies and benefits.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research describes how to promote critical thinking skills to vocational students through strategies and the benefits of their implementation in the classroom.

#### 3.1. Strategies to promote critical thinking skill

##### 3.1.1. Discussion

One of the activities that teachers can apply to encourage students to improve critical thinking skills is through the discussion method. The discussion method is an activity that can encourage students to be actively involved in conveying ideas and main points of language through thoughts and knowledge about the topics discussed. The teacher needs to emphasize the limitations of the discussion that needs to be discussed so that students become more capable of conveying what needs to be conveyed. Learning through this discussion will provide opportunities for vocational students to provide arguments and views on the themes or topics being discussed so that students will consciously be able to think critically in conveying an opinion. Akihary & Apituley (2022) said that discussions were able to encourage students to think deeply and critically according to the topics being discussed in class. This discussion activity can be carried out both individually as a whole in class or also in groups by asking students to convey what is discussed in accordance with the motion that the teacher gives. Clear implementation instructions are the main key in implementing this activity. The teacher needs to be a facilitator when students present their arguments. According to (Lailiyah & Wediyantoro, 2021) discussion is a strategy that teachers can use to build students' awareness and ability to give opinions. In addition, discussion is able to encourage students to be more active in speaking. Therefore, this activity will also train students' communication skills well, students will also practice expressing opinions, increase self-confidence and be able to provide ideas and solutions to the topics studied.

In practice the teacher can also integrate the implementation of this discussion by using themes or topics that are familiar with the lives of students so that students do not experience difficulties when conveying their ideas. For example, when the teacher gives English material about the importance of studying the discussion, the teacher needs to include a picture or photo of a familiar place, object or person so that the essence of the learning objectives can be achieved properly. The teacher can also make argumentation boundaries as appropriate according to learning needs and indicators so that students are able to convey their critical opinions and arguments properly and correctly. Through this discussion activity, there will be a final result in the form of a conclusion from the learning material discussed so that students are able to find the main points when expressing an opinion.

##### 3.1.2. Presentation

Presentation is one activity that can hone students' speaking and critical thinking skills. The presentation method is one way of conveying something. The presentation here is an activity related to learning the material taught in class. Presentation will prepare students to be able to convey a message (Tarigan & Listyani, 2021). Teachers need to design appropriate topics to be able to encourage students either independently or in groups to appear in front of the class in conveying findings or information to others. Presentation activities will train students to be ready to provide arguments and explanations about topics discussed in front of the class. In this way students are not only able to convey the message they want to convey but are also able to convince others of the use of the language they use. This presentation method will also provide an opportunity for students to be more confident in conveying something (Nguyen, 2022). If it is related to vocational students, the need for presentation skills is very much needed where when someone is able to convey information properly it will make it easy for opponents to understand the intent and purpose of the topic being discussed. Especially now that many companies are looking for workers who have communication skills in explaining their products or services to customers, so this ability is needed at this time. Apart from that, presentation skills will train students to be able to spontaneously convey ideas and arguments in front of many people so that the people around will witness and focus on listening to what the speaker is saying. It will be very profitable for the company if it has employees who are able to sell their products through good product/service explanations.

### 3.1.3. Project-based learning

Project-based learning is one way that teachers can do to encourage students to think critically well. This learning will train students to find ideas and innovations from the projects they will work on. Project-based learning will train students' ability to think critically to find answers, solutions, and innovations from what they learn. This method uses problems in the early stages of gathering and integrating knowledge through real activities in the learning process ([Efendi, 2017](#)). Through project-based learning students will tend to be more active in thinking about finding new ideas in learning so that they can develop thinking skills and make students more sensitive to the abilities they have when learning. By carrying out this learning, it means that students will be faced with various activities that encourage them to find innovative and creative ideas in various learning activities. To find these innovative and creative ideas, of course students must find various references through various literature and experiments as well as think critically in carrying out the project so that students are able to find the right activities in the learning they are doing. This project-based learning will train students to be prepared and sensitive to various possibilities that may occur in the future through creative and critical thinking to find innovations in various problems ([Astuti et al., 2021](#)). Furthermore, with regard to vocational students must be able to have the ability to find good ideas and solutions in dealing with various challenges of work and life. It can be seen that vocational students tend to face more practical learning, meaning that they will always be faced with real events from what they learn during school. When they have the ability to design a project, it means they will become more knowledgeable in designing a project that is related either to their scientific field or related to their social life. So the teacher really needs to encourage students to have the ability to complete something with a project or can emphasize students in working on a project so that they are able to critically find ideas and innovations that are useful for life and their field of study ([Prayudha, 2023](#)). This is a basic point for vocational students because almost every day at school they will be faced with practical matters that ask them to produce something based on the projects they make and when they are able to think critically, actively, solutively and innovatively, they will become an individual who is ready and tough to face life in the future.

### 3.1.4. Question and answer

One of the learning activities that can hone students' critical thinking skills is through the question and answer strategy. This question and answer activity is one of the activities that can encourage students to think critically based on questions posed by the teacher and from other students. Through questions that require students to think deeply will foster students' ability to answer, especially if the questions are given spontaneously it will provide opportunities for students to think critically about the answers requested. Giving questions is one stimulus to stimulate students' thinking power ([Dewanta, 2020](#)). The teacher can give good questions to all students, individually or in groups related to general questions or related to learning material. Giving this question allows students to try to answer spontaneously or thoroughly based on their knowledge and abilities. For example, when the teacher teaches about "proverbs" in English, the teacher can ask students to guess the meaning and intent of these proverbs. Through the question and answer method, it provides opportunities for students to convey their answers, ideas, and arguments regarding the questions raised by their teacher. Activities like this certainly train students to have broad insights related to diverse knowledge. In the vocational world, students must have resilience and extensive knowledge in order to become quality students and understand all the problems that are happening at the moment. The world of vocational education tends to be more faced with practice so that the implementation of learning should be able to equip students with a variety of quality knowledge. One thing that can be done to encourage students to have broad and varied knowledge is by using a question and answer strategy both related to learning material or with other general knowledge so that students can become more resilient and able to broaden their understanding.

### 3.1.5. Team-work

Activities carried out in groups may not be new, but they are still very relevant to encourage students to be more creative, innovative and have good critical and collaborative thinking skills. Group activities are one way that is considered quite effective when students are asked to solve a problem ([Prayudha, J. & Solihah, 2023](#)). Through the exchange of information and knowledge from fellow members of the student group it will be easier to complete a task together. One thing that must be considered by the teacher is to ensure that each student must take part in the work being done, no student may just join in and do nothing so that the role of the student is not taken into account. Teachers need to arrange and organize the



assignments of each student evenly so that students can and are able to develop abilities and skills in critical thinking in solving problems ([Gusta, W., Christina, D., & Zakirman, 2020](#)). The implementation of teamwork can be varied, starting from discussions, presentations, case studies and so on which require students to be able to work together in solving a problem in learning. Through teamwork skills students are expected to have the values of tolerance, respect, and care for the social and surrounding environment so that they can become more solid in finding solutions by exchanging thoughts, information and ideas in creating and completing work. Teachers need to be able to develop a variety of fun activities in groups so students can experience memorable and meaningful group learning. Group learning will teach students a lot about how to find answers to the problems they encounter at school and learning in a way that tends to be good because they will make conclusions and decisions that are responsible for every answer they collect. Thus the ability of collaboration will be much improved because students can be aware of the importance of solving problems together.

### **3.1.6. Contextual learning/ role playing**

There are many ways that teachers can apply in increasing student activity in the classroom. Through fun ways, it will certainly make it much easier for students to get and understand learning material. In addition to making it easier for students to understand learning material, it is very important for teachers to pay attention to the importance of students' critical thinking skills because basically when students are able to think about something critically, it will be much easier for them to solve problems that occur in their lives. This ability is also one of the factors for anyone to become more resilient in dealing with various problems in life. One way to improve critical thinking skills is to use contextual learning methods or role playing. Contextual learning is a learning concept that helps teachers relate the material they teach to students' real situations and encourages students to have a relationship between their knowledge and everyday life ([Aziz & Dewi, 2019](#)). Through context-based learning students have full awareness of what they choose or what they are engaged in while studying ([Arianto, 2011](#)). Contextual will also provide an understanding to students about certain conditions and situations so that students will consciously think about how they will play the role of what they choose, for example an English teacher asks students to pretend to be a tour guide so students consciously will act as if they were a real tour guide. This method will certainly make it easier for students to practically carry out the duties of a tour guide compared to just learning the theory of becoming a tour guide. Furthermore, teachers can design learning classes that are much more interesting with various role-playing activities and setting classes according to the theme and context to be achieved so that students will become more aware of real learning situations or conditions before they actually enter the world of work. In this way the teacher can also support student success in demonstrating the actual conditions of each major that students take so that in the future they are able to understand real conditions because they have been forged as well as possible when learning related to the conditions of implementation at school. Then, students also become more sensitive to real situations in the learning environment and can certainly increase students' creativity with problems that exist around the environment. The application of good learning will make an impression on students' minds and they will be ready for the real conditions and environment outside of learning at school. Thus, it will be much easier for teachers to provide opportunities for students to be more active according to real conditions when learning to use contextual learning and role playing.

### **3.1.7. Problem-based learning**

Problem-based learning is a method that English teachers can apply to encourage students to be able to solve cases they encounter while learning. Through this learning students will analyse and critically digest problems and creatively and critically be able to determine how to solve a case ([Fahmi et al., 2021](#)). This is a point that must be emphasized for all teachers to encourage students to be able to use the knowledge and knowledge they have to determine solutions and innovations in learning so that students don't just listen or listen to material delivered by their teachers but they participate in developing abilities, their knowledge and skills in finding innovations and solutions to what they face when studying. If this method continues to be used, it will provide a new horizon for students to be more prepared and courageous in facing various possibilities that may occur in the future so that they will continue to practice to become individuals who are ready and resilient in facing future challenges. ([Depi Prihamdani, 2020](#)). At the vocational student level, learning through problem-based learning might be very suitable for them, this is based on the fact that there are more students learning in theory inside the classroom and outside the classroom which requires them to be more prepared to develop in solving tasks or problems they face in

life both about the world school and after they graduate from the school environment. This learning allows students to be able to solve problems both individually and in groups in developing a solution in what they are doing. It is important for all teachers to be able to continue to encourage students' thinking skills so that students become more prepared and understand how to find the right and responsible solutions so that when they are faced with a problem they can become more aware of determining the right way to solve it.

### 3.1.8. Guessing the answer

One interesting technique that can encourage students to think critically is to apply a method of guessing the answers to the questions given. This term is often referred to as guessing the answer. Learning through this technique can be done either by the teacher or other students by providing questions or clues about a case or movement related to learning ([Hermaniar & Azkiya, 2021](#)). By providing the right questions or clues, it can train students to think deeply and critically in associating the clues that have been given both by the teacher and by other students so that later students will design their thinking about what they encounter and understand while studying. Guessing the answer can be done in an easy and simple way where one only needs to determine what points need to be mentioned or explained to describe an object or thing, where students who are asked to answer these questions must be able to relate the clues that have been described to find the right answer. This method allows students to think critically in a more enjoyable way by combining each feature of the given clues in order to determine the right answer. For vocational students, maybe this method can be used to relax their brains from various tiring learning practices. Teachers can use this technique in a more fun way in discussing simpler material so that students can experience learning that is truly not burdensome to their minds. Through this fun way, it is hoped that vocational students can use their brains to think critically in an easier and more enjoyable way ([Nikmah, 2020](#)).

### 3.1.9. Mind mapping method

The mind map method is one way that English teachers can use to hone students' English skills critically. The mind map method can be used to develop students' understanding through the points displayed in the mapping ([Luangkrajang, 2022](#)). For example, the English teacher explains material about a descriptive text, let's call it "Test Lake", so the English teacher only needs to write down words that generally describe the specific characteristics of the Test Lake. Then, students will explain in detail about these characteristics more broadly. This method is very useful for training student communication more broadly and critically ([Chalak & Rastgoo, 2021](#)). Students will be more prepared in explaining how the Lake Test describes through the points written and students will become more focused with what they have to say based on the main points in the mind map that have been mentioned. Mind maps will encourage students to be able to develop a broader understanding and explanation because students already have an understanding of the main points that must be explained in more depth. This method allows students to be more confident in conveying their understanding of something. For vocational students this is one of the right methods to encourage them to be able to develop an understanding of what is the main topic of discussion from the expertise they are studying. Through the main points presented, vocational students will be more focused in explaining what matters need to be mentioned more broadly and in depth. This enables students to be better prepared to think broadly and critically so that they will be better prepared to face the world of work. It is necessary for teachers to be able to get used to learning about the mind map method because students will be trained to spontaneously convey their ideas and opinions on the topics discussed. In this way they will understand better in explaining the steps according to what they have learned and understood while at school. So, practicing students' English skills using the mind map method will encourage and improve students' critical thinking skills and that is very important for students' lives in the world of work.

### 3.1.10. Write essay, story or article

There are many ways to improve students' critical thinking skills in learning English, one of which is through writing essays, stories or articles. This activity is certainly not easy for high school students to do, but through a simple application it allows students to be able to try to start writing with their own abilities. Writing activity is one of the productive activities where students will produce a work of ideas and knowledge about a topic that they make so that from the writing someone can read it and understand what the intent is conveyed in the writing. Writing activities also cannot be carried out if a person does not have "content" in his head so that when students are asked to carry out writing activities, the teacher needs to determine a topic that students should be able to learn before they actually do the writing. Students will

have the courage to arrange words and sentences into a piece of writing so that what they understand and know can be material in the writing they make. This will have a very good impact on the development of students' critical thinking skills where they will be trained to think deeply and creatively in constructing sentences and constructing interesting storylines so that their skills in understanding English can be channeled properly. For these students, it will train ways to develop skills in expressing their ideas and knowledge, especially when it comes to materials that are appropriate to daily activities, so this will shape the character of students who are more confident in developing their English language skills ([Prayudha, 2020](#)).

### **3.2. Benefits of critical thinking skill for vocational students**

#### **3.2.1. Problem solver/ right decision making**

One of the benefits of implementing learning that emphasizes critical thinking is to train students to think broadly and deeply in determining a solution, innovation and creativity from what they face. This allows students to be more aware and ready to determine the best way to get things done ([Arsyad et al., 2021](#)). Critical thinking trains students to be able to determine the right and responsible steps in making a decision or solution where each individual will be ready to use their brains in developing their potential to find good solutions. In some cases when students already have the ability to think critically then they show characteristics that are more prepared in providing various solutions in learning ([Gusta, W., Christina, D., & Zakirman, 2020](#)). In addition, learning to think critically also shapes students' character to be more active in conveying, giving opinions, and of course forming strong self-confidence when appearing in front of the class. This function shows that critical thinking skills can encourage students to be more prepared to find ways, or at least explore information and knowledge in depth related to topics or problems that occur in class. Teachers need to familiarize students with applying critical thinking-based learning so that students are able to hone their brains and minds in finding various innovations and responsible solutions so that when faced with the real world they already have good provisions for using the right steps in finding a solution. In learning English at a vocational school, it will certainly be very important for students to be able to understand various uses or terms in English. Many engineering terms in English may be slightly different when they learn general English, so it is necessary to apply specific learning based on the field they are taking, of course, this will make it easier for students to understand instructions for use or when running a working machine. Therefore, English teachers can provide teaching with the various strategies mentioned above in order to create and train students to become individuals who are competent and adept in dealing with various problems.

#### **3.2.2. Open mind**

Various activities can make students become someone who has a broad horizon in understanding something. This is one of the goals of education which creates individuals who are able to think openly and respect each other for any differences that occur. The activities mentioned in this paper are an effort for teachers to be able to create students who have broad insights through critical thinking about the topics and problems given and encountered either during learning or in the real world. By providing a topic or movement in learning English, the teacher has provided opportunities for students to think openly and critically in conveying information, so this will be an opportunity for the teacher to be able to provide and pave the way for students to be able to find the right solution of what what's going on. Various activities such as discussions and presentations will train students to be more open to the issues being discussed ([Destianingsih & Satria, 2020](#)). Through various group activities it will also form the characteristics of students who respect each other and appreciate every difference. Therefore, teachers should be able to focus more on learning for students by asking students to dare to appear and express their opinions and opinions on the material that has been discussed. In creating a conducive class, the teacher is the main key in designing a fun class, the teacher can use the same thing in creating students who are more critical in learning by providing a variety of interesting topics so that they can provoke students to become more active in giving the opinions they have. Through this learning, the teacher certainly expects students to become more open and have extensive knowledge in looking at a problem in learning and life.

#### **3.2.3. Develop innovation and creativity**

As already mentioned, that critical thinking is a process to find a solution and innovation to the problems that are being faced when learning takes place. Critical thinking skills are used to be able to explore ideas and responsible solutions from students wisely to the problems that are happening. Through this



activity the teacher can also see the extent to which students are able to think rationally about the issues that are happening. Critical thinking skills will also require students to have the courage to express their opinions both in speaking and writing ([Mahbub, 2020](#)). In various cases critical thinking is a way that teachers can apply to encourage students to be better prepared to face various possibilities that may occur in the future by providing a more real discussion in the world of work. Through real-time discussions, it will be easier for students to think about things related to real situations in their lives so that they will be better prepared to formulate good strategies through the ideas, innovations and creativity they have. In the world of vocational education finding innovation is an achievement and a very good learning goal where as we know vocational students learn more in practice than in theory this means that they learn further in real terms when compared to high school students in general, because practical learning is more. Compared to theory, they will do things related to the world of work more often and this will be an opportunity for vocational students to more easily understand the steps for work that are in accordance with the field of education they are taking. This is the benefit of critical thinking where vocational students can develop their knowledge either by studying, researching, or conducting experiments in making or designing an innovation from what they learn related to the field of education they are taking. The more science and knowledge they learn, the wider their desire to dare to do experiments in making something. Therefore, in learning English the teacher can design learning that can support students to make observations, experiments, and practice so that they are able to think critically in solving cases and problems in an innovative and creative way.

#### **3.2.4. Improve confidence**

Teaching and learning activities certainly expect that students are able to become students who are confident in conveying and doing something. Confidence is a very important thing to develop for all students so that they are able to become brave individuals, especially when conveying an opinion in front of the class ([Faiza et al., 2022](#)). The various activities contained in this study are activities that can encourage students to be confident when learning, whether in expressing opinions or providing solutions and innovations to any problems encountered while studying. Good learning needs to form the character of students who are brave and confident when conveying an opinion or argument both personally and in groups, this is because by having the ability to convey a message, these students tend to be more courageous in expressing ideas, knowledge, and solutions from what is being discussed in the lesson. Teachers need to foster and design interesting classes both individually and in groups through activities that can spur students' potential in giving an opinion. It is important for teachers to be able to increase the potential of students in providing good arguments so that students can be more confident in building their opinions and communication skills. For vocational students it is important to be confident in doing something, especially in giving opinions and ideas related to training and practice in learning, especially if they are already in the world of work, they will be more prepared and courageous to appear in explaining the product or work produced their work. Of course this will give a good picture for vocational students when they are able to have good insight and confidence in explaining a product, project or activity with more confidence so that they are ready and able to compete with others. With regard to learning English, of course this will provide an advantage for students when they are able to explain something in English with confidence so as to provide added value in their curriculum vitae to make it easier to get a good job after they graduate from school. Therefore, it is very important to always equip students with various positive activities to develop critical thinking skills that encourage self-confidence.

#### **3.2.5. Independent learning**

The various activities taught by the teacher must certainly be interesting and able to improve the abilities and knowledge and learning competencies of students. Some learning activities can be carried out by asking students to study independently in completing them, for example project based learning where students can work on assignments or projects that the teacher gives so that students can work on and complete their assignments more confidently and independently. The various activities in this study can certainly be applied by the teacher to encourage students to think critically in doing something and of course even though learning becomes more independent the teacher has a supervisory role in every activity carried out by students. Teachers need to be able to create a learning atmosphere to be more focused on students who play a more active role in class so that students can become more able to develop and improve their own abilities in solving a learning problem. Through deepening critical thinking activities, students will be better able to open their minds and horizons to find solutions and appropriate ways of doing things so that the results or products obtained can be in accordance with what is expected. Thus, the teacher needs to

train students to be more active in participating in learning activities so that students can become more independent in doing the assignments given by the teacher.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In this limitless era of globalization, the ability to communicate in English is one of the skills needed to establish better international interactions. English teachers need to design learning as well as possible in order to be able to encourage students to actively follow and participate in learning activities properly. In addition, teachers also play a role in preparing students through the competencies needed in this century, especially for vocational students who tend to learn more in practice than theory. Teachers need to build and develop students' awareness of competence and skills in critical thinking in order to be able to help students deal with learning, life or reality better. Through good critical thinking skills students can become individuals who are ready and tough to face every problem they face in society. When students have good critical thinking skills, of course they will become individuals who are expected to be able to find innovation and creation in every aspect of life. This provides a positive opportunity for English teachers to equip vocational students with good and responsible problem solving skills. To equip students with good critical thinking skills, teachers need to utilize various learning activities and methods that enable students to use their brains and minds to think critically. Various activities in this study can be used by English teachers to improve students' competence in critical thinking. Through individual or group activities the teacher can build students' awareness in critical thinking. By having critical thinking skills, students will be better at dealing with problems both at school and in the real world, even with good critical thinking skills students can make the right decisions and be responsible for every problem they face, think openly, create innovations, creativity and increase self-confidence, as well as being able to learn independently. Therefore, it is important for teachers to always encourage students to be able to have good critical thinking skills so that they are able to become individuals who are ready and resilient in facing various challenges in the future. Furthermore, the recommendation for English teachers is to be able to design each learning activity by incorporating critical thinking skills so that students become accustomed to discovering new things and solving problems wisely and well. For further researchers can conduct research on 4C expertise collaboration in improving English learning towards the development of vocational students' learning abilities..

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