

**Better questions for better answers: A strategy to develop critical thinking and communicative skills among English as a Second Language Learners**

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This paper describes the effects of a strategy aimed at helping students develop critical thinking and communicative skills by means of a program for guided reading of images, using the questioning technique in an English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching and learning context. Many teachers are not prepared to encourage critical thinking as part of their curricular work. This has created a student population which is unable to think critically.

This is a qualitative, descriptive research study carried out with first year undergraduates of the Faculties of Humanities and the Social Sciences from the University of Kelaniya. Field notes, artifacts, and questionnaires were used as data collection instruments. The study shows that the program activated participants' mental processes to allow them to move from basic to higher levels of critical thinking while communicating their thoughts in English. This strategy could be used by teachers of different disciplines.

**Keywords: Critical Thinking, Critical Thinking in an ESL Context, Guided Reading of Images**