

**Developing critical thinking in the upper secondary English / Language Arts
classroom: A study of teachers' narratives**

Abstract

Critical thinking has been identified globally as one of the essential twenty-first Century skills. Therefore, an integral aim of education programmes is the development of critical thinking skills. In keeping with this educational goal, this study examined the perceptions of secondary school teachers of students' critical thinking in English/Language Arts. It aimed at analyzing the extent of congruence between the teachers' perceptions and their pedagogy through their narratives. The data were obtained from four English teachers in one secondary school in the Caribbean. The findings of the research demonstrated that the teachers employed a limited number of critical thinking teaching strategies despite their awareness of a variety of strategies and methods that could be used. Given the incongruence between the teachers' perceptions and their pedagogical practices, this study posits that the acquisition and development of critical thinking skills would be realized with a clear policy both at the school and national levels that specifically targets these skills. Such a policy should factor in popular culture so as to motivate students to become engaged in the English / Language Arts classroom.

Keywords:

critical thinking, English/Language Arts, secondary school, ethnography, narrative inquiry