

A qualitative perspective on the roles of instructors and learners using group discussion strategies in the critical thinking process.

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The lack of critical and creative minded human capital which is essential to the progress of a country, has been of concern to those involved in the education system, which is seen to be churning out students who are concerned only with obtaining paper qualifications without understanding the true nature of education. The problem often lies, not only with the educators as well as the education policies, but the students themselves who assume that learning is a one-way process where total input comes from the instructor. This problem could be unique to Malaysia where the Asian values of accepting whatever an authority figure says undermines the value of student input to the learning process. In the context of this research, it was hoped that the covert teaching of this skill to students through the practise of discussing and writing argumentative essays would help them be aware that critical thinking is essential to help them maximise their learning process. Through the use of a questionnaire administered to both students and instructors, the researchers hoped to gain insight into how students and instructors felt about the technique of using group discussions to generate ideas critically, before writing argumentative essays. The qualitative analysis of the perspectives of both parties involved in the learning process could help educators learn to adapt and modify their teaching techniques to help students understand the importance of critical thinking.

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