

An Analysis of Writing Assignments Through The Critical Thinking Skills in The Sixth Semester of English Department UIN Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi

Bagus Purnomo¹, Elsi Amiza², Irwandi Nashir³, Widya Syafitri⁴

^{1,2,3,4}State Islamic University of Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi

Author correspondence: siibaguiih.bp@gmail.com¹

Abstract. *The purpose of the research was to find out the implementation of the indicators of critical thinking skills in the writing assignments of sixth-semester students in the English department. This analysis involved an in-depth understanding of writing structure, language choices, and students' ability to formulate arguments critically. The research proved useful for increasing knowledge about pedagogical writing and providing an in-depth analysis of students' writing assignments. This research was a quantitative descriptive analysis method research. The population of this research were all of the students in the Sixth semester of English Department UIN Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi year 2022/2023. According to the findings of the study, students showed inadequate critical thinking skills while creating 17 specific sub-indicators with scores below of 50%. It was found that students encountered difficulties when writing a thesis assignment. It means that the majority of students were unable to organize thoughts into thesis writing assignments.*

Keywords: *Writing Assignments and Critical Thinking Skills, Students.*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a fundamental skill that is highly valued in academic and professional settings. Writing is one of the most difficult skills to develop since it requires the concentration of many linguistic skills, including grammar and vocabulary, as well as possessing a strong imagination that permits an unproductive flow of ideas. For some writing teachers, inspiring students to write was a challenge (Moses & Mohamad, 2019). Furthermore, students struggle to concentrate because the class is made up of kids of various academic levels. Many students are uninterested in and unmotivated to learn the writing process. Teachers ought to emphasize that university-level writing is all about communicating ideas rather than using cliches and flowery language (Chidiac & Ajaka, 2018).

Writing can make a significant contribution to the advancement of education and professional lifestyle in the future. In both academic and professional life, writing is the one skill that is extremely important to learn and master. Writing isn't just about having the skill to write clear, concise sentences and paragraphs, it also has to do with having the skill to express oneself clearly and to collaborate with others. Studies on writing can include a variety of topics, including the nature of writing, the purpose of writing, the process of writing, types of writing, problems, and components.

Writing assignments is a crucial form of activity for students in higher education, particularly those seeking degrees in English Language and Literature. Writing assignments

refer to tasks or written work given to students or course participants with the aim of developing and evaluating their writing skills. These writing assignments are designed to ask students to produce a specific text according to a given guide or topic. Writing assignments can appear in various forms, such as essays, reports, reviews, research papers, blog posts, or other forms of writing.

However, even though writing is important, many students struggle to get better at it. This is particularly true for students in the English Department, who may still struggle to meet the needed writing standards even after completing many writing courses. Writing assignments may be made at different degrees of difficulty depending on the learning objectives and the particular educational level. Students are expected to enhance writing more proficiently, and comprehend subjects better by completing writing tasks, and critical thinking.

Some specialized topics that may become the focus of the studies include, among others, textual analysis using the critical thinking, writing instruction using the principle of writing for learning, or the development of writing related skills. The critical thinking of 21st century learning plays a crucial part in how students learn. In the learning process, teachers and students are encouraged to collaborate with the students. To master, assess, and synthesize the knowledge have acquired, students are also taught to think critically. The study attempted to incorporate critical thinking in interventions to enhance the student's writing skills in English classes (Trilling & Fadel, 2019).

Critical thinking skills are one possible strategy for improving writing skills. These skills are referred to as "super skills" because they are crucial in assisting students in gaining skills for greater productivity, critical thinking, problem-solving, not only while students are still in college but also, and perhaps most importantly, after graduation, in the daily lives (Kivunja, 2015). This skill places a focus on the acquisition of fundamental skills that are necessary for good writing. However, it is necessary to investigate whether this strategy is successful in enhancing the writing skills at students in the English Department who are in the sixth semester.

Although the literature has extensively discussed the importance of developing critical thinking skills through writing assignments, research specifically investigating the context of UIN Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi is still limited. There is a substantial information vacuum regarding the analysis of writing assignments from the sixth semester of the English Study Program at UIN Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi due to a lack of study. It is crucial to comprehend how much the integration of critical thinking abilities in writing tasks is reflected in the writing instruction at UIN Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi. Furthermore, more research is needed to fully understand the teaching strategies used by lecturers to help

students develop critical thinking skills through writing assignments. Writing assignments are a useful tool for measuring and enhancing students' critical thinking skills. Therefore, in an attempt to close this gap and offer fresh perspectives on how to enhance teaching and learning at that level, research centered on a thorough examination of writing assignments in the sixth semester at UIN Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi can be conducted.

Some problems with the student's writing assignments were found. First, students who don't understand the concept of critical thinking skills may struggle to write in a clear and organized. The message is trying to express may not effectively reach the reader as a result of the writing's potential lack of persuasiveness. This will be influential in determining how well students have understood the concept of critical thinking and how it may be used in the context of academic writing.

Second, poor analysis in writing for students could impact the thesis writing assignments. This may make it more difficult for them to write well. Students can even lose interest in honing writing skills. Without adequate analysis, the arguments in the writing may be less convincing. Students may have difficulty presenting compelling evidence or explaining how the evidence supports the claims they are making.

Finally, as there are little previous research using critical thinking principles in writing tasks at the college student level, this research is important. Without adequate research, students may not be able to present accurate and verified facts and information. This can be detrimental to the credibility of the writing and weaken the arguments presented. Students may not realize how to use critical thinking skills in thesis writing assignments as a result.

Based on preliminary research, the stage of collecting writing assignment samples was a crucial step. This research purposed to examine whether critical thinking skills indicators could be found in sixth-semester students of the English Department in the writing assignments. This process was carried out in coordination with the relevant teaching lecturers to obtain the thesis writing assignments. Next, a sample of these assignments was preliminarily analyzed to identify common patterns and critical thinking indicators that might be reflected in students' writing assignments. This analysis involved an in-depth understanding of writing structure, language choices, and students' ability to formulate arguments critically. The research proved useful for increasing knowledge about pedagogical writing and providing an in-depth analysis of students' writing assignments.

Students must focus on ideas during the writing process. A crucial language skill for everyday use is writing. Students can communicate the ideas to others by writing, acting, persuading, and expressing the emotions. It is one of four fundamental skills that are extremely

complex and challenging to develop. Because not every student has the skill to write successfully, this research was interested in learning about students' writing assignments through critical thinking skills. Based on the review of students' writing assignments, several problems were found with the students writing assignments. Besides that, students were still uncertain or didn't know about the indicators of critical thinking skills and students have no idea how to identify critical thinking skills in the writing assignments. Next, some students have a limited vocabulary which makes it difficult for them to explore and share the ideas. From the explanation above, the research wants to conduct research entitled “An Analysis of Writing Assignments through the Critical Thinking Skills in the Sixth Semester of English Department UIN Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi”.

METHOD

This research employed a quantitative descriptive analysis, which is effective for finding perceived similarities and contrasts in items and articulating such impressions in one's words. As a result, quantitative descriptive analysis is essential to gathering information about a product. And this research purpose was to analyzed the student's writing process through critical thinking skills and this research wants to analyze students' writing assignments through critical thinking skills indicators.

In a research design, the population and sample are two components that cannot be separated. These are two crucial components of the study. In quantitative descriptive research, the population consists of people, groups, or environments that are connected to the research problems and offer a comprehensive understanding and varied viewpoints on the phenomenon under investigation. Additionally, the population is the entirety of the research object, and it is this object that employed as a source of data for the research.

The population of this research were all of the students in the Sixth semester of English Department UIN Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi year 2022/2023 consisting of four classes 6A, 6B, 6C, 6D. The number of students will be shown in the table below:

No	Classes	Students
1.	6A	29
2.	6B	26
3.	6C	35
4.	6D	24
Total		114

From the table above, the population of this research were 114 students.

This research utilized purposive sampling, also known as judgment sampling, where participants were selected based on specific attributes. This nonrandom approach did not necessitate a predetermined number of participants or underlying hypotheses. Instead, this research identified the required information and actively sought sources willing and able to provide it based on their experience or knowledge.

The documentation checklist instrument was used to collect data for this research. This research was used verbal interactions with the lecturer to conduct a literature review, which collected by conducting a research of student assignments that have something to do with the related problem. Next, documents were collected which in the form of worksheets that students have worked on to fulfill the thesis writing assignments in the sixth semester, which later was analyzed using the documentation checklist to find out whether there are indicators of critical thinking skills in the assignment.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research substance in this chapter was evaluated to analyze students' writing assignments through critical thinking skill indicators. This chapter describes the data analysis used to address the formulation of the research, is the implementation of the indicators of critical thinking skills in the writing assignments of sixth-semester students in the English department been carried out?

The data of this research were based on the research that had been done in the Sixth semester of English Department UIN Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi year 2022/2023 class 6B. The scores of the student's writing assignments through the indicators of critical thinking were collected by the rubric score below:

Critical Thinking Skills Indicators	Sub Indicators	Indicators Code	Indicator's Descriptions	Data Analysis	
				Y	N
Analyzing An Argument	Examining the Author's Thesis	A1	Writers must mentioned to produce an analysis of experts writing in the writing of the thesis	15	11
	Examining the Author's Purpose	A2	Writers have to mention purpose when writing a thesis.	26	0
	Examining the Author's Method	A3	Writers have to inform the reader something about the writer's methodology	3	23

Developing an argument	Examining the Author's Persona	A4	Writers mentions the writer's identity and personality in the thesis.	0	26
	Summary	A5	Writers who have to make an analysis and finish by writing a summary, a condensed version of the expert's text that has been read.	9	17
	The Thesis	B1	Writers create a sentence that contains a thesis (main point) that can be expressed concisely, generally in a sentence.	19	7
	The Opening Paragraphs	B2	Writers put some opening words on paper and keep going before writing a title or subtitle	2	24
	The Ending	B3	Writers summarize the main points and reaffirm the sentences that have made	11	15
	Two uses of an outline	B4	Writers should use outline sketches immediately to help with thesis writing	26	0
	We, One, or I?	B5	Writers cannot use "we" or "I" in the thesis	15	11
	Avoiding sexist language	B6	Writers have to avoid using sexist language like "she" or "he" words in the thesis	26	0
	Peer review	B7	Writers listed written peer reviews in the thesis	0	26
Using Sources	Why use sources?	C1	Writers are required to conduct a preliminary study into to comprehend a subject, high-quality sources will notify of the many tactics others have chosen and will assist in determining the facts	13	13

Locating books	C2	Writers may be able to use the search for books on a specific topic released in English in the last ten years	14	12
Interviewing peers and local authorities	C3	Writers should strive to consult professionals, such as faculty members or other local authorities	2	24
A note on plagiarizing, paraphrasing, and using common knowledge	C4	Writers need use the paraphrase technique	16	10
A note on footnotes (and endnotes)	C5	Writers using a note on footnotes (and endnotes) or body notes in the thesis	16	10

Source: Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing (Barnet & Bedau, 2011).

From the data above, the score was on table showed the results of the critical thinking indicators in the students' writing assignments that have been analyzed. These results vary with each sub-indicators by the number of answers yes and the answers were not. The first indicators, namely analyzing arguments, have 5 sub-indicators that were closely related to describing the skill to analyze arguments in critical thinking in terms of in-depth examination. Most of the 26 students had implemented some of these sub-indicators, but none of the students implemented sub-indicators A4 in the thesis writing assignments.

The second indicators, namely developing an argument, have 7 sub-indicators. The indicator describes the student's skill to develop an argument in critical thinking. The second indicators, still with 26 students, also had varying results from each sub-indicator that had been implemented. Like sub-indicators B2, B3, and B7 not each of the students implemented these sub-indicators in the thesis writing assignment. And for sub-indicator B4 and B6 all students have implemented it. And for the other sub-indicators, there were varying results on the implementation of these sub-indicators.

Not much different from the second indicator, the third indicators were also still with 26 students and also has varying results from each sub-indicator that has been implemented by students. Using sources indicators describes the skill of students to always use the sources in every argument that has been made in critical thinking. And for sub-indicators C1, C2, C4, and

C5 all students have highly implemented it. And for the C3 sub-indicators, not all of the students implemented these sub-indicators in the thesis writing assignment.

The Guttman scale was used to compute the scores, percentages, and categories. The Guttman scale was utilized for calculations since it provides a non-parametric way of evaluating quality ratings in a range of settings (Alviana, 2020). The computations for the scores, percentages, and categories utilized were showed below. The score was determined by the number of students who answered yes. The research's data analysis was divided into the Guttman Scale, which are as follows:

No	Critical Thinking Skills Indicators	Sub Indicators	Score	Percentage	Category
1.	Analyzing An Argument	Examining the Author’s Thesis	15	57,69	High
		Examining the Author’s Purpose	26	100	High
		Examining the Author’s Method	3	11,53	Low
		Examining the Author’s Persona	0	0	Low
		Summary	9	34,61	Low
2.	Developing an argument	The Thesis	19	61,53	High
		The Opening Paragraphs	2	7,69	Low
		The Ending	11	42,30	Low
		Two uses of an outline	26	100	High
		We, One, or I?	15	57,69	High
		Avoiding sexist language	26	100	High
		Peer review	0	0	Low
3.	Using Sources	Why use sources?	13	50	High
		Locating books	14	53,84	High
		Interviewing peers and local authorities	2	7,69	Low
		A note on plagiarizing, paraphrasing, and using common knowledge	16	61,53	High
		A note on footnotes (and endnotes)	16	61,53	High
Count			213	807,63	Low
Average			12,52	47,50	

The average score on the table indicates the computation of scores, percentages, and indicator categories based on the data presented above. The results revealed that 10 sub-indicators had high categories and 7 sub-indicators had low categories. 10 categorized sub-

indicators that were related to the critical thinking indicators have been implemented entirely by the students in the thesis writing assignments. Out of the 7 low-category sub-indicators, students did not implement very effectively in thesis writing assignments.

With these 7 low-categories from sub-indicators, it showed that the students lack understanding of the critical thinking indicators in the thesis writing assignments as students in sixth-semester English Department students. It was because students do not have inadequate teaching methods in the English Department that do not incorporate the critical thinking concept into writing assignments. In addition, users were not provided with data security training by the company. It showed that the level of students' knowledge of critical thinking was low.

In this research, this research used a documentation checklist as the instrumentation. There were three indicators for critical thinking skills in writing. First, there were analyzing an argument, second developing an argument, and last using sources. The indicators were about students' writing assignments through the critical thinking skills when writing a thesis, which when added up these entire sub-indicators amount to 17 indicators.

The findings of this research for students' writing assignments for the thesis writing revealed that students had low percentages of critical thinking skills indicators, as seen by the average score items of the documentation checklist, where the average score was 47,50%. According to the findings of the research, students showed inadequate critical thinking skills while creating sub-indicators A3, A4, 15, B2, B3, B7, and C3 with scores below of 50%. It was found that students encountered difficulties when writing a thesis assignment. It means that the majority of students were unable to organize thinking skill into thesis writing assignments.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The purpose of this research was to find out the implementation of the indicators of critical thinking skills in the writing assignments of sixth-semester students in the English Department. Based on the findings and discussion that have been presented in the previous chapter, this research concludes the result of the research about an analysis of writing assignments through critical thinking skills as follows:

Based on the result of the research above, this research concluded that the students' assignments of thesis writing assignments through the indicators of critical thinking skills were a low category. The average score of students' writing assignments through the critical thinking skills indicators of the thesis writing in the Sixth semester of English Department UIN Sjech

M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi year 2022/2023 class 6B was 47,50% which means the students' category of the thesis writing was low.

REFERENCES

- Alviana, S. (2020). User care level audit of information data security at PT XYZ using Guttman scale. *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering*, 879(1). <https://doi.org/10.1088/1757-899X/879/1/012050>
- Babu Chiruguru, S. (2020). The essential skills of 21st century classroom (4Cs). Shingania University, 1–13.
- Barnet, S., & Bedau, H. A. (2011). Critical thinking, reading, and writing: A brief guide to argument. <https://www.amazon.com/Critical-Thinking-Reading-Writing-Sylvan/dp/1457649977/>
- Hayati, I., Sakti, G., Roza, V., & Safitri, W. (2022). The effect of shared reading strategy on students' reading comprehension in narrative text at the second grade of SMPN 2 X Koto Tanah Datar in the academic year 2021/2022. *Education: Jurnal Sosial Humaniora dan Pendidikan*, 2(3), 68-75.
- Kardena, A., Syarif, H., & Zaim, M. (2020, December). Analysis of students' point of view regarding to writing skill at English education section of IAIN Bukittinggi. In *2nd International Conference Innovation in Education (ICoIE 2020)* (pp. 62-67). Atlantis Press.
- Kivunja, C. (2015). Exploring the pedagogical meaning and implications of the 4Cs “super skills” for the 21st century through Bruner’s 5E lenses of knowledge construction to improve pedagogies of the new learning paradigm. *Creative Education*, 6(2), 224–239. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2015.62021>
- Sohaya, E. M. (2020). Blended learning and 4Cs: Trends in the new normal life of education, globalization and the next decade. *AISTEEL*, 488, 77–81. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.201124.019>
- Trilling, B., & Fadel, C. (2019). 21st century skills, enhanced edition: Learning for life in our times. 45–86.