

**STRATEGIES USED BY TEACHERS AT THE BUILDING
KNOWLEDGE PHASE OF CRITICAL THINKING IN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Education
In Partial Fulfilment for the Master of Education in English**

**Submitted by
Khul Prasad Gautam**

**Faculty of Education
Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur
Kathmandu, Nepal**

2017

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that, to the best of my knowledge, this thesis is original; no part of it was earlier submitted for the candidature of research degree to any university.

Date:.....

.....

Khul Prasad Gautam

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACCEPTANCE

This is to certify that **Mr.Khul Prasad Gautam** has completed the research of his M.Ed. thesis entitled **Strategies Used by Teachers at the Building Knowledge Phase of Critical Thinking in English Language Classroom** under my guidance and supervision.

I recommend the thesis for acceptance.

Date:

.....

Mr. Guru Prasad Poudel (Supervisor)

Teaching Assistant

Department of English Education

Faculty of Education

University Campus, T.U., Kirtipur

RECOMMENDATION FOR EVALUATION

This thesis has been recommended for necessary evaluation by the following
'Research Guidance Committee':

Signature

Dr. Anjana Bhattarai

Professor and Head

Department of English Education

University Campus

T. U., Kirtipur, Kathmandu

.....

(Chairperson)

Mr. Resham Acharya

Teaching Assistant

Department of English Education

University Campus

T.U., Kirtipur

.....

(Member)

Mr. Guru Prasad Poudel (Supervisor)

TeachingAssistant (Member)Department of English Education

University Campus

T.U., Kirtipur

.....

Date:2016/07/10

EVALUATION AND APPROVAL

This thesis has been evaluated and approved by the following '**Thesis Evaluation and Approval Committee**':

Signature

Dr. Ram Ekwel Singh

Reader and Head

Department of English Education

University Campus

T. U., Kirtipur, Kathmandu

.....

(Chairperson)

Dr. Anjana Bhattarai

Professor **(Member)**

Department of English Education

University Campus

T.U., Kirtipur, Kathmandu

.....

Mr. Guru Prasad Poudel (Supervisor)

Teaching Assistant

Department of English Education

University Campus

T.U., Kirtipur, Kathmandu

.....

(Member)

Date: 14/02/2017

DEDICATION

Dedicated

to

*My parents who gave me the greatest gift of life, love and
care to become a complete human being*

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ABSTRACT

This thesis entitled **Strategies Used by Teachers at the Building Knowledge Phase of Critical Thinking in English Language Classroom** is an attempt to find out the strategies used at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking approach to identify the usefulness of the strategies used at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking approach. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, it was conducted using mixed research design in general and survey research design in particular. All the Secondary level English teachers of Bara District were the population of the study and 25 secondary level English teachers were taken as the sample. They were selected by following purposive non-random sampling method. A set of questionnaire including both open and closed-ended items was used to collect the data from the sample. Similarly, I observed the 25 classes of the selected teachers by using observation checklist. The collected data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively following simple statistical tools as well as item analysis. The research findings showed that the teachers used focus on the text and comprehension of message, contextualization, association of message to the learners' experiences, picture description, experience sharing, question sharing, personal connections monitor the activities as the major strategies at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking approach. As a part of the usefulness of the strategies, 83% of the selected teachers view that the strategies help learners to consolidate the learning, enhancing experiences and raising critical consciousness.

This thesis consists of five chapters viz introduction, review of related literature and conceptual framework, methods and procedures of the study, analysis and interpretation of results and conclusions and recommendations. The first chapter consists of background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study and operational definition of the key terms. Similarly, the second chapter includes the review of theoretical literature,

review of the empirical literature related to this research; implications of the review of the study and conceptual framework of the research.

Similarly, chapter three deals with the methodology adopted to carry out the research. It consists of design, and method of the study, population, sample and sampling strategy, study area/field, data collection tools and technique, data collection procedures and data analysis and interpretation procedures. In the same way, chapter four consists of analysis and interpretation of the data and it also presents summary/discussion of findings. Chapter five consists of the conclusion and recommendations of the study. Recommendations have been presented in policy related, practice related and further related. The final part of the study consists of references and appendices.

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SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

T.U	Tribhuvan university
Mr.	mister
Dr	Doctor
Prof:	Professor
Mrs	mistresses
P.	Page
Et.al	Including others
KWL	Know, want to know
ibid	Given in the same page
Ect	Etcetra
i.e.	That is
viz	Mainly

CHAPTER: ONE

INTRODUCTION

This is the study on “The Strategies Used by the Teachers at the Building Knowledge Phase of Critical Thinking”. This introduction part includes the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study, delimitations of the study and operational definitions of the key terms respectively.

1.1 Background of the Study

We are now in the 21st century of language teaching and learning. In this era, English is widely regarded as the global language. However, the scholars of ELT in the globe, have thought that there are doubts that will retain the prominence of language teaching in the 21st century (Graddol, 1997). This is the thorny and challenging question to the present status of English language and the speakers of English. It is because of the reason that globalization is fluid, dynamic and transitional. What is the future of English tomorrow, nobody can envision. Whatever the doubts and curiosities we have regarding global status of English language teaching and learning, presently English language has enjoyed its monopoly. Regarding this, (Awasthi, 2014) says:

Much like water and air, today English language is being one of the very basic needs of the world's people. It has global spread and used globally. People in each corner of the world teach and learn this language. The English language teaching and learning has received very important place in today's time because it is similar with the case that human life will be paralyzed if petrol and computers are not available anymore and

people of the world will become useless and jobless without the proper knowledge of English language (p. 1).

The present global spread of English language indicates to the fact that English language has received the recognition of global use. It is being one of the international languages. It is, therefore, it has ceased to be the sole possession of the American and British people (Harmer, 2008).

This new present educational climate has brought new kinds of trends or waves in language teaching arena as well (Poudel, 2014). This is also known as a shift from teacher training to teacher professional development. Teacher professional development program in teacher education program views at transferring today's schools from knowledge-transformation to knowledge-creating schools (Freire 1970 as cited in Sapkota and Shrestha 2012). Freire further says "teaching does not necessarily mean transferring knowledge but creating opportunities for...producing and constructing it" (Freire 1970 as cited in Torres, R. M. 2007, p.15). If teaching and learning activity is done in a genuine manner we ought to respect and appreciate for the learner and his or her knowledge. The acknowledgement of the learners' reality is the starting point for the teaching and learning process, and the importance of dialogue as a pedagogical tool, leads towards the invention of the terms such as exploration, innovation, generation, and to the creation of knowledge. According to this kind of view, the classrooms are envisioned as learning-communities or learning centers (Day, 1999). Regarding this, Richards and Farrell (2005, p. vii) also say:

The field of language teaching is subject to rapid changes, both as the profession responds to new educational paradigms and trends and as institutions face new challenges as a result of changes in curriculum, national tests, and students' needs. As a result, teachers need regular

opportunities to update their professional knowledge and skill, that is, their opportunities for professional development.

The target goal of such changes made in curriculum, teaching and testing have been to change learners from dependent to independent learners (Shrestha, 2014). This kind of shift in educational practice has directly affected in teachers' behaviors and teaching activities. This idea will be clearer if we view the following ideas. Crawford , John and Brown (2005, p.1) assert :

Many teachers are seeking to change their practices to support reading and writing for critical thinking . They want to challenge their students not just to memorize, but to question, examine, create, solve, interpret and debate the materials in the classes. Such teaching is now widely recognized as best practice.

It is, therefore, today's teaching and learning activities should be guided by the idea that students should learn the materials most fully and usefully. Here, learning fully and usefully means that students can think about what they learn, apply it in real situations or towards further learning, and can continue to learn independently (Gardner 1993, as cited in Crawford et al. 2005, p.1). Therefore, the field of language teaching in general and English language teaching in particular has shifted from rote learning to the critical learning. In such a situation, teachers have to use critical thinking approach in teaching language to the students. While teaching language critically, they have to involve students in three different phases of critical thinking. In this study, I want to explore the ways or strategies that teachers use at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The best and most successful classrooms are those that encourage students to think for themselves and engage in critical thinking. Critical thinking allows students to think about their own thoughts and the reasons behind their points of view. It means that they reflect on their own ways of making decisions or solving problems. Thinking like this means, their thoughts are consciously directed to some goal. Their thoughts and ideas are based not on their biases or prejudices but on logic and information they might gather and filter from many sources. They think critically and they are always mindful of what and how they are thinking. Students who think critically are typically excited about their learning. They see challenges and opportunities for learning in even the most difficult intellectual tasks. This kind of teaching and learning is the need and call of the day. However, our ground reality is different. There is no difference between yesterday and today in teaching and testing. Our teachers do not try to employ such teaching techniques or strategies which enhance to explore something new from classroom practice. Moreover, there are different strategies that can be employed at different steps of entire teaching period. To be particularized, most of the English teachers do not use strategies that create scene setting environment in English language classroom which help teachers to develop students as independent thinkers. They teach to the textbook, not the students. They do not think about their students' inner voices, desires, intentions, and hopes. As a result, we have developed dependent learners. This means our students need even small support to understand the text which they face in course of their learning. This is the main concern or problem which my research strives to innovate some stepwise strategies which are helpful to make our students as the independent and critical thinkers.

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research study were as follow:

- To find out the strategies used by teachers at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking approach.
- To find out the usefulness of the strategies used at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking approach
- To suggest some pedagogical implications from the findings of this study.

1.4. Research Questions

This study was specific to address the following research questions:

- a. What are the strategies adopted by the teachers to teach English to their students at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking approach?
- b. What are the very useful strategies that the teachers use in the classroom for developing critical thinking skills?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The present research study is about the strategies used at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking approach in English language classroom. In this study, the overriding objectives are to find out the types of activities English teachers use at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking and to examine the extent to which the activities at building knowledge phase of critical thinking enhance learners to be independent and critical thinkers. It is supposed to be beneficial for different group of people. The findings derived from the responses given by the respondents will, of course, be valuable for different groups of people who are concerned with the educational policy

making level, planning level, and curriculum development level, text book writing level, and most importantly teachers and students for the further improvement and betterment of the overall academic progress as well as to be independent and critical thinkers. Similarly, the researchers who wish to carry out their research in this area will find this research work as a useful guideline material.

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

This study had the following limitations:

- The study was limited to the secondary level English teachers of Baradistrict.
- This study was limited to those strategies or activities that can be used at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking approach.
- This study was based on the data collected through the use of two types of research tools: questionnaire and observation checklist.
- Only twentyfive English teachers teaching at secondary level schools and twenty five classes observed were the target population of this study
- The information obtained through questionnaire was cross-checked with the information found in observation checklist.

1.7 Operational Definition of the Key Terms

The following key terms were used in this study:

Critical Thinking Approach: In this study, I have used critical thinking approach as a method of language teaching that emphasizes stating original claims or opinions and supporting them with reasons in a language teaching classroom.

Building Knowledge phase of Critical Thinking Approach: I have used this step of critical thinking approach to refer to the active learning model. It is the phase towards the middle of a lesson in which students inquire into the topic and pursue answers to their questions.

Strategies: This term has been used in this study to refer to the activities and techniques adapted so far to process the learning.

CHAPTER: TWO

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This unit provides information of previous research works and other related literatures including theoretical and empirical literature on strategies used in critical thinking approach. The aim of reviewing the previous research works and literatures is to explore what has been done before and what is left to be done in this area.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Based on the aforementioned literature, I have developed following type of theoretical framework to judge applicability and the usefulness of the strategies at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking approach. The framework consists of the following parameters. Crawford, et al (2005, pp. 2-4) have given a kind of framework for teaching purpose which will be very useful to cite here. They have given ABC framework with respect to critical thinking. Here, the acronym ABC refers to:

- A= Anticipation
- B= Building knowledge
- C= Consolidation

There are different activities/strategies that can be used at these three step framework of critical thinking. Furthermore, they are used in teaching for different purposes. First, the researcher will discuss the purposes of those three step framework.

Anticipation

It is the first step of ABC framework. It refers to the fact that if any activity or lesson is supposed to be started, it should anticipate target population' s desires

and intentions. According to Crawford ,et al. (2005, p. 235) "It is the phase at the beginning of a lesson in which activities done to remind students of what they already know about a topic, encourage them to raise questions about the topic, and set the purposes for their learning." There are different purposes of anticipation phase. They are to:

- call up the knowledge students already have
- informally assess what they have already know, including misconceptions
- set purposes for learning
- focus attention on the topic
- provide a context for understanding new ideas (ibid, p.2)

Building knowledge

It is the second step of critical thinking approach. According to this phase, after the lesson gets started, the teaching leads students to inquire, find out, make sense of the materials, answer their prior questions, and find out new questions and answer. The overriding purposes of this phase include of the following. They are to:

- compare expectations with what is being learned
- revise expectations or raise new ones
- identify the main points
- monitor personal thinking
- make inferences about the material
- make personal connections to the lesson
- question the lesson (ibid, p. 3)

Consolidation

This is the final step of critical thinking approach to teaching. This phase or step is also known as evaluation step. At this step, the following purposes will be sought. They are to:

- summarize the main ideas
- interpret the ideas
- share opinions
- make personal responses
- test out the ideas
- assess learning
- ask additional questions (ibid, p.3)

Now, from the above mentioned step-wise purposes what can be concluded is that ABC framework is the latest concept and will prove very effective and successful in English language classroom. The essence of ELT should be to develop this kind of spirit with the students.

Theoretical aspect is the main basis which provides the space to stand and see what and how something has already been done. In this research, I have reviewed the different types of strategies used within the critical thinking approach and focused on the strategies at building knowledge phase. I have also tried to see the certain parameters to measure the activities or strategies used at building knowledge phase.

2.1.1 Present System in English Language Teaching

There is no dispute about the changing concept of time and the world's trends. In such changing phenomenon, English language teaching cannot be exceptional case. English language teaching has become a fluid and changeable area. Day-by-day and moment-by-moment amazingly numerous ideas and concepts have been emerging. Furthermore, English language teaching is not only intellectual and emotional engagement with others-whether learners, colleagues, or parents but also regular review and renewal of the purposes and practices of teaching (Sharma, 2014, p. 8). It is the continuous process of fueling and strengthening positive attitude to the students. It is also worth considering to the fact that academic qualifications once acquired are not

enough for the teachers in any way to teach language effectively forever (ibid, p.9). They need to go along the demand of the time and current educational wave. Therefore, English language teaching practitioners today update their professional knowledge regarding learners, learning theories, methods, classroom management, school community, curriculum, textbook, and other teaching resources. English language teachers should pay their serious attention towards school change and development. Regarding this Hargreaves (1994) say:

In recent years we have come to realize that the teacher is the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement. The restructuring of schools, curriculum modification, developing local curriculum, the development of the benchmarks of assessments- all these things are of little value if policy makers and planners do not take the teacher into account. Teachers don't merely deliver the curriculum. They develop, define it and reinterpret it too. It is what teachers think, what teachers believe, and what teachers do at the level of the classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that young people get. Growing appreciation of this fact is placing working with teachers and understanding teaching at the top of our research and improvement agendas (p. ix).

From Hargreaves's saying, we are clear that the more responsibilities are placed on the shoulders of teachers for the change and development of schools. They should be directed towards such missions of school improvement and development with their inner voices of visions. This kind of climate is blowing within our schools' periphery but our teachers are not aware of the fact that they are the change agents (Fullan, 1993). Nonetheless, ELT practitioners have not

remained reliant or dependent on fixed prescribed and imposed practices. Instead, ELT practitioners put into practice a great deal of diverse activities to keep themselves up-to-date and enhance their practices. By and large, we see many areas in ELT where many new ideas have taken place which can be called as recent trends in ELT.

2.1.2 Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is the ability to think clearly and rationally. It includes the ability to engage in reflective and independent thinking. Someone with critical thinking skills is able to understand the logical connections between ideas, identify, construct and evaluate arguments, detect inconsistencies and common mistakes in reasoning, solve problems systematically, identify the relevance and importance of ideas, reflect on the justification of one's own beliefs and values.

Critical thinking is not a matter of accumulating information. A person with a good memory and who knows a lot of facts is not necessarily good at critical thinking. A critical thinker is able to deduce consequences from what he knows, and he knows how to make use of information to solve problems, and to seek relevant sources of information to inform himself.

Critical thinking should not be confused with being argumentative or being critical of other people. Although critical thinking skills can be used in exposing fallacies and bad reasoning, critical thinking can also play an important role in cooperative reasoning and constructive tasks. Critical thinking can help us acquire knowledge, improve our theories, and strengthen arguments. We can use critical thinking to enhance work processes and improve social institutions.

Some people believe that critical thinking hinders creativity because it requires following the rules of logic and rationality, but creativity might require breaking rules. This is a misconception. Critical thinking is quite compatible

with thinking "out-of-the-box", challenging consensus and pursuing less popular approaches. If anything, critical thinking is an essential part of creativity because we need critical thinking to evaluate and improve our creative ideas.

2.1.3 Benefits/ Rationale of Critical Thinking

Critical thinking can be defined as the focused and thoughtful judgment about one's own beliefs and thoughts. It helps to determine the action to be taken in response to a person's own observations, experiences, arguments and expressions. The process of critical thinking begins with the conscious evaluation of our thoughts and ideas, so that they can be improved and enhanced in accordance with the changing environment. It is a means of increasing our own awareness and take command of your own thinking processes so as to think more effectively. Critical thinking results in more rational, accurate, clear, and consistent thoughts that are apt for the surrounding ever-changing environment.

There are many benefits of critical thinking, some of which include:

a. An unambiguous mind

Whenever, there has been a situation of panic or mass hysteria, rational critical thinkers have raised their voices of reason. Only these rational reasons and decisions were able to solve all the mess. According to the famous saying by Franklin D. Roosevelt the only reason behind fear is fear itself. Those who are involved in the process of critical thinking have the comprehensive skills and abilities to consider all probable options and choose the one which is most feasible and apt for a particular situation.

b. Ability to doubt their decision

People involved in critical thinking are usually calm and know exactly they are right or wrong . There are fore there are fewer chances of theme falling into

the trap of scams or tricks. This is due to the fact that they approach everything with a sufficient amount of skepticism and doubt. people who lack these skills assume that everything they decide or hear is true. regardless of the surrounding factors and source.

c. Time-Saving

Critical thinkers think all possible alternatives before they act make decision regarding a problem. when time is a limiting and important factor these people consider the quickest method of reaching their target and achieving a goal: something, they might find out a shortcut if time demands so.

d. Effective decision making

Critical thinking is important when the time comes for making decisions in highly paying jobs and career moves of professional . Critical thinking skills are required for generating successful ideas and making critical decision. Applicants in job interviews are often asked questioning that help the interviewers test their critical thinking abilities. Critical thinking also helps an employee when he or she seeks a promotion.

e. Differentiates between rationality and emotion

Critical thinkers are self-aware and capable of identifying the difference between thought based rationality and that based on emotional response and personal bias. Understanding one's own perspective will help one consider the viewpoint of others. This will help in making a decision based actuality rather than feelings. All the above mentioned advantages of critical thinking shows that this process will put forward relevant questions before making a decision, understand complex problems ; verify evidences that are given in support of statements, and make decisions

2.1.4 Stages of Critical Thinking

The stages are classified on the basis of the nature of critical thinkers which are described in the following:

Stage One: The Unreflective Thinker

These thinkers are basically unaware of the role of thinking in their lives and of potential problems with their own reasoning – they lack the ability to be meta cognitive. They do not identify concepts or assumptions behind ideas, and they rarely assess the logic of their opinions or conclusions. They may have developed some skills in thinking (compare and contrast, analyze, conclude, etc.), but these skills are inconsistently applied and these thinkers tend to retain biases and prejudices. Though these thinkers may be highly educated, they tend to be unable to “fix” problems in thinking or adopt new strategies to solve problems.

Stage Two: The Challenged Thinker

These thinkers have become aware of the role thinking plays in their lives. They have begun to understand that problems in thinking and logic can cause significant trouble for them, and they recognize that productive thinking requires effort and deliberate attention. They have an understanding of the basic elements of reasoning (concepts, assumptions, questions at issue, purpose, point of view, information, implications and consequences) and standards for the assessment of thinking (clarity, accuracy, relevance), but they have only a superficial understanding of these concepts. They find it hard to apply these concepts consistently and deliberately in their reasoning. They may believe that they have critical thinking abilities, but they may not recognize that they apply these critical thinking abilities inconsistently in their lives, thus making it harder for them to improve their thinking skills.

Stage Three: The Beginning Thinker

These thinkers are actively trying to take control of the quality of their thinking in several areas of their lives. Because they realize that they sometimes

experience difficulty in their reasoning or problem solving, they take deliberate measures to monitor and improve their thinking. They are aware of the need to assess and improve their thinking, but they “lack a systematic plan for improving their thinking, hence their efforts are hit and miss.” These thinkers are aware of the elements of reasoning and the standards for assessing reasoning, and they understand the need to internalize these and begin using them consistently. They also have an understanding of the role of egocentrism and can identify times when they are responding egocentrically. They welcome critiques of their own thinking and know that their thinking needs to be self-monitored, though they are sporadic at this self-monitoring.

Stage Four: The Practicing Thinker

These thinkers have an awareness of how our thinking tends to be flawed, have an understanding of the basic elements of reasoning and standards for assessing reasoning, know that our thinking needs to be monitored and corrected, and understand that we are basically egocentric if we do not challenge our own assumptions. They actively analyze their thinking across many areas of their lives, but are only beginning to assess their thinking in a systematic way. They understand that the human mind tends to be self-deceptive, and they attempt to assess and critique their own conclusions, beliefs, and opinions. However, they still have “limited insight into deeper levels of thought, and thus into deeper levels of the problems embedded in thinking.”

Stage Five: The Advanced Thinker

These thinkers have “established good habits of thought which are ‘paying off’.” They actively analyze, assess, and critique their own thinking in the significant areas of their lives, and they also have insight and understanding of problems at deeper levels of thought. While they are able to think well (apply elements and standards) across many areas of their lives, they may not do this at a consistently high level across all areas at all times. These thinkers have a well-developed sense of their own egocentric nature, and they strive to be fair-

minded. If they “catch” themselves displaying bias or applying a double standard, they quickly correct their thinking in an attempt to be intellectually fair. They have a developed understanding of the relationships between thoughts, desires, emotional needs, and feelings. These thinkers sometimes lapse into egocentrism and reason in a one-sided way. Though they understand that egocentrism will always play a role in their thinking, they are able to control the extent of their egocentrism through careful monitoring of their thoughts.

Stage Six: The Accomplished Thinker

These thinkers have established a systematic plan to assess and correct their own thinking, and are also continually critiquing this plan in order to improve their thinking. They have almost completely internalized the elements of reasoning and the standards for assessing reasoning, so that the application of the elements and standards is both conscious and deeply intuitive for them – meta cognitive application of the elements and standards has just become “how they think” and how they make sense of the world around them. They “regularly raise their thinking to the level of conscious realization,” assessing and critiquing their own thoughts, conclusions, and opinions to uncover bias, egocentrism, and logical fallacies. They have extensively practiced critical thinking traits and skills, and are able to develop new insight into deeper levels of thought. Accomplished thinkers are deeply invested in fair-mindedness, and regularly recognize and control their own egocentric nature. They systematically monitor the logic, relevance, accuracy, precision, clarity, sufficiency, depth, and breadth of their claims and thoughts, and have “deep insights into the systematic internalization of critical thinking into their habits.” They understand and can recognize the relationships between thoughts, desires, feelings, and emotional needs, and can correct their thinking when they are motivated by irrelevant emotions. They can think through complex issues with exemplary judgment, insight, and intellectual depth. The intellectual character traits of the critical thinker are deeply integrated into the accomplished thinker,

and they are known to display intellectual fairness, empathy, humility, perseverance, and strength. They are problem solvers who bring people together, seek out alternatives, display sound judgment, and lead through example.

2.1.5 Standards of critical thinking

Critical thinking is generally known as a scholarly interpretation involving a number of significant activities such as reasoning and evaluating. Lohani, Subedi and Adhikari et al. (2008, pp. 9 - 10) give a list of questions mentioned below that critical thinking should address.

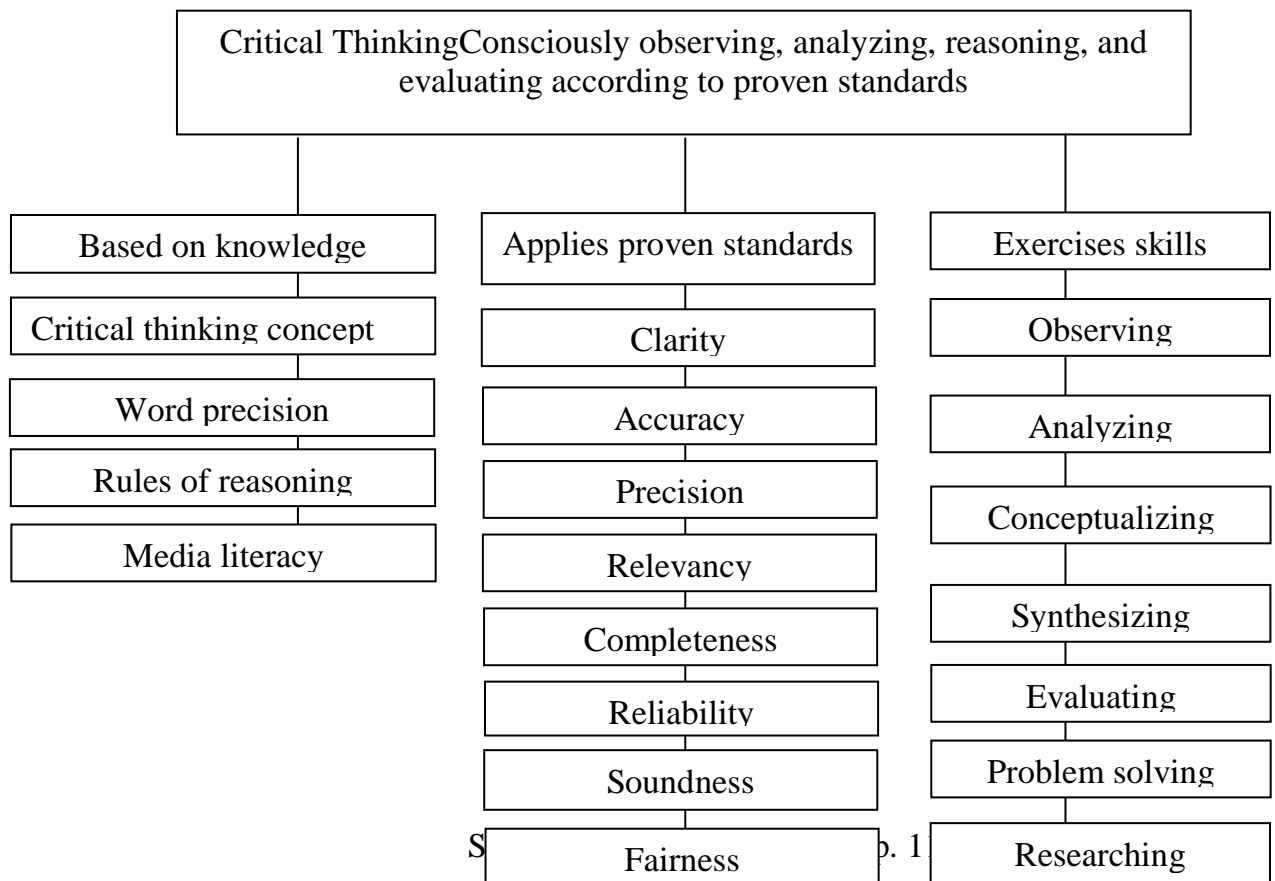
- How to improve reasoning skills?
- How to construct arguments?
- How to put forward acceptable evidence to construct arguments?
- How to be objective concerning reasoning skills, arguments, and evidence?
- How to be analytical (considering similarities, differences in a topic) by emphasizing comparison, differentiation, relation in an argument?
- How to be evaluative (giving opinion or judgment) by ways of assessment, comment and interpretation?
- Is critical thinking simply a tool to find faults?
- How to give importance to rhetorical (art of employing language) considerations in responding to an object or a work of art?
- How to believe, create objective and universal response?
- How to handle deductive/inductive distinction?
- How to develop syllogistic logic?
- How to develop imaginative response?
- How to be sensible in response?

These are the overriding questions of critical thinking. In order to address these questions we have to employ many different insights and ideas. This research

attempts to quest the strategies that address these questions. There are certain standards which ought to be met to make any thinking or interpretation as critical thinking. For this, different scholars have imparted their own perspectives. Lohani et al. (2008, p.11) have designed a set of standards for critical thinking divided into three broad areas or categories.

- Based on knowledge
- Applies proven standards
- Exercises skills

The following diagram depicts these ideas.



2.1.6 Critical Thinking as a twenty first Century Skill

Thinking is a conscious purposeful mental activity. It is directly related to the mental exercise and creation of something new. Critical thinking, on the other

hand, refers to the processes and methodologies that employ reason, insight, awareness, imagination, and sensibility in order to criticize and evaluate a text or an object or a thing (Lohani et al. 2008, p. 9). In the 21st century, it is a 'by-word' or 'buzz-word' in educational circle. It is in every body's mind and tongue. Everybody talks about critical thinking. Furthermore, there has been massive scale teacher training on critical thinking .The term refers to the ability to interpret, analyze and evaluate ideas and arguments. This is the concept necessary in all spheres of human life to be successfully survived in this 21st century era. If this is the case, the need of critical thinking in education field is debateless. The concept and its strategies are useful in teaching and learning areas. It is because of this kind of importance of critical thinking it ought to be taught and learnt like as four skills of language:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading, and
- Writing

Scholars in the field of research, second language acquisition and second language teaching have advocated that critical thinking should be treated as a separate skill of language. Regarding this, Fisher (2011, p. i) has said that "critical thinking is now widely seen as a basic competency , akin to reading and writing, which needs to be taught." If we review the definitions imparted by different scholars, we can extract some common gist from them. Therefore, it is worth reviewing them. Lohani, et al.(2008, p. 12) define the term 'critical thinking' as "consciously observing, analyzing, reasoning, and evaluating according to the proven standards." John Dewey ,the father of modern critical thinking tradition has defined it as "active, persistent, and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds which support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (Dewey, 1909 as cited in Fisher, 2011, p. 2). Similarly, Crawford, et al. (2005. p, 236) define the term 'critical thinking' as:

an approach to thinking that emphasizes stating original claims or opinions and supporting them with reasons. Critical thinking is used expressively when students make interpretations and support them verbally or in writing. Critically thinking is used receptively when students critique other people's ideas.

From the above mentioned definitions what can be concluded is that critical does not necessarily imply to the negative analysis of any fact, object or something else. Most of us think critical thinking as the negative interpretation of any object or being negative or finding fault. Regarding this, Norton and Tohey (2010, p. 298) say :

When there is the term 'critical' we may have wrong concept that is mainly concerned with pointing out negative aspects of something. It always involves in search of negative points of concerned matter. But, in reality, it involves the activities like disruptive, skeptical, appreciation, scrutiny, and analytic move toward progressive path.

It is, therefore, the word 'critical' always strives to train the people to develop inquisitive minds and not to accept anything as taken-for-granted. Similarly, Lohani et al. (2008, p. 10) write that " the original meaning of the word comes from the root form 'skeri' which means to cut , separate or sift; thus the original idea conveyed by the word was to take something apart or to analyze it.

2.2 Review of Related Empirical Literature

Critical thinking is itself relatively new and less explored area of study. This sub-heading under literature review will seek to find out what has already been done in this area and what is left to be done. This study comes under learning strategies being based on critical thinking, which is entirely different than that

of previous studies. It is, therefore, this area of study is entirely new and the findings will be valuable to the concerned stakeholders. The following reviewed areas will be the related areas to the present research study.

Hendrix (1995) designed "A Treatment to Develop Critical Thinking Skills in college students". The experimental group that received the treatment was compared to a group that received the standard reading program. The result of this study showed that the experimental group significantly improved their critical thinking skills and reading comprehension in comparison to the control one.

Crawford, et al (2005) have written a book entitled 'Teaching and Learning Strategies for the Classroom Thinking'. They have proposed ABC framework to teaching. They have mentioned that critical thinking approach is based on the anticipation, building knowledge and consolidation phase. They have further said that the goal of teaching should be from remembering to creating.

Rogers (2006) carried out a research on "Teaching Critical Thinking Skills to fourth Grade Students Identified as Gifted and Talented". The purpose of the study was to teach critical thinking skills in a group of four grade gifted and talented learners. The subjects for this study were 21 fourth grade students identified as gifted and talented Bowman Elementary School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. There were four instruments used during the study to collect the data: a teacher journal, student's surveys, students' journals, and a teacher observation inventory. The pre- and post student assessments indicated that a basic understanding and application of the intellectual standards rose by 35%. The largest increase was in the area of naivety with the growth of 62%. The smallest gain was in the area of selfishness, showing only a 13% increase.

Similarly, Forfeiter, et al. (2007, as cited in Connerly, 2006) explored the effect of explicit instruction in an undergraduate course aimed at developing responsible environmental citizenship. The students were involved in discussion and written assignments dealing explicitly with specific critical

thinking skills. This study reflected an approach to critical thinking skills instruction that calls for active work in preparing students, as well as the need to provide varied and meaningful opportunities to interact with these skills in the classroom. This study also pointed out that the best way to structure the learning experience to introduce critical thinking is to include these skills in the work with different subjects in the curriculum.

Saiz, et al. (2008, as cited in Connerly, 2006) studied the efficiency of the structural component of Halpern's model. They applied the model to a program for improving critical thinking among university students in which one experimental group followed the guidelines of Halpern's structural component and the other experimental group received instruction in the same skills. The result showed that in relation to the test that measure critical thinking skills, there were no major differences between the two groups. However, in the tests about critical thinking beliefs and analysis of arguments, both experimental groups had similar results and they were better than the control group. Hence, the results did not show significant improvement through the use of Halpern's model. This is one of the emerging areas since there is no research in our context I chose the area.

Sah (2011) carried out one research work about developing critical thinking at the Department of English Education, T.U. Kirtipur. The topic of the research is ' Effectiveness of Active Learning Strategy for Developing Critical Thinking. The main purpose of the study was to evaluate some active learning strategies for effective reading comprehension. For this purpose, the researcher experimentally used three active learning strategies which were TPS (Think, Pair and Share), SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), and five question techniques to the targeted group. The major finding of the study showed that active learning strategies were effective in developing critical thinking.

Similarly, Khanal(2015) carried out a research on the Strategies Used by EFL Teachers at Anticipation Phase of Critical Thinking. He aimed to find out the strategies employed by teachers at the anticipation phase of critical thinking. Questionnaire and observation checklist were used as the tools to collect the data about the teachers' perception and the practices on the use of strategies at anticipation phase. Secondary level English teachers of Surkhet district were the population of the study and twenty teachers were taken as the sample. They were selected through the use of purposive non-random sampling method. The findings of the study show that brainstorming, picture description, experience sharing, question search give on talk and pair brainstorming were the major strategies used at the anticipation phase.

This study is entirely different from the above reviewed because it has explored the strategies used at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking approach. This is one of the unexplored area in the department of English education as well.

2.3 Implications of the Review for the Study

Theoretical and empirical literature reviewing are the basic foundation of this research. The review works provided me some insights on the critical thinking. I received many several meaningful inputs about the area of strategies used at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking approach. When the researcher will thoroughly go both the areas of literature, will get the direction where and how the researcher should go for the research study. Therefore, what can be said about the reviewing the theoretical and empirical literature is the path finder for the new area of this research work. To be specific, I got the ideas on the strategies used at the anticipation phase of critical thinking from the study of Khanal (2015). Similarly, I got methodological insights from the study of Rodger (2006) and the approaches of data analysis and interpretation and the overall design of the study from Sah (2011).

2.3.1 Strategies Used at Building Knowledge Phase

In our today's ELT classroom we what we find is teachers knowing or unknowingly try to use the activities that can build up new knowledge on the part of students. For example, group work, pair work, simulation, drilling, pattern practice, and so on. It is very crucial and important phase that every ELT teachers must follow. This phase contains many strategies which can be used in ELT classroom. According to Crawford, et al. (2005) the following are the strategies that can be used at the building knowledge phase. They are:

- K-W-L Technique
- Value line Technique
- Academic Controversy
- Jigsaw
- Pens in the middle
- Walk Around /Talk Around
- One Stay Three Stray
- **Know/ Want to know/ Learn(KWL)**

The K-W-L activity can be used to structure a whole lesson. It asks students to think of what they already know about the topic of the lesson, raise questions about it, and find answers to those questions. We can use this strategy in any class. We should select the topic and create a K-W-L chart on the chalk board or on the chart.

- **Value line Technique**

It is a cooperative learning activity that is recommended for evoking students' opinions on issues to which there can be varied responses. In other words, it is an activity that requires students to take a position on an issue and to support it with reasons. The teacher begins by posing a polarizing questions, such as, is war good for human being? It is useful for students to stand up for their beliefs even when friends disagree. It can be very effective while teaching supernatural stories.

- **Academic Controversy**

It is a strategy in critical thinking approach that offers an opportunity to involve the students in academic controversy. Students are given the topics that create quite confusing ideas. They present their ideas to address the controversy between or among the friends. This activity becomes helpful for generating new ideas and for developing reasoning, argumentative and critical questioning skill.

- **Jigsaw**

This strategy helps to introduce basic awareness to the lesson to the students. Its language aim is to introduce the language for expressing opinion, agreeing and disagreeing. This activity is a useful way to introduce students to the idea of becoming critical thinkers.

- **Pens in the Middle**

Pens in the middle strategy is intended to ensure that all students have the opportunity to participate in learning group, and provide the teacher with a stimulus for asking students about their contributions. When students begin to share ideas in the typical learning group of 3-7 members, each student marks his or her contribution by placing a pen on the table in the middle of the group. It can be used in ABC phases especially while teaching short stories and writing skill.

- **Walk around/ Talk around**

It is designed to support students' reading comprehension and speaking by guiding them to key points in the text and providing opportunities to discuss its meaning with their classmates. Before implementing walk around/ talk around in the class, the teacher should chunk the text by dividing it into manageable pieces for the students to read silently.

- **One Stay Three Stray**

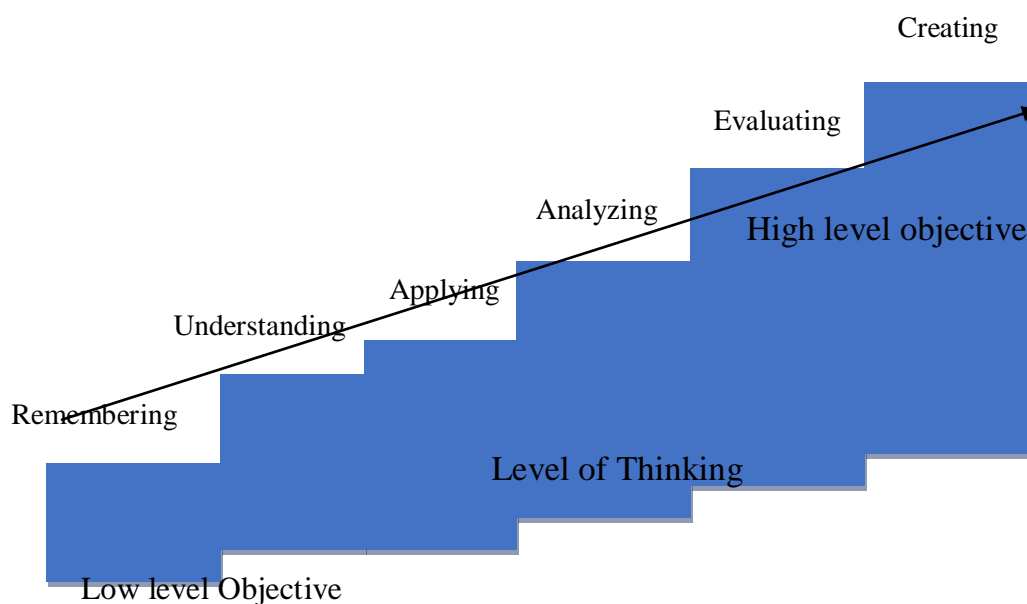
This strategy may work more efficiently if students are assigned certain roles within the groups. The roles may rotate among the group members, though, so each student will have plenty of opportunities to practice each role. It is basically intended to give each student a clearly understood contribution to make to the success of the group;

and to teach student over time, the skills and attitudes that make a staying and straying group member.

- **Think-Pair-Share**

Think-pair-share is a strategy for having students think of individual answers to a question posed by the teacher, and then share their answers with a partner. Later, the teacher calls on two or three pairs to share their answers with the whole class. It can be used in the anticipation, building knowledge and consolidation phase.

The above-mentioned strategies or activities are the implementational in nature. Our English teachers do not think about these activities, rather they continue the traditional styles of teaching. They do not understand to the fact that teaching does not only mean to make students memorize the text. 21st century teaching should aim at developing capacity on the part of learners from memorization to creation or exploration. The different levels of teaching objectives can be displayed in the following figure.



Source: Crawford (2005, p.4)

From the above-mentioned levels of thinking what we have to understand is that our teaching should aim from the lowest level (remembering) to the

highest level (creating) (ibid. p, 4). According to this kind of vision of model teaching objectives what we need to understand is our teaching style should be changed. Our final goal of teaching ought to be toward knowledge creation or knowledge exploration. The school should be knowledge creating school and classroom will be learning community (Freire, 1970, Day, 1999). Accelerating educational change is not only our concern but is a global phenomenon.

CHAPTER: THREE

METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

In this section, I have described the research design, on which this research was based on. It includes the methods and procedures employed to carry out this research. Here, I have incorporated the primary and secondary sources for data collection, population of study, sampling procedure, and process of data collection procedure.

3.1 Design and Method of the Study

A research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation to obtain answers of the research questions. It tells to the researcher within which framework the research activity will be conducted in order to collect required information. It also suggests how the collected information will be gathered and analyzed. Regarding it, Kumar (2007, p. 84) says that a research design is a procedural plan that is adopted by the researcher to answer questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically.

This present research was based on survey design. It is because survey is a research design that is widely used in social and educational researches. Primarily, it is carried out in the large number of population to find out an attitude, belief or behavior of particular group of people or an individual as well. It is mostly useful to generalize the finding in a large number of populations. It is cross-sectional in nature. About it, Best and Kahn (2007, p. 131) say:

Survey is an important type of study. It must not be confused with the mere clerical routine of gathering and tabulating figures. It involves a clearly defined problem and definite objectives. It requires expert and imaginative planning, careful analysis and interpretation of the data

gathered, and logical and skillful reporting of the findings.

From the above mentioned sayings it is vivid that in survey research data are gathered from relatively large number of population using certain sampling procedure where, the whole population for data collection is not feasible. It is more realistic in nature. Similarly, it deals with clearly defined problems and objectives. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2010), “surveys are the most commonly used descriptive method in educational research and may vary in scope from large-scale governmental investigations through to small-scale studies carried out by a single researcher”. They further state that the purpose of survey is generally to obtain a snapshot of conditions, attitudes, and/or events at a single point in time. In this sense, survey research is different from other types of researches as experimental and quasi-experimental research in terms of population of the study, nature of collecting data. There is a single time data collection in survey research and conducted in natural setting. Similarly, it differs from case study in terms of large size of samples while case studies are oriented to the more intensive and longitudinal study of small population. The attraction of survey research lies in its appeal to generalize ability or universality.

3.2 Population, Sample and Sampling Strategy

All the secondary level English teachers of Bara district were the population of the study. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, I selected twenty five English teachers teaching at secondary level in government-funded schools as the sample of the study.

To meet the objectives of this research study, I used purposive non-random sampling procedure. Only twenty five teachers who were teaching at secondary level were selected on the basis access. I provided questionnaire for the teachers and 25 classes of them were observed.

3.3 Study Area/Field

This study was carried out within Bara district since very broad area cannot be maintained within this small-scale study.

3.4 Data Collection Tools

In order to collect the required information, I employed two types of research tools: a set of questionnaire and observation checklist. The study depended on the information obtained from questionnaire and were cross checked by the information obtained from observation checklist for the purpose of reliability collected information.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

For the purpose of collecting required data the following processes were followed.

- Firstly, I visited the government secondary schools which are in the researcher's access.
- Secondly, I selected 25 schools where there are only one secondary English teachers at each school.
- Thirdly, I informed to the school head teachers and English teachers about the visit.
- I asked them to provide supportive hands in course of carrying out research work.
- I distributed the questionnaire to the English teachers and ask them to write their factual information.
- I observed their classes as well with the help of checklist.
- Finally, I thanked to all the respondents for their supportive hands extended to me in course of carrying out this research.

3.6 Analysis and Interpretation Procedure

The data collected through two different research tools were analyzed and interpreted using both quantitative and qualitative measurement tools like table, figures, and researcher's feelings, opinions, experiences were also mixed with the factual data.

CHAPTER - FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

This chapter is concerned with the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through the questionnaire and classroom observation checklist. So far the objectives of the study, both questionnaire and observation checklist were prepared to find out the strategies used at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking. The researcher followed survey research design in this study. Twenty-five secondary level teachers of Bara District were selected by following the purposive non random sampling procedure. The selected informants were administered a questionnaire to fill up their respective opinions and the classroom observation checklist was filled up by the researcher himself from the sharp observation of the classroom. Only twenty five classes were observed by the researcher due to the time constrains. The data obtained through the questionnaire and observation are duly analyzed and interpreted in this section. The detail of analysis and interpretation is subsumed under the following sub headings:

4.1 Analysis of the Data and Interpretation of the Results

This research work is primarily concerned with the primary sources. The nature of the data obtained in this study was both qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative data were obtained through the questionnaire. So the item analysis was done for the systematic presentation and interpretation of such data. Besides, the quantitative data obtained through classroom observation were tabulated and scrutinized by using simple statistical tools like frequency count and percentage. Though there are various ways of data analysis and interpretation, for the simplicity, clarity and brevity of the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data, I have presented the analysis under the following frame.

4.1.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Data Obtained Through the Questionnaire

In this section, the researcher analyzed the collected data from the respondents regarding the task of the respondents according to their post, their conceptualization of the term critical thinking, their views about the 'building knowledge phase of critical thinking, their familiarities on the activities to be done at the specified phase, the strategies can be used at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking, their opinions on the role of critical thinking strategies for enhancing English learning environment and their knowledge on the strategies for building knowledge phase. In fact, the questionnaire that was administered to the informants included seven different items. Thus, the analysis and interpretation is processed in following items:

(a) The Task of the Teachers According to their Post

The first item included in the questionnaire was, *presently, what is your task according to your post?* Almost all the informants defined their task in much more similar way. According to them, their task was to teach the students effectively by involving them in critical thinking and practical learning. They opined that as the teacher in critical thinking, their responsibility was to make students creative, active, rational, explainer, curious and task oriented. Similarly, they viewed that their task was to strengthen the students learn critically in English classes. Their role was to assist the them by developing their confidence, by investing strategies and skills, by providing practical activities and so on regarding the response of this item, one of the teacher responded as, *As per my post, my task is to enable my students to be active, creative, reasoning and explore in their learning of English.* Similarly, one of the trainer viewed as, *the general pedagogy, new has been shifted into the critical pedagogy. So my task is to strengthen the students competency over critical thinking by providing the knowledge of wide range of critical strategies.*

On the basis of above responses, it can be said that the teacher task, at present is to make students critical learner in the classroom by means of various activities as like reasoning, exploring, creating the content and opportunities and so on.

(b) The Teachers' Views on Critical Thinking

As per the demand of the day, the English language pedagogy should be as critical as possible for developing English language proficiency. It also means that the teacher should aware about the term 'critical thinking'. So that researcher included another item in the questionnaire as *what do you mean by critical thinking?* The responses derived from the informant show that many of the teachers do not have proper ideas about critical thinking, however, almost all of them showed their acquaintance to the critical thinking. According to them, critical thinking is the processes and methodologies that employ reason, insight, awareness, imagination and sensibility in order to criticize and evaluate a text or object and the lesson. For teacher trainers, it is the ability to interpreted, analyze and evaluate ideas and arguments. They viewed that critical thinking should be treated as separate skill and language for developing a basis competency. Most of the ideas expressed on this item included critical thinking as alive, persistent and careful consideration of the belief to support conscious learning. To support this I have presented the two excerpts of them here. One of them response of the teacher on this is, *From personal understanding, critical thinking is away of forming on which learners have to be involved in reaching, evaluating, constructing arguments, being inductive, analytical, imaginative and sensible in their learning.* Similarly, another teacher viewed it as, *critical thinking is a approach to thinking that emphasizes on consciously observing, analyzing, reasoning an d evaluating. It always strives to train the pupils to develop inquisitive minds.*

On the basis of the ideas expressed to the term critical thinking, the informants meant it as the best and most successful way to allow students to think about

their own thoughts and the reasons behind their point of view on the particular items of instruction.

(c) The Teachers Views on Building Knowledge Phase of Critical Thinking

In critical thinking approach of instruction, students reflect on their own ways of making decisions or solving problems. From the review of related literature on critical thinking, it becomes clear that there are three different phases of critical thinking as anticipation building knowledge and consolidation. As the major concern of this study is to identify the strategies used at building knowledge phase of critical thinking, the next item in the questionnaire was *What do you think about the 'building knowledge phase' of critical thinking?* While responding to this item, almost all the informants viewed it as an inevitable step of critical thinking. It is the learning or developing itself. After the systematic study of the ideas expressed to the item, the informants viewed it as the second step of critical thinking approaches. In this phase, the teaching leads students to inquire, find out, make sense of the materials, answer their prior questions and find out the new questions and their answer. Similarly, the selected teachers and trainers viewed that building knowledge phase is the concrete out of reasoning and learning by mean of the activities observation, analysis, exercise, conceptualization, and evaluation, problem solving and researching for being independent and critical thinkers. One of the excerpt of this phases, *the building knowledge phase of it is the constructive and fundamental one. It is leading towards the lesson which aims at comparing expectations with what is being learned, revising the expectations or raise new ones, identifying the main points, make personal concoctions to the lesson and getting the intent of the lesson for long term remembrance.*

On the basis of the synthesis of the view expressed by the informants, it can be concluded that building knowledge phase is the most important and concrete act of learning in critical thinking. It is the step on which learners are involved to inquire the lesson make senses of materials and answers the questions asked.

It aims to monitor or the personal thinking of individual students to identify the main points of the lesson.

(d) Teachers' Familiarity with the Activities to be done at the Building Knowledge Phase of Critical Thinking

The field of language teaching is subject to rapid changes. So, the strategies and activities investment has become a concern of language teaching. For this, the teachers need to be familiar with the wide range of activities in any of the approach of language teaching. Thus, the teachers are seeking to change their practices to support the activities for developing critical thinking of the students. In this regards, the teachers' familiarity of the activities to be done at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking is worth to be discussed. So, the next item of the questionnaire was asked *What do you think English teachers are familiar with the activities to be done at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking?* From the ideas expressed by the informants on this item, many of the teachers found to be not familiar about the exact activities to be done at the phase of building knowledge. Though, the building knowledge phase is the developing phase, teachers do not have much more knowledge about the activities. However, they have viewed that memorization, creation, exploration, applying, analyzing, evaluating, creating context and automatization of knowledge are the activities to be done in this phase. The secondary sources of information mention that building knowledge phase of critical thinking involves the activities like disruptive, skeptical, appreciation, scrutiny and analytic move towards progressive path, the informants of his study did not have explicit approach regarding these activities. It might be the lack of theoretical knowledge on it. One of the informants responded in this way, *From my own personal perspectives, many English teacher are not familiar with the activities to be done at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking and I myself too. However, knowingly or unknowingly, evaluation, creation and being sensitive to the context of knowledge helps in teaching.*

Taking evidence of the responses found on this item, many of the teachers are found to be unfamiliar to the activities. Out of 25 respondents, twelve of them responded just as I am not familiar with the activities and it can be same to the case of other teacher as well. However, the rest of the others respondents partially agreed to the item.

(e) Strategies that can be used at the Building Knowledge Phase of Critical Thinking

Teacher can use various strategies at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking. Once the lesson gets started, the teachers have to involve their students in to the different strategies inquire, find out, make senses of materials, answer the prior questions, find out new questions, answer the questions and contextualize the knowledge in their practice. The knowledge of strategies supports them for better practices on building knowledge phase. So, the researcher also administered the item as, *What strategies do you think can be used at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking?* In response to this item, the selected informants have presented their ideas differently. Many of them asserted that the strategies like exploring learners expectations, comparing their expectations, identifying the main points, monitoring personal thinking, jigsaw, walk round/talk round, K-W-L technique, paired brain storming, questioning board free write can be used as the strategies at the building phase. in the same way, some of the presented that conscious observation, analysis, sportive reason, interpretations on verbal and written arguments, making a critique on other peoples' ideas, thinking about the students inner voices and so on as the activities to be done. One of the excerpt on this item was like this, *to be particularized, most of the English teachers do not use strategies to build learners knowledge on the particular item of instruction but for me, the strategies reasoning, construction arguments, exploring acceptable evidence, finding out similarities and differences in a topic, differentiation and so on.*

Concluding the responses of the informants, it is found that the strategies like asking students exploring their expectations, identifying main points, monitoring personal thinking, jigsaw, paired brain stoning, think and write, talk around, conscious observation, context sensitivity can be done at the building knowledge field of critical thinking.

(f) Critical Thinking Strategies for Enhancing English Learning Environment

In recent years, we have come to realize that the teacher is the ultimate key to educational change and English learning environments critical thinking is taken as the emerging skill of English Language Teaching. It is the processes and methodologies that employ reason, insight, awareness, imagination and sensibility in order to criticize and evaluate a text or object or a thing. In this approach, teachers have to use various strategies as analyzing, interpolating, evaluating ideas, reasoning and so on. They are taken as the instrument for quality assurance in English. The teachers' views on the critical thinking strategies determine whether they use them in their teaching for enhancing English learning environment. Thus, the researcher, in next item, asked the teachers *What is your opinion about critical thinking strategies can enhance English learning environment? Give your opinion.* While responding to this item, almost all the informants accepted the fact that critical thinking strategies can enhance English learning environment. To prove this claim, they have presented following arguments:

- Critical thinking strategies enhance learners to be independent and critical thinkers.
- Those strategies emphasize the students make interpretations and support them verbally or in writing.
- Those strategies encourage students to critique another people's ideas.

- The strategies strive to train the pupils to develop inquisitive minds and not to accept anything as taken for granted.
- They help to direct the thoughts to the goal attainment.
- More significantly, they help to explore something new from classroom practice.
- Critical thinking strategies play key role to create scene setting environment in English language classroom which help teachers to develop students as independent thinkers, etc.

The respondents were found to emphasize on the proper implementation of the strategies. One of the respondents viewed, *well, of course, if the teacher properly implement the strategies of critical thinking, they will enhance English learning environment because those strategies seem useful for making personal connections to the lesson, assess learning, set purposes, for learning, focus attention to the topic and provide accountability on the application of knowledge.*

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that for English teachers, critical thinking strategies are the instruments for enhancing English learning environment by making them active, creative, accountable, sensitive and reflective thinkers.

(g) Role of the Strategies of Building Knowledge Phase to Bolster English Classes

The purposes of the strategies used at building knowledge phase are to compare learners' expectations with what is being learned, to revise expectations or raise new ones, to identify the main points, to monitor personal thinking, to make inferences about the materials, to make personal connections to the lesson and to make the lesson constructive. These purposes clarify that they tend to bolster English classes. The teacher vies on its help them to employ the strategies in

their classes. Considering this fact, the last item of the questionnaire was used to ask the teacher to provide their knowledge on more strategies used at building knowledge phase and their role to booster English classes. The information's presented a wide range of strategies that can be used at building knowledge phase. According to them, those strategies can be disruptive, skeptical, appreciation, scouting, analytic, interpretative, persistent, consciously observing, analyzing, reasoning, evaluating thinking about, immediate retrospection, value line technique, academic controversy, walk round/talk round, pens in the middle, K.W.L. technique and so on. Almost all of them agreed on that the strategies bolster English classes. However, they were concerned to the proper implementation of the strategies and students activities in the classroom. It can be supported by the following excerpt of one of the respondents, *We can find out various strategies to be used at the building knowledge phase. The answer of the questions, 'can they bolster English classes' depends upon the proper implementation of the strategies and students readiness to be through those strategies.*

From the discussion above, it becomes clear that there can be a wide range of strategies for building knowledge phase but their role to bolster English classes depends upon the proper implementation of the strategies and students readiness to be active in the class.

4.1.2 The Analysis and Interpretation of the Data Obtained from Classroom Observation

In order to collect the data about the strategies used building knowledge phase of critical thinking, the researcher prepared an observation checklist and observed their classes. At least one of the classes of all the selected teachers were observed. The strategies used in the classroom have been presented in the table below. Altogether fourteen indicators were included in the checklist to find out teacher strategies used at the building phase of critical thinking. All the

indicators of the checklist were the strategies to be used at the building phase.

The details of which is presented below:

Table No. 1

Strategies Used at the Building Knowledge Phase of Critical Thinking

Strategies	Not found		Found					
	F	%	F	Good %	F	Very good %	F	Excellent
Jigsaw	-	-	20	80	5	20	-	-
Think pair and share	-	-	15	60	10	40	-	-
K-W-L- Technique	10	40	13	52	2	8	-	-
Paired brainstorming	3	12	15	60	7	28	-	-
Questions search	4	16	9	36	7	28	5	20
Value line	10	40	10	40	5	20	-	-
Free write	-	-	18	72	5	20	2	8
Discussion web	3	12	13	52	7	28	2	8
Walk around talk around	8	32	15	60	2	8	-	-
M-chart	12	48	8	32	2	8	-	-
T-chart	15	60	10	60	6	24	4	16
Reasoning	-	-	12	48	10	40	3	12
Identifying the main points	-	-	3	12	15	60	7	28

Monitory persona thinking	-	-	15	60	6	24	4	16
Evaluating	-	-	18	72	5	20	2	8

The above table shows that in 60% of total classes observed, teachers used the jigsaw strategy good way in 80% and 20% used very good way, however no classes were found as unused and excellent use of jigsaw strategy. Next strategy used at the building phase of critical thinking was think pair and share. In 60% of the total classes, it was used in good way and its use was in very good manner in only 40% of the total classes. However no classes were found to unused and excellent use of this strategy.

Next strategy used at the building phase of critical thinking was K-W-L technique. Only in 52% of total classes were used in good way but it was not found in 40% of total classes and only 8% of total classes had very good use of his strategy, however, no classes were found to have an excellent use of K-W-L technique Out of the 25 observed classes, in 60% of total classes, teacher used paired brainstorming strategy, in good way and 28% of the classes had very good use of it while in 12% of the classes, paired brainstorming was not used and none of the classes had an excellent use.

Another strategy included in the checklist was question search. Similarly, in 20% of the classes, teacher made excellent use and in 36% of the classes, it was used in very good way and 28% classes were very good way. This strategy was not found to be unused in only of the classes. Regarding the value line strategy of critical thinking, in 40% of the total classes, teacher did not use it and they made the good use of it in the equal number, i.e. 40% of the classes. However, only 20% of the classes, teacher made very good use of it and none of the classes were found to have an excellent use of this strategy.

The next strategy used by the teacher at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking was free write. Its use was found to be good in 72% of the total

class observed, very good in 20% of the classes and excellent in 8% of the classes. It means, this strategy was found to be used in almost all the classes observed. The strategy 'Discussion web' was used in good way in 52% of total classes, in very good way in 28% of the classes and excellent in only 8% of the classes. Teachers did not make use of this strategy in 12% of the total classes. Next strategy included in the observation checklist was walk around, talk around in 60% of the total classes, teacher made good use of this strategy in 8% of total classes, it had very good use. However it was found unused in 32% of the total classes.

In case of the strategy M-chart, the large number of classes i.e. 48% of total teacher did not make use of the technique while in 40% of the classes, it was used in good way and in had very good use only in 12% of the total classes. The strategy T-chart was found to be used in 32% of the total classes.

Similarly, none of the classes had very good and excellent use of this technique. Another strategy used at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking reasoning. This strategy was used in good way in 48% of the classes, very good way in 40% of the classes and excellent use in 12% of the classes observed. However, it was not found to be unused in any of the classes.

In the same way, the strategy asking students for identifying the main points had very good use in the majority of the classes, i.e. in 28% it was used in excellent way in 25% of the classes and in good way in 48% of the total classes. However, teachers were not found to be unused of this technique in any of the classes. Similarly, teacher made good use of the strategy 'monitoring personal thinking in 60% of their classes. They made a very good use of the strategy in 24% of the classes and 16% of the classes were found to have excellent use of the strategy. So this strategy was used in all the classes observed. The last indicator of the checklist was about the use of evaluating strategy. The teacher used this strategy in good way in 72% of the classes, they used it in very good way in 20% of the classes and this strategy was found to have excellent use only in 8% of the total classes. The data presented in the

above table shows that evaluation strategy was used in almost all the classes observed.

On the basis of the above presentation analysis and observation of the data obtained through observation checklist, it is found that the teacher made effective use of the strategies jigsaw, academic controversy, paired brainstorming identifying main points, reasoning, evaluating, etc. in their classes at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking. And, they did not make the proper use of the strategy such as T-chart, M-chart, K-W-L technique, value line and so on in their classes.

4.2 Summary of the Findings

What teacher did in involving students to inquire, find out, make sense of the materials and answer the questions in language teaching are the strategies used at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking. This study was carried out considering that it would add a brick in the field of critical pedagogy by helping English teacher to make use of effective strategies for building knowledge of the students.

Critical thinking is an approach of conscious observation, analysis, researching and evaluation according to the proven standards. Among the three different phases of critical thinning, building knowledge phase is the lead phase on which learners are involved in concrete act of developing competencies/knowledge. The collection and analysis of the data lead me display a handful of findings. The summary of the major findings has been presented under the two headings based on the objectives of the study:

a. Findings Related to the Strategies Used at the Building Knowledge Phase of Critical Thinking Approach

- i. Most of the teacher viewed critical thinking as one of the skill on action to be taken into the consideration for conscious study. It is taken as the scholarly interpretation based upon evaluation and the ability to think

clearly and rationally. Further, they opined that it is the best and most successful was to allow students to think about their own thoughts and reasons behind their points of view on the particular items of instruction.

- ii. Another findings to the study presents that teacher understood building knowledge phase as the focused lessons stage on which teachers make the learners observer, analytical, critical thinkers, reassuring, evaluator. Moreover, they viewed that it is the concrete act of learning rather than being ready for learning on which they are involved to inquire the lesson make serve of materials and answer the questions. Building knowledge phase aims to monitor the personal thinking of individual students to identify the main points of the lesson.
- iii. For most of the teachers, memorization, creation, exploration, applying, analyzing, evaluating, creating context and automat section knowledge are the activities to be done at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking. However, the teachers were not found to have an explicitly approach regarding the use of these activities in their classroom practices.
- iv. Another important finding of the study is about the strategies that can be done in the building knowledge phase of critical thinking. For most of the teachers, the strategies; asking students for exploring their expectations, identifying main points of the lesson, monitoring personal thinking, jigsaw, parried brainstorming think and write, talk round, conscious observation context sensitivity, free write, questioning board were the major strategies to be done at the building knowledge phase. However, some of the teacher did not have much more theoretical knowledge on building knowledge strategies.
- v. From the observation of 25 classes of selected teachers, it was found that teacher made good use of the strategies jigsaw, think, pair, share, paired observation, questions search, free write, walk around, talk around, pens in the middle, evaluation, monitory personal thinking and reasoning.

Similarly, they made a very good use of the strategies identifying the main points, reasoning and think pair share. However, the strategies, T-chart, M-chart of K-W-L technique, value line were not much used in the classes and no strategies was found to be used in an excellent way in their classes. It shows a big difference between their saying and doing.

(b) Findings Related to the Usefulness of the Strategies used in Building Knowledge Phase

- i. Almost all the informants of the study heartily accepted that critical thinking strategies enhance English learning environment. They supported the reason behind their claim as; the strategies help learners be in depended and critical thinkers, emphasize the students make interpretations and support them verbally or in writing and these strategies strive to train the students to develop inquisitive minds and not to accept anything as taken for granted.
- ii. Regarding the role of usefulness of the strategies at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking, most of the teachers viewed that the strategies seem very much effective to bolster English classes through making students disruptive, skeptical, appreciative, analytical, interpretative, persistent and rational. However, they said that the usefulness of the strategies depends upon the proper implementation the strategies and students readiness to go through the activities.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter begins with the conclusion drawn on the basis of findings and it moves ahead along with the discussion of some recommendations for the policy makers, practitioners in the field of ELT and for further researchers on the basis of the findings of the study.

5.1 Conclusions

Language teaching has become the fields of rapid change and innovative after the 1990s. The new educational climate has brought new kinds of trends or waves in language teaching. The shift aims of transforming the learning from knowledge transformation to the knowledge creation. The acknowledgement of learner's critical thinking and creative learning at the starting points of teaching leads the learners towards exploration, innovation reassuring and creation of knowledge. Such a creative and innovative mode of instruction is considered as the critical thinking approach language teaching involving learners in the concrete act of inquiry. Making sense, indentifying main points and leading towards the success of the lesson is building knowledge phase of critical thinking approach. From this study, it was found that teachers used a number of sorties to build the knowledge to the learners in English language classroom. So, the finding to the strategies used and can be used the building knowledge phase of critical thinking become the sole concern of this study.

This study was an attempt to find out the teachers' strategies used in the building knowledge phase of critical thinking. Twentyfive teachers who were teaching in different secondary schools of Baradistrict were selected as the sample by using purposive non random sampling procedures. The use of strategies was collected through questionnaire and observation checklist. After the analysis of the information accumulated through questionnaire and observation checklist, some conclusions have emerged from the findings of the

study. It can be asserted that almost all the teacher and teacher trainers viewed critical thinking as a skills or action for conscious study. They understood building knowledge as the focused phase to make inquiry and sense of lesson on which teacher involve the learners into reasoning, exploring, evaluating and so on. The major conclusions of the study are given below:

- The teachers used the strategies like academic controversy, jigsaw, and free write, paired brainstorming, walk and talk around. Rescoring, evaluating, and identifying main points and critical interpretation significantly at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking.
- Strategies used at building knowledge phase of critical thinking were found as the self directed, inquiry based and independent skill.
- The observation report of the teachers' classroom shows that teachers make use of various strategies like jigsaw, paired brainstorming, academic controversy, questioning search, free write, pointing major ideas and reasoning in their classroom practices. However they seemed quite contradictory in their theory and practices.
- The strategies used at the building knowledge those of critical thinking were taken as the tools for enhancing English learning environment and bolstering the English classes.

So far the study is conducted I have incorporated all the theoretical methodological, data based and interpretative ideas into the five chapters. In the first chapter, I have included background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, significance and limitations of the study. In the second chapter, I have reviewed theoretical and empirical literature and drawn some of the implications of the review and presented the conceptual framework of the study. Third chapter is fully based on the methodology. So I have talked about the design, population, sample, sampling procedures, tools of data collection and procedures of data collection and analysis and interpretation under it. Similarly, in fourth chapter, I have analyzed and interpretative data

descriptively and enlisted the major findings. In the final chapter, I have drawn the conclusion of the study and provided some recommendations to be applicable in policy, practice and further research related areas.

5.2 Recommendations

Based upon the summary and discussion of the findings and conclusions of the study, some recommendations have been recommended for the policy makers, ELT practitioners and further researchers. For the convenience of presentation, they have been divided in the following three levels:

5.2.1 Policy Related

This is the highest level of implementation of any study. The things that are implemented at this level can charge the entire educational system. The following recommendations have been made from the study at this level:

- i. Teachers need to use constant and critical thinking approaches in their teaching to meet the changing needs of the learners. Thus, the policy should ensure the provision of teaching critically, training, reflection and assistance to empower the critical thinking abilities of both learners and students.
- ii. It was found that there is a wide gap between the theory and practice. It means that the practice of teaching strategically is relatively power than the extent to which teacher advocate it. So, it can be recommended that constant training on teaching strategies and supervision should be made mandatory.
- iii. Policy makers should consider the fact that teachers should be provided with opportunities to update strategic competence at the anticipation, building knowledge and consolidation phases of critical thinking. So the trainings, seminar, workshops and other professional activities should be conducted to make teacher use different strategies in the different phase of teaching through critical thinking approach.

- iv. The findings of this study show that the critical thinking approach enhances and bolsters the English language learning environment. Thus the teacher and student should be equipped with critical thinking strategies from the policy levels.
- v. Many of the teachers were found not to have sufficient knowledge about the strategies used at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking. So the textbook, manuals, teacher guide and other reference materials should provide the meta language of such strategies to both teacher and students.
- vi. As this study states the importance of critical thinking in language teaching, it can be recommended that the critical thinking approach should be the part of teachers' education of university program and in teacher training center.

5.2.2 Practice Related

This is the level at which theories and principles are put into practice. It means, the policies should be implemented in the classroom. The following points of recommendations have been made at this levels:

- i. The findings of the study depict that majority of teachers used various strategies at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking, however many of the teacher in our context, do not have adequate knowledge on how to use those strategies for developing students critical thinking. So, the teacher should invest their time and energies on strategies investment and their proper use in the classroom.
- ii. This study shows that the widely used strategies for building knowledge phase are paired brain storming, jigsaw, reasoning, evaluating, pointing out the major ideas, taking division, contextualizing the experiences and so on. Thus, the individual teacher and students are recommended to go through those strategies.

- iii. The teacher should transfer what they have learnt in different mode of teacher education and developmental activities. So, they are suggested to utilize that knowledge in their practice.
- iv. As the building knowledge phase is the stage of leading students to the lesson and enabling them to make sense of lesson, adequate strategies are required to use from the side of teacher and students for enhancing critical thinking.

5.2.3 Further Related

No research is complete itself. There are many areas which are not addressed by this study. Scholars who are interested to explore more on this area have been given the following recommendation for carrying out further researcher in the respective areas:

- i. This research is based on a survey design. It is only based on the teacher views on the strategies and their practices of strategies in the classroom for building knowledge of the students in critical thinking approach. For more intensive study, the new are recommended to carry out action and experiment based research on the effectiveness of those strategies for developing learners creativity and critical abilities.
- ii. This research covers only the views and uses of the strategies of 25 secondary level teachers of bara district. It means, it is limited in its scope and purpose. So, other researches having wider scope are recommended to conduct from the side of new researchers in the coming days.
- iii. Some other areas to be explored by the new researchers can be recommended as critical thinking in developing creativity of language learners, critical thinking for learner autonomy, strategies used in consolidation phase of critical thinking and so on since these are still unexplored areas.

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Appendix-A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE TEACHERS

Date:

Dear Sir,

This questionnaire is an integral part of my research study entitled “**A Study on the strategies used by teachers at the building knowledge phase of critical** thinking approach in English Language Classrooms”, under the supervision of **Mr.Guru Prasad Poudel**, teaching Assistant at the Department of English Education, T.U., Kirtipur. This research study attempts to search what strategies can best work in order to create favorable academic atmosphere in course of teaching. This questionnaire attempts to collect ideas, feelings and perceptions from teachers about such strategies that can be used at the building knowledge phase.

Your kind co-operation in responding all the questions will be extremely valuable to ascertain the usefulness of the strategies of building knowledge phase. So, your participation is encouraged because only a small sample of trainers has been selected and a high percent of returns is necessary for a successful study. Please, feel free to put your responses required by the questionnaire. I assure you that any information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Q.N 1. Presently, what is your task according to your post?

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.....

Q.N. 2 What do you mean by critical thinking?

.....
.....

Q. N. 3. What do you mean by critical thinking?

.....
.....

Q. N. 4. What do you think about the 'building knowledge phase' of critical thinking?

.....
.....

Q. N. 5. What do you think English teachers are familiar with the activities to be done at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking?

.....
.....

Q. N. 6. What strategies do you think can be used at the building knowledge phase of critical thinking?

.....
.....

Q. N. 7. What is your opinion on critical thinking strategies can enhance English learning environment? Give your opinion.

.....
.....

Q. N. 8. To be specific, strategies at building knowledge phase can be of many more. Can they bolster English classes? If yes. How? If no. Why? Give your ideas.

.....
.....

Q.N.9. What are the usefulness of the activities like pair interaction, focused discussion, experience sharing and critical reflection in building confidence in English language learning?

.....
.....

Q.N.10. Do you involve your students to compare expectations with what is being learned as a part of strategy used in Building Knowledge phase? If Yes, How do you do?

.....
.....

Q.N.11. How do you ask them to revise expectations or raise new ones?

.....
.....

Q.N.12. What are the ways for asking students to identify the main points?

.....
.....

Q.N.13. As a part of strategies used in building knowledge phase, How do you ask them to monitor personal thinking?

.....
.....

Q.N.14. How do you ask them to make inferences about the material?

.....
.....

Q.N 15. Do you ask them to make personal connections to the lesson? If so then how do you do such? Please share your ideas?

.....
.....

Khul Prasad Gautam

Researcher

Thanks for your kind co-operation

Appendix -B

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FORM

Name of the School:

Name of the teacher:

Teaching Experience:

Grade:

Age:

Sex:

S.N.	Strategies Used in Building Knowledge phase	Not found	Found		
			good	very good	Excellent
1.	Jigsaw				
2.	Think pair share				
3.	Monitor personal thinking				
4.	Paired brainstorming				
5. s	Make personal connections				
6.	Question search				
7.	Make inferences				
8.	Free write				
9.	Discussion web				
10.	Asking to explore the potential reasons				
11.	Identifying the interested area of the students to the lesson				
12.	Asking questions to the lesson				
13.	Monitor the activities				

Note: If any found

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