

## TOWARD EFL STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING: HOW EFFECTIVE VALUE LINE LEARNING STRATEGY IS?

<sup>#1</sup>Heri Hidayatullah, <sup>\*2</sup>Siti Syafi'atul Qomariyah

<sup>#1</sup>English Lecturer, Faculty of Culture, Management and Business, Mandalika University of Education, Indonesia

<sup>\*2</sup>English Lecturer, Faculty of Culture, Management and Business, Mandalika University of Education, Indonesia

Corresponding Author Email: [herihidayatullah@undikma.ac.id](mailto:herihidayatullah@undikma.ac.id)

### ABSTRACTS

Critical thinking in the academic context is considered paramount due to Indonesian government regulations. However, developing such skills needs extraordinary effort. Accordingly, this present research aimed to examine one out of so many strategies called Value Line Learning (VLL) Strategy toward such skills in speaking and writing classes. An experimental research with one group pretest-posttest design was applied aiming at measuring the current strategy for two times (before and after exposing a non-random group of participants to a certain treatment). This study was conducted at MA Nurul Ulum where the population was all students of A class consisting of 21 students due to the total sampling was applied. The instrument of the research was a critical thinking self-assessment questionnaire which has been measured its validity and reliability. The data obtained were then analyzed to calculate the mean, standard deviation, and t-test using SPSS. The findings showed that the mean score of critical thinking in the pre-test was 45.2381 and 78.0952 in the post-test. It meant that there was an improvement in the mean score before and after applying VLL Strategy. Next, The result of testing the hypothesis using a t-test was 38.548 with a level of significant .000. It could be concluded that the Value Line Learning (VLL) Strategy was effective towards the students' critical thinking skills.

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### INTRODUCTION

In today's era, social media facilitates netizens to interact with or without knowing each other. In such interactions, feedbacks and comments toward the post and news often contain hatred which in turn arouses polemics (Ningrum et al., 2019). They continued that such hateful comments are opposed to not only the concept of politeness but also communication ethics. There are so many factors why such hateful comments are expressed like freedom, human right, anonyms available in social media, and so on.

The hatred expressions in social media are often hidden on behalf of the word critics however these two terminologies are absolutely different. The word critics integrate into critical thinking which is supposed to be more complex and it becomes the objective of the government to be achieved by learners in all contexts (Permendikbud 81A of 2013). The

importance of critical thinking is clearly stated in the Indonesian curriculum which the students are needed to be able to communicate, think critically and creatively.

Literature regarding critical thinking skills describes that it includes the knowledge of constructing a series of interrelated critical questions, and the ability and willingness to ask and answer questions at appropriate times (Browne & Keeley, 2007). Such knowledge refers to a description where someone views something from different aspects in order to accumulate a variety of reasons which in turn come to a certain decision. According to Ennis (2011) states that critical thinking is reasonable and reflective thinking focuses on deciding what to believe or do.

The term critical thinking requires students to do an analysis, make self-questions, do an evaluation, and do interpretation toward an issue. However, when the activity is in reading, such terminology is closest in meaning to critical reading. They distinguish in terms of activities where the former looks more general than the latter. Next, they seem to be the same in the context of how to have them. Imran and Hidayatullah (2020) stated that having critical reading skills requires a good and appropriate plan. Further, the requirement of having a good and appropriate plan might be determined by the teachers' pedagogical competence (Hidayatullah & Qomariyah, 2022).

One of so many teaching strategies that can be applied by teachers in developing the learners' critical thinking is Value Line Learning (VLL) Strategy. This kind of strategy has been applied and then improved the students' critical thinking when speaking (Sudirman & Tawali, 2022). However, inconsistency appears in such articles, especially between the research problem and the conclusion. Further, this present research tried to re-examine how effective such a strategy toward the students' critical thinking with different research subjects.

The VLL strategy basically belongs to cooperative learning since its activities focus on the students (Crawford et al., 2005). They continued that it helps students 1) pay attention to a certain issue and then decide what to think about it; 2) recognize to varying opinions about the same issue; 3) and take a position on an issue as well as state their reasons for it. Due to the students' activities which involve their cognitive activity, it might be stated that such strategy matches to be applied in the context of critical thinking.

The teaching procedures of VLL strategy according to Crawford et al. (2005) consist of seven steps namely: 1) posing questions to the whole class in order that the students share their opinions which then vary from a strong "yes" to a strong "no." The example question of this step is "do you think that protecting our environment is more important than getting someone's needs?"; 2) the student comprehends the question and he or she is allowed to write his/her answer; 3) both teacher and students are at the opposite position then state extreme opinions toward the issue; 4) the teacher asks the students to take their place following the line in between the two opinions where they agree with more; 5) the students are warned to discuss the issue they agree with aiming to the question unless they should move one way or another; 6) the students are allowed to continue discussing their responses on both sides of them; 7) a representative student is asked to state their small groups' position toward the issue. The student who changes their mind after listening to the representative statement is allowed.

The activities of the classroom considering the whole steps of such strategy seem to create joyful learning because they like moving around in class and sharing with others. Next, the students were led to acquire meaningful learning in terms of critical thinking. At least, the students were also trained to work cooperatively in a challenging nuance. Accordingly, this current research examined whether Value Line Learning (VLL) Strategy is effective or not in the teaching of critical thinking skills at MA Nurul Ulum.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Research Design

In this study, the researchers applied one group pretest-posttest design. It is a type of quasi-experiment in which the outcome of interest is measured two times (before and after exposing a non-random group of participants to a certain treatment). This research design is characterized by two features; (1) the use of single-group participants. This feature denoted that all participants are part of a single condition. It means that all participants are given the same treatments and assessments. And (2) a linear ordering that requires the assessment of a dependent variable before and after a treatment is applied. There are some advantages of applying this design; feasible when the random assignment of participants is considered unethical, feasible when randomization is impractical, requires fewer resources than most designs, and no temporality. It can be seen in figure 1.

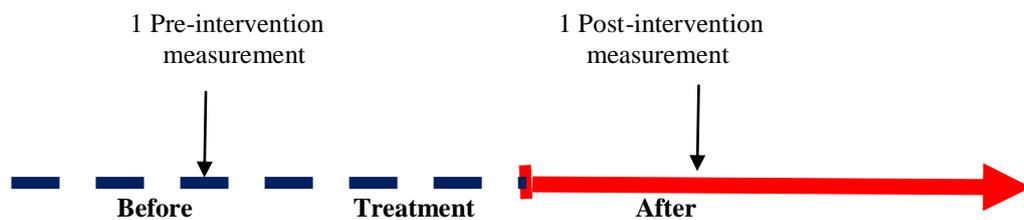


Figure 1. One Group Pretest Posttest Design

### Population and Sample

This study was conducted at MA Nurul Ulum. The population of this study was all students of class XI majoring in Islamic Religion consisted of 21 students. Sugiyono (2013) stated that the population could be humans and or objects in the area where the research is conducted. He stated that a sample part of the population where in the current study was 21 students of class XI who were chosen using a sampling technique.

### Instruments

The instrument used the critical thinking self-assessment questionnaire. According to Facione (2016) and Bloom et al. (1956) there are seven frameworks of critical thinking namely: systematic, judicious, analytic, confident, open-minded, truth-seeking, and inquisitive. There were 10 questions in the questionnaire by which the respondents could choose 1 out of 5 options. The five options were started from 1 (Not very Agree), 2 (Not Agree), 3 (Fairly Agree), 4 (Agree), and 5 (Very Agree).

### Data Analysis

This study used a questionnaire as the instrument, so to determine true or not the instrument need validity. Validity is a measure of the degree of validity or validity of a research instrument. Validity refers to how accurately a method measures what it is intended to measure. If a study has high validity, it means that it produces results of real properties, characteristics, and variations in the physical or social world correspond. The result of validity showed that the score is higher than the r-table can see in table 1.

Table 1  
Result of Validity

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7
r-test	0.519	0.510	0.636	0.539	0.532	0.528	0.662
r-tabel (0.05%)	0.433	0.433	0.433	0.433	0.433	0.433	0.433
Description	Valid						
Variant	1.447	1.431	1.361	1.864	1.918	1.623	0.719

Reliability refers to how consistently a method measures something. If the result can be consistently achieved by using the same methods under the same circumstances, the measurement is considered reliable. The result of reliability was 0.501 higher than the r-table which was 0.433. It means that the instrument was valid and reliable. High reliability is one indicator that the measurement is valid. If a method is not reliable, it probably is not valid.

The data of students' critical thinking self-assessment in the five-point Likert rating scale 1 to 5 (5 = very high, 4 = high, 3 = medium, 2 = low, and 1 = very low) was analyzed to calculate mean, standard deviation, and t-test using SPSS 16.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Findings

All the data are distributed normally and homogeneously. The quantitative data obtained from the pre-test and post-test of the critical thinking self-assessment questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS version 16. The mean score of critical thinking in the pre-test was 45.2381 and in the post-test was 78.0952. It meant that there was an improvement mean score of critical thinking before and after applying the treatment. The result of the statistics of the pre-test in detail can be seen in table 2.

Tabel 2  
Statistics of Pre-test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental Class	21	45.2381	13.64516	2.97762

Table 2 described the position of the students' critical thinking before applying VLL strategy. It was 21 students did the pre-test and the average score fell in 45.23. In accordance with the minimum passing grade which had been settled by the school or government, such a score was still far from expectation. Due to such conditions, preparation of applying VLL strategy in the form of a lesson plan was provided for some meetings. Afterward, the pre-test was then distributed and the result of the statistics of the pre-test in detail can be seen in table 3.

Tabel 3  
Statistics of Post-test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental Class	21	78.0952	9.28388	2.02591

Table 3 showed that the students' critical thinking after giving treatment for some meetings reached 78.09 of the mean score. This mean score was higher than the score obtained before treatment. After having pre-test and post-test scores, the researchers continued to examine them using a t-test that could be seen in table 4.

Table 4  
T-test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Experimental Class	38.548	20	.000	78.09524	73.8693	82.3212

The result of the testing hypothesis showed 38.548 at the level of significant .000. It meant that Value Line Learning strategy toward EFL students' critical thinking.

## Discussion

This current research was intended to measure whether VLL Strategy is effective toward the students' critical thinking or not. In accordance with the result of the data analysis by which the t-test score was 38.548 at the level of significant 0.000, it meant that such a strategy was effective to be used in order to develop the students' critical thinking. Next, the t-test score was considered valid due to the researchers did the validity and reliability of the instrument before distribution. In addition, the application of VLL Strategy was well-prepared which was in the form of the lesson plan. In other words, the alternative hypothesis was accepted and the null hypothesis was rejected. Accordingly, it could be stated that the effectiveness of VLL strategy toward the students' critical thinking was in line with what had been found by Sudirman and Tawali (2022). Their research proved that using VLL Strategy could enhance their students' critical thinking when speaking was 80.86 and their writing score was 80.57.

The mean score and the value of the t-test obtained in this current proved the effectiveness of VLL Strategy could not be separated from the nuance created during its application. At the first step, the issues were attractive where the technology usage assisted and led the students to decide on the issue being dug up. Next, each of the groups with the help of the teacher verified the same opinions. At last, all groups took their position on the issue as well as drawing conclusions. Due to the created nuance at the first step, the students were led to make a decision dealing with the issue and move from one place to another place in finding references. Such condition seemed to let the students feel free and enjoyed the learning which in turn aroused the students' interest and motivation. All in all, joyful activities during the implementation of VLL was assumed no different from joyful learning created by the usage of the game as was found by Ariawan and Pratiwi (2017). They succeeded to improve the fourth-graders of elementary school in the context of reading comprehension. Bhakti et al. (2018) reported that the happiness learning model could develop the students' potency which in turn builds their mental, healthy, and pleasant surroundings.

In accordance with the limitation of this current study by which the researchers only focused on the students' critical thinking in the context of speaking and writing, they recommended to examine this current strategy to other variables but still in language skills.

## CONCLUSION

This current study examined the effectiveness of Value Line Learning (VLL) toward the students' critical thinking skills. In accordance with the result of the data analysis in which the mean score of critical thinking in the pre-test was 45.2381 and in the post-test was 78.0952. After conducting the t-test at the level significant of .000, it was found that the value of such a test was 38.548. It could be concluded that the null hypothesis was accepted and the

alternative hypothesis was rejected. In other words, the VLL Strategy was effective toward the students' critical thinking of MA Nurul Ulum.

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