



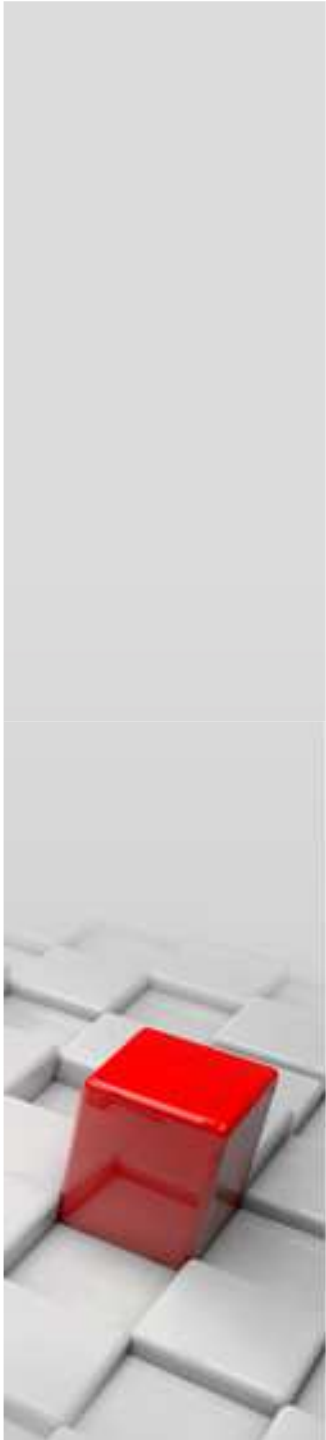
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# Primary School Teachers' Understanding of Critical Thinking in KSSR Classroom and Its Importance to Students

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# INTRODUCTION

- In the 21st century where information is easily accessible, critical thinking is needed to **select** important and appropriate information or knowledge to be practiced -what to believe and **how to use** the massive amount of information to **make informed decisions**.
- The change from the New Primary School Curriculum (Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Rendah) or KBSR to the new Primary School Standard Curriculum (Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah) or KSSR in 2011 beginning with the Year One students no longer emphasized the importance of knowledge only, but also on **developing higher order thinking skills**.
- KSSR - to restructure and improve the existing curriculum to ensure students are provided with the knowledge, skills and values that are relevant to meet current needs and challenges of the 21st century.



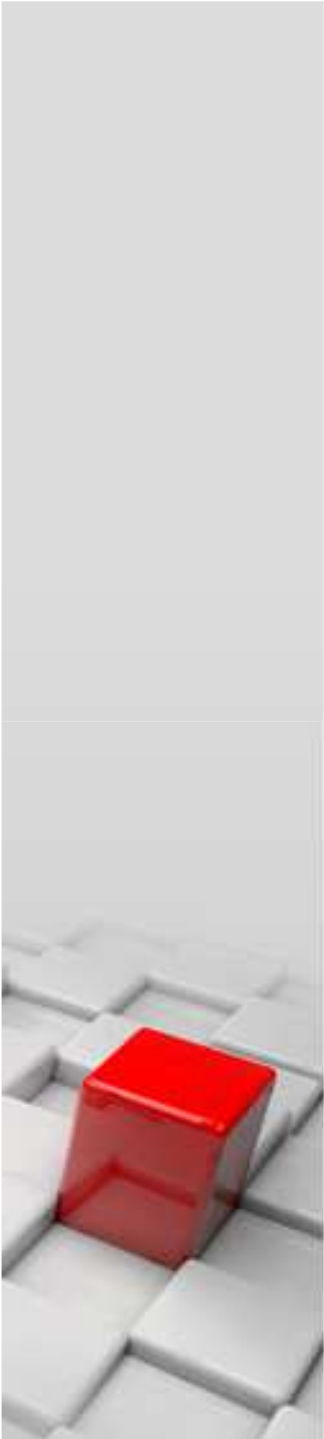
- Since critical thinking skills are crucial for students' cognitive development, and it was introduced in the new curriculum for primary students, it is important to prepare teachers with the knowledge, competency, and good attitude towards learning management with emphasis on critical thinking as well as self-development.
- Thus, teachers themselves should be first be equipped with the skills before they could teach students.
- Due to this development, various studies were found to suggest that critical thinking should be taught in classroom. **But none were found to study the understanding of teachers on critical thinking skills and its importance to students.**

## Research Objectives

1. Investigate the primary school teachers' understanding of critical thinking skills in KSSR classroom
2. Explore teachers' perception on the importance of critical thinking to students

# METHOD

- **Six teachers** with diverse academic background from a primary school in Gombak, Selangor were purposely selected for the study.
- **The interview** was done and probing questions were asked until saturation level was met.
- The data was recorded and transcribed.
- Data analysis was done through **coding method and themes** were emerged from data transcribed.



# FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

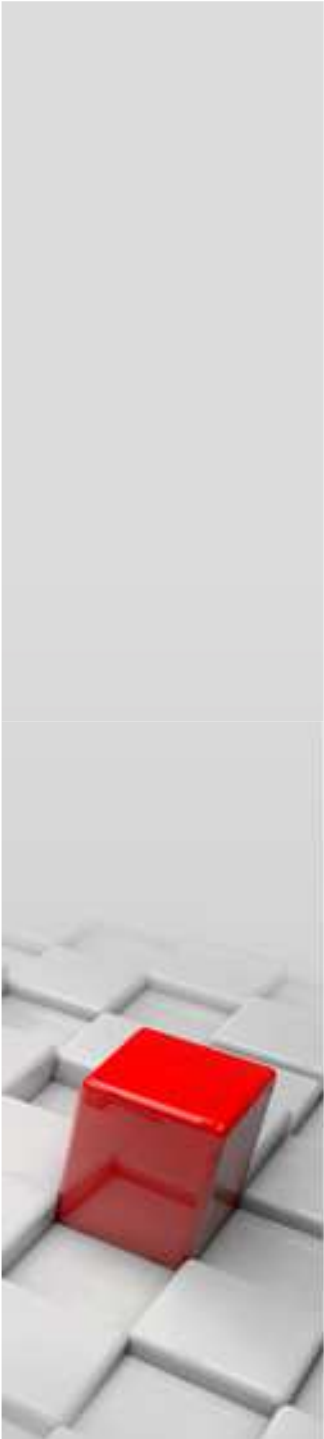
## RO1) Teachers' Understanding of Critical Thinking Skills in KSSR Classroom

### *a) Gather Information*

- The ability to gather information through **inquiry skills** enable them to be able to think critically.
- Teachers believed that the ability to seek information is another skill in critical thinking.
- This idea is consistent with Paul and Elder (2012) who state that critical thinking required students to gather and assess information.
- Facione (2000) also deems that being inquisitive and curious affects someone to value being well-informed and he or she advocates learning, and understand how to achieve something.

## ***b) Express thoughts***

- The ability to express thoughts - in the form of **giving suggestions** as well as presenting ideas as mentioned by the informants.
- Teachers also postulated that in the KSSR classrooms, students have the opportunity to speak and **communicate** their ideas through group discussions and group presentations.
- An informant who compared KSSR to the previous curriculum stated that even though the previous and the current curriculum are similar in terms of the formal teaching approach where teachers talk and write on the board, **KSSR has more than that**, it requires students to go to the front of the class and present their ideas



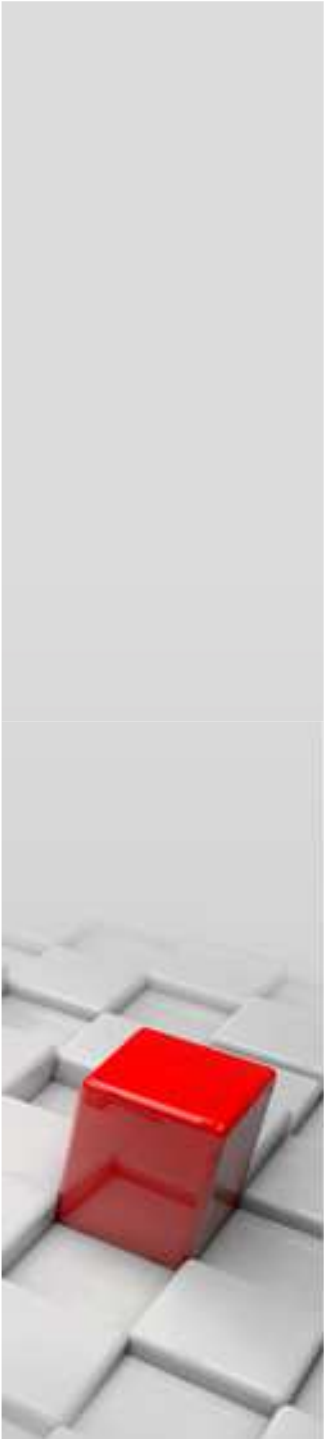
### ***c) Problem Solving.***

- The data also revealed that most of the teachers viewed one of the critical thinking skills is **problem-solving skill.**
- Through experiment, when students created hypotheses, they need to solve the problem in the experiment to prove whether or not their hypothesis was true.
- This is congruent with Halpern (2014) who defines critical thinking as a kind of thinking that involves problem solving.
- She found problem solving to be a 'hot' topic recently since the world is facing a lot of issues and problems. Thus it is crucial to equip students with problem solving skills and this is provided in KSSR.



## *d) Analysis*

- Informants believe that when a student is able to **analyze a situation**, or topic at hand, it shows that the student is thinking critically.
- This is evident when teachers reported that students need to analyze questions given by teachers in classroom, and then they need to solve the problems from the questions.
- This is compatible to Paul and Elder (2012) who revealed that critical thinking is “the art of analysing and evaluating with the view to improve it”.



## RO2) Teachers' Perception of the Importance of Critical Thinking Skills to Students

### *a) Application of Knowledge*

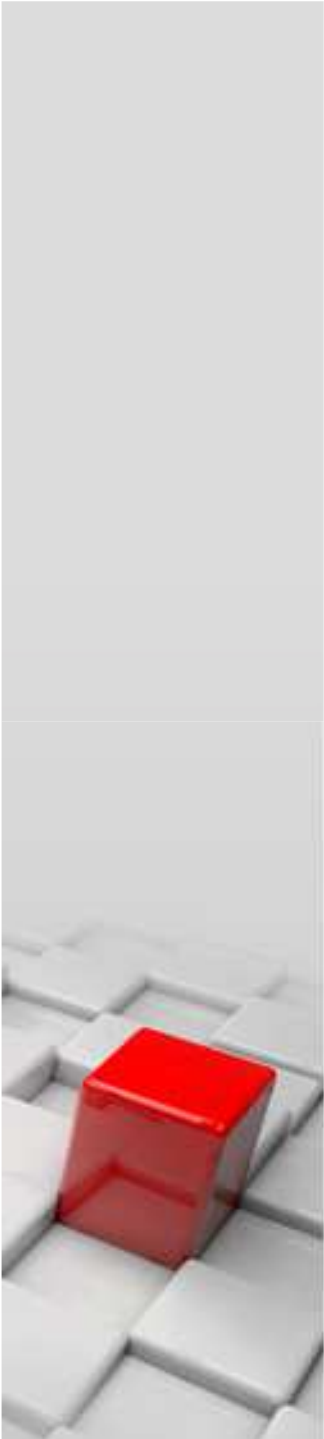
- Most of the informants reported that by having critical thinking skills, it enabled students to **apply their knowledge** in their everyday life as well as in future academic endeavors.
- Teachers also admitted that the skill of critical thinking can be applicable to university life as well as working lives of students.
- They need this skill to function well in the future whether in studying or in workplace.

### *b) Able to Make Decision*

- Besides the student's ability to apply knowledge to new situations, by promoting critical thinking skills in the curriculum, KSSR also helps students to be able to make decisions.
- Teachers believed when they have to create activities in classrooms, that enable students to **think and decide**.
- A teachers expressed that students needed to be selective especially when it comes to using technology

# CONCLUSION

- Findings suggested that teachers understand that critical thinking among students in KSSR classrooms involved the ability to gather information, to express thought, to solve problems, and to analyze.
- They also were found to view critical thinking skills as important since it enable student to apply knowledge and to make decision.
- The findings signify limited knowledge of teachers of critical thinking skills.
- Although they seem to have some ideas about the skills, the responses collected indicated that **lack of exposure to the skills itself** and they need to be trained well in order to define the concept better and to be able to relate to students' ability and achievement



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THANK

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