# THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY CRITICAL THINKING MODULE AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS IN ENHANCING HOTS AMONG ESL SCHOOL STUDENTS

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# SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY CRITICAL THINKING MODULE AND
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# ABSTRACT

This study aimed to develop and investigate the effectiveness of literary Critical Thinking Module (CTM) to enhance higher order thinking skills (HOTs) in the teaching of Literature. This study employed module development research design using both qualitative and quantitative approaches in collecting data. CTM was developed using ADDIE instructional design model. Test papers, classroom observation, field notes and interviews were used to measure the effectiveness of CTM in enhancing HOTs among ESL students. Nine subjects of different proficiency level and two teachers were involved in the study. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. After 18 weeks of using CTM in the literature classes, the subjects' answers for analysis, synthesis and evaluation questions contained HOTS' characteristics namely examining, explaining, inferring, categorizing, predicting, summarizing, creating, giving opinion, imagining and criticizing. From the classroom observation and field notes, the subjects were found to be engaged and participated actively throughout the 18 weeks of classes. The interview with the teachers revealed that CTM was adaptable, interesting and was capable of generating HOTs among the students. It can be concluded that CTM was able to develop students' analysis, synthesis and evaluation skills in learning literature. The implication of this study is that CTM can be used as an alternative tool to promote students' HOTs in their Literature classes.

# PEMBINAAN MODUL PEMIKIRAN KRITIKAL SASTERA DAN KEBERKESANAANNYA DALAM MENINGKATKAN KBAT DALAM KALANGAN PELAJAR BAHASA INGGERIS SEBAGAI BAHASA KEDUA DI SEKOLAH MENENGAH

## ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk membangun dan menguji keberkesanaan Modul Pemikiran Kritikal Sastera (CTM) dalam meningkatkan KBAT dalam pengajaran kesusasteraan Inggeris. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kajian pembangunan modul dengan mengaplikasikan kajian kualitatif dan kuantitatif sebagai pendekatan untuk mengumpulkan data. CTM telah dibangunkan menggunakan model kaedah instruksional ADDIE. Ujian, pemerhatian di dalam kelas, nota lapangan dan temu bual digunakan untuk mengukur keberkesanan CTM dalam meningkatkan KBAT dalam kalangan pelajar. Sembilan orang pelajar dengan pelbagai tahap kecekapan berbahasa dan dua orang guru telah terlibat dalam kajian ini. Data yang dikumpul dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan analisis kandungan. Selepas menggunakan CTM selama 18 minggu dalam kelas kesusasteraan, didapati jawapan bagi soalan analisis, sintesis dan penilaian mengandungi ciri-ciri KBAT iaitu menilai, menjelas, menyimpul, mengelas, meramal, meringkas, mencipta, memberi pendapat, memgambar and mengkritik. Daripada hasil pemerhatian di dalam kelas dan nota lapangan, pelajar didapati melibatkan diri secara aktif selama 18 minggu di dalam kelas. Temubual dengan guru menunjukkan CTM boleh diubahsuai, menarik serta mampu membentuk KBAT di kalangan pelajar. Dapat disimpulkan bahawa CTM berupaya membangunkan kemahiran analisis, sintesis dan penilaian dalam pembelajaran kesusasteraan Inggeris. Implikasi kajian ini menunjukkan CTM boleh digunakan sebagai alat bantu mengajar alternatif untuk meningkatkan kemahiran KBAT dalam kelas kesusasteraan Inggeris.

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| | |
|---|---|
| CCTS | Critical and Creative Thinking Skills |
| CRP | Class Reader Programme |
| CTM | Critical Thinking Module |
| HOTs | Higher Order Thinking Skills |
| KBSM | New Secondary School Curriculum |
| KSSM | New Primary School Curriculum |
| KSSM | Standard Based Curriculum for Secondary School |
| KSSR | Standard Based Curriculum for Primary School |
| LEP | Literature in English Programme |
| PISA | International Student Assessment |
| PPPM | Malaysian Education Blueprint |
| SBA | School Based Assessment |
| TIMSS | Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study |
| ULBS | School Based Oral Assessment |
| UPSR | Standard 6 Assessment |
| VLE | Virtual Learning Environment |
| ZPD | Zone of Proximal Development |

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.0　Introduction

This chapter focuses on several issues related to the research study. Background information such as the importance of HOTs, the implementation of HOTs in classrooms and how the students practice HOTs are used to contextualized the research problem. The development of the Critical Thinking Module (henceforth CTM), as a teaching tool to encourage HOTs in literature classes is also justified. The purpose, significance, limitations and research questions of the study are explained. Finally, the definitions of key terms used in the thesis are listed.

## 1.1    Background of the Study

The National Education Philosophy is the quintessence of education in Malaysia. It aims to produce holistic and integrated students by focusing on their intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical development (Ministry of Education, 2004). This is to enable Malaysia to grow and expand into a modern and progressive country with globally competitive human resources. With a good education system, Malaysia could be transformed into a country with prosperous and driven economy with united melting pot of people and world class education with brilliant minds.

Therefore, the students have to embody the 21$^{st}$ century characteristics. The 21$^{st}$ century entails for students who are multi-skilled, have good personal quality and have high content knowledge. These skills are called generic skills. Generic skills or also known as soft skills are non-technical knowledge. They can be categorized into personal attributes, interpersonal skills, problem solving skill and decision-making skills (Roselina, 2009 & Schulz, 2008). Malaysian Institute of Higher Learning lists seven essential soft skills that are valuable (Roselina, 2009). They are:

- communication skills

- critical thinking and problem-solving skills

- team work

- lifelong learning and information management skills

- entrepreneur skills

- ethics and professional moral

- leadership skill

However, despite the findings showing that students have good and high readiness for generic skills (Esa, Abdul Hadi & Mohd Salled, 2007), Malaysian 2015 statistics of unemployment rate soared to 10.7% which was more than three times higher than the national unemployment rate of 3.1% of the same year. Of the 273,373 graduates in 2015, 53% were reported to have started working, 18% chose to pursue further studies, and 24% of graduates were still unemployed (Dian Hikmah & Mohd Zaidi, 2016). This could be due to the lack of the generic skills (Mohd Zaki Kamsah, 2004).

This is said because it was found that students have average to below mean score for employability skills, thinking skills, resource management competence (Omar et. al., 2012; Bakar & Hanafi, 2007) but they scored high for personal quality (Omar et. al., 2012). It was also found that students who are technically proficient are dearth at communication and analytical skills (Roselina, 2009). The imbalance in the mastery of generic skills among the students is a disadvantage in the 21$^{st}$ century. This is because a research conducted by Stanford Research Institute and Carnegie Mello Foundation found that 75% of long-term job success depends on generic skills and only 25% on technical knowledge (Clement Hii, 2007).

A survey conducted by The Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) on ICT workers in 2004, showed that employees are not only weak in English, poor at solving problems but also do not perform well at work albeit good academic grades (Clement Hii, 2007). Consequently, they are perceived as unsuitable and unworthy to be employed (Morshidi Sirat et. al., 2008). This is worrying if Malaysia wants to be seen as a competitive country in the challenging and demanding world.

## 1.2      Statement of Problem

Among the paramount skills associated with the 21$^{st}$ century are critical thinking and problem solving, communication and collaboration as well as creativity and innovation (Thrilling & Fadel, 2009). Nevertheless, evidences show that young Malaysians are lagging behind compared to their other counterparts. This is proven through a study carried out on 846 Form 4 Science students of rural and urban area in Selangor. The findings showed that the students' critical thinking is at an average level (Nor Hasnida et. al., 2008). Another study carried out by Malaysian Technical Universities Network (MTUN) illustrated that although the students do exhibit some form of critical thinking but they have not reached the global standard of critical thinking warranted by Insight Assessment California (Aziz Yahya et. al., 2011).

There are a few reasons that contribute to this issue. The first reason that leads to this drawback is teacher-centered classroom practice. Many educators are in favour of teacher-centered teaching (Tan & Mohammad Yusof Arshad, 2011) as it helps to produce good and desirable results among the students (Toh, 2003). Consequently, the students become observers and listeners who enjoy the information delivered by the teachers instead of taking charge of their learning. It was also found that most students' innovative instinct lessens when they enroll (Mohamad Mohsin & Nasruddin Yunus, 2008) and they become very cautious. As a result, they rarely asked questions in class. Hence, students questioning is found to be at an average of 2.6 % (Zamri & Lim, 2011). This results in disengaged students, rote learning and lack of HOTs among the students. This is contrary to the aim of the education system which is to develop autonomous learners who are fully in-charged of their learning.

The students' belief and culture also play a factor in the lack of HOTs among Malaysian students. Learning styles are often culturally-based and students from different culture would therefore have different ways or patterns of learning, thinking and behavior (Eilisha, 2007). Values are seen as silent rules that do not have to be formally written yet understood and accepted in the society. It is quickly learned and passes from one person to another, from one generation to another either formally or informally. The value helps to bind and maintain some form of status, harmony in the circle to allow a harmonious existence among its members.

Researches showed that in the Asian society, asking a lot of questions and being inquisitive are not highly encouraged. They aim at maintaining a harmonious relationship whereby cooperation is key and competition is avoided (Merriam & Mohamad, 2000). Therefore, those who persist in asking a lot of questions and talk back or argue are viewed as being outspoken, rude and disrespectful of the elders. In traditional higher education settings, many students find themselves in a situation where independent thinking is not encouraged (Hooks, 2010). Thus, this results in the students being quiet and passive in the classrooms. On the contrary, the west value independence and competitiveness (Faizah, 2008) in addition to being autonomous, in control and productive (Merriam & Mohamad, 2000).

A similar situation can be seen in the Japanese community whereby Japanese students who attempt to answer or participate in the class learning process are considered as such imprudent and bold (McVeigh, 2002). The students are very worried of being labeled as a 'show off' and laughed if they give the wrong answers.

On the contrary, they are expected to accept their seniors and superiors' authority without questioning (Habsah, 2002).

Malaysian tertiary students are also found to be reserved in their opinion and thoughts (Fung Lan Yong, 2010). This makes engaging in class discussions, oral presentations and oral argumentations arduous to them. They students too find it difficult to give constructive arguments and interacting with their peers as open criticism is not a norm (Fung Lan Yong, 2010). This is further supported by Asma & Petersen (2003) who claimed that Malaysians are generally very indirect, circuitous and inexpressive.

As a result, some students become passive and become good at parroting the information given to them. Though they might be able to memorize a number of facts and theories yet they lack curiosity and are not able to apply the knowledge at higher levels. This is a situation faced not only by Malaysia but also by other countries too. For example, Japanese universities use lecture-based lessons whereby students depend heavily on the notes given and taken during lecture. During examination the Japanese students pour out what they have learnt and memorized to pass the tests (Potter, 1996 as cited in Richmond, 2007). While in Pakistan teaching relies very much on dictation and "examinations are tests of memory" (Hoodbhoy, 1998 in Richmond, 2007). This deters thinking skills and HOTs from taking place.

The pressure to excel in public examinations has shaped the students learning styles to copying and rereading notes, organizing information through concept mapping and remembering information using mnemonics and visual organizers (Alias

& Jamaludin, 2005). Teachers are their main reference especially when difficulty arises. Hence, they rarely self-correct and evaluate their learning strategies. They see their teachers as 'the know all' whose responsibility and main task is to transmit knowledge (Fung Lan Yong, 2010). This is different from their West counterparts who are intrinsically motivated.

For HOTs to take place there has to be an active interaction, communication and dialogues with everyone. This will help to broaden the students' minds, sharpen their thoughts and mature them. But most lessons are exam oriented and teacher centered. A research study conducted in 2011 showed that although there are quite a number of excellent teachers in the Malaysian education system yet only 50% of the lessons are delivered effectively. The remaining half of the lessons concentrate on teaching for surface level content understanding which are synonymous to being passive instead of promoting higher order thinking skills among the students (Ministry of Education, 2012).

Thus, this is the reason CTM is developed and proposed. CTM is presented in lesson plan format. This is to enable the teachers' understanding on how to use the proposed lesson plans and activities in CTM to embed HOTs in their Literature classes. Both the in-class and follow-up activities developed to minimize teacher-centered teaching. They are also to encourage the students to think, share, argue and defend their point of views. This will eventually develop the students into confident analytical individuals who are comfortable to voice their opinions and be heard. This is aided with the literary text that is chosen which offers familiar schemata, culture and background that the students can rely on. A text that is well comprehended,

activities that are engaging and positive class atmosphere could result in the development and enhancement of HOTs. It is hoped that as time evolve, this type of learning will become a way of learning hence producing students who inhibit the required 21$^{st}$ century skills. This study attempts to add to the knowledge of how the teachers can be guided to assist the students to activate their HOTs ability.

## 1.3 Relationship between Generic Skills, Higher Order Thinking and Critical Thinking.

Generic skills are known by many names. Sometimes they are referred to as soft skills, transferable skills, basic skills, core skills or key competencies. They can be categorized into personal, social, communication and self-management behavior (Klaus, 2007). Generic skills are the ability of the students to be self-aware, trustworthy, meticulous, adaptable, practice critical thinking, empathy, confidence, integrity, self-control, leadership, time management, possess good attitude, likeable, influential, riser taker and able to solve problems (Klaus, 2007).

Generic skills are transferable and measurable. The effect of the teaching of generic skills can be seen through the individual's behavior (Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 2011). 13 generic skills have been chosen to be implemented in Malaysian schools in the attempt to generate holistic Malaysian youngsters who are prepared to face the challenge of globalization. They are:

- social responsibilities
- appreciating nature skills

- ethical, moral and professionalism skills

- spiritual skills

- communication skills

- team work skills

- leadership skills

- critical thinking and problem-solving skills

- information and communication skills

- life-long learning skills

- globalization skills, entrepreneur skills

- management skills

While Smith & Bath (2006) divided them into the following sub- classes:

- basic skill

- personal and attribute skills

- skills in relation to the public

- conceptual skills

- entrepreneurship skill

- skills related to community

Employees who bring to their workplace good generic skills are seen as an asset as they are usually driven to perform well in their work field.

Critical thinking, on the other hand, is a subset of thinking skills. For individuals to be able to think critically, they have to be able to think on a higher level. Both HOTS and critical thinking are thinking strategies that are interrelated. They exist in a symbiosis relationship. One of the traits of generic skills as indicated by Roselina Shakir (2009) in Section 1.1 is critical thinking. Therefore, it can be concluded that HOTs are part of generic skills. For people to be able to possess good generic skills, they have to acquire good thinking skills in order to utilize their HOTs well.

## 1.4    Purpose of the Study

Many of the studies or journals written on literature are on teaching and learning preferences, perceptions towards learning literature and approaches used in teaching literature or the teaching of a particular subject by incorporating HOTs. Little attention has been placed on developing a teaching module in a form of lesson plans that practices 21$^{st}$ century learning styles which is differentiation teaching method to assist the teachers to teach HOTs in class in Literature classes. This is the focal point of this research.

CTM is prerequisite as HOTs is a skill needed in the 21$^{st}$ century. Countries around the world is emphasizing the development of HOTs in its education. Malaysia too has taken the initial steps to develop HOTs through Critical and Creative Thinking Skills (CCTS) programme. CCTS is integrated into the main stream teaching across various disciplines ever since the introduction of KBSR and KBSM. The objective is

to assist and guide the students to solve problems, make decisions and express themselves (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2003). However, many classes are still teacher-centered. That is why although CCTS has been in the system for a while. But its effect is yet to be seen.

The introduction of Penilaian Tingkatan 3(PT3), a standardized national exam for Form 3, to replace Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR), the former standardized national exam for Form 3 showed a huge difference in the students' achievement. PMR tested mostly on the students' content knowledge. PT3 consist of HOTs questions. This could be because of the new format and the questions that require the students to think on a higher level such as analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating as memorized answers are not relevant.

The CTM is developed with the following purposes:

1. **General purpose**

   a) develop a literary Critical Thinking Module (CTM) to help the ESL secondary school students to enhance their higher order thinking skills (HOTs).

2. **Specific purpose**

   a) develop a CTM that the English teachers can use in Literature class to enhance the students HOTs focusing on analysis, synthesis and evaluation skills.

   b) determine the effectiveness of the CTM on students' class engagement. The activities incorporated in the CTM focus on the students working together as a group whereby discussion, collaboration and cooperation are vital.

c) find out the English teachers' perceptions of CTM as a teaching tool to be used in the actual Literature classrooms.

## 1.5 Justification and Rationale for the Development of Critical Thinking Module (CTM) as a Teaching Tool

The development of CTM is seen as prerequisite because the 21st century emphasize on the importance of acquisition of English, development of soft skills and the ability to think on the higher level. This makes the teachers' roles and abilities to teach HOTs more important than ever. The teaching of HOTs requires the teachers to plan HOTs infused lessons and deliver them effectively. But not many teachers find this difficult (Shamilati, Wan Mazwati & Rahimah, 2017) as both the teachers and students have grown accustomed to rote learning throughout their schooling experience (Asgharheidari & Tahriri, 2015). In addition, teachers are found to lack knowledge, skills (Zulkarami, 2011) and practice in the teaching of HOTs (Sukiman et.al., 2013). They believe that they are teaching HOTs but instead they are introducing LOTs (Mohd Hizwan, Muhammad Shukri & Yusri, 2017). They utilize low order thinking questions and practice teacher-centered teaching that focus on memory-based learning. As a result, Sardareh et. al. (2014) indicated that inactive students get more passive when discussions and questions asked in class are mostly answered by a specific group of people or the teachers themselves.

Hence, the latest educational reforms through the Preliminary National Education Blueprint (2013-2025) proposed teaching of Literature Component at secondary school level. Literature Component is seen as a suitable tool and resource

to promote English language learning and development of HOTs among students. It could also contribute to their personal development, character building and widen their outlook of the world (Ganakumaran, 2003; Aziz & Nasharudin, 2010).

However, review of previous researches found that teachers tend to rely on conventional method in teaching literature such as asking students to copy down notes, merely giving explanation in the class and employing answering comprehension questions techniques. This results in not only dull, unencouraging and ineffective learning experiences but also underestimates the students' capacity to read, think and react to the text (Narasuman, 2006).

Past studies too described that students want interesting non-conventional activities. They consider worksheet and workbook exercises as unchallenging, boring and simple and a 'nightmare' (Gurnam Kaur Sidhu, 2003; Siti Norliana, 2008). When teachers engage the students in class discussion, role playing and other fun activities, they exhibit fun. They gain the opportunity to actively engage themselves with the texts, develop their critical and creative thinking skills and becomes motivated to learn Literature. They could learn something out of those activities which reflect the aspiration and the demands of the Literature component learning outcomes (Gurnam Kaur Sidhu, 2003; Narasuman, 2006).

In order to prepare for student-centered classroom accompanied with interesting and engaging activities, planning and preparing the lesson is key. Teachers play a crucial and dominant role (Huijie, 2012) in the process of teaching. Teachers function in disseminating knowledge to the students. Consequently, they are expected

to plan and prepare the lesson, choose the materials, systemize the teaching process and evaluate the students. This requires experience, creativity and support from the teachers to be opened to non-conventional paper and pencil or chalk and talk method. However, there are teachers who are unaware of the importance of spending time on careful preparation instead worked in a very mechanical and arbitrary way (Lin, 2011). In addition, there are inexperienced teachers (Yong, 2014) who need help to improve their teaching pedagogies to meet the students' needs and demands. This could be because many teachers do not receive enough training on integrating HOTs in their lessons (Siti, 2016).

This shows the need for a teaching tool in a form of a module which the English teachers can understand and use easily in class to develop HOTs in Literature classes. This is where the inspiration to develop CTM arises. CTM hopes to help the teachers to develop the students' HOTs via Literature classes and to ensure students' engagement in class. CTM also aspires to help the teachers with activities and ideas to be used in class to develop HOTs.

In developing CTM, a need analysis was carried out. This is prerequisite to guide the researcher to decide on essential elements to be included in the CTM such as the type of text to be used, the activities that students prefer or issues that might interest the students. This information is useful as CTM is developed for English teachers, regardless of age and experience, to use in Literature classes with intermediate students. It is a 5-lesson-plan-module complete with in-class and follow up activities which are designed for low intermediate, intermediate and high

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intermediate students to ease teachers' understanding in implementing each proposed lesson.

## 1.6 Research Objectives and Research Questions

Table 1.1

*Research Objectives and Research Questions*

| | Research Objectives | Research Questions |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | To analyze how the CTM as a teaching module enhance the students' ability to analyze, synthesize and evaluate a literary text. | To what extent does the CTM enhance the students' ability to analyze, synthesize and evaluate a literary text. |
| 2 | To analyze how far the CTM engages and promotes HOTs to the students via the proposed activities on the literary text. | To what extent do the proposed activities on the literary text keep the students' engaged and promote HOTs. |
| 3 | To find out the perceptions of the English teachers who are teaching Form 4 of CTM as a teaching tool in promoting HOTs in Literature classes. | How do the English teachers perceive CTM as a teaching tool to promote HOTs in their Literature classes? |

## 1.7 Significance of the Study

At present the generic skill that is of imperative is thinking ability. Thus, the lack of this skill itself is a strong reason why this research is necessary. Using the CTM, the students are exposed to various types of activities. These activities are students-based. Teachers play the role of facilitators and mediators. This enables the researcher to gauge what activity or instruction works and what does not and the possible reasons why things happen the way they do.

The research is also timely and relevant as currently schools and teachers are required to inculcate HOTs in their teaching. They are exposed to MAPPA 21, i-Think and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). This is because the end objective of today's education is to mould the students into thinkers. Hence, teachers have to quickly embrace these changes as lesson of the 21st century entails student-centered learning, collaborative learning, skill based, HOT practical, group based, community based, formative assessment and life-long learning.

All of these changes are necessary as many researches have proven the importance of HOTs in embracing the challenges and obstacles of the millennium. However, the wide range of teaching tools and changes introduce will be futile if the teachers are not guided on how utilize the different ideas and teaching tools to stimulate the students' HOTs. All of these will be in irrelevant if the students' response to the teaching tools are not analyzed. If HOTs are taught well, it could make Malaysia a highly industrialized and progressive country if not in the world but at least in the region.

CTM provides teachers with teaching materials that are adaptable and can be used with different proficiency level. This module aims to be used by either experiences, novice, teachers in the rural areas or even teachers who are keen on experimenting with new activities in their classrooms. The fact that the materials could be adapted and adopted is an advantage to teachers who have to deal with mix ability classes. In addition, the module is presented in a form of a lesson plan. This will help the teachers to carry out the proposed lesson easier. The step by step nature of the lesson is a format that the teachers are accustomed to. This is ease

understanding and execution of the proposed lessons. The activities that are of everyday nature can be used either in city schools that are equipped with facilities such as Language labs or even schools that are located in rural areas. Its contribution is what makes this research significant and worth undertaking.

CTM could ease the teaching of HOTs and demonstrate that the teaching of HOTs is not impossible despite the students' level of English proficiency. The description of the usage of the CTM could assist the educators and even the policy makers in incorporating HOTs in literature lessons thus developing thinking skills in effective and interesting manner. In addition, the result too could be used as a basis of introducing a HOTs course for not only in-service teachers, teacher training colleges, at tertiary level but most importantly for school students. The younger the students are introduced to HOTs, the more likely they are to be thinkers of higher level in the future.

The module's primary objective is to assist the students to think on a higher level and not merely focus on rote learning can be achieved. It is hoped that the activities proposed will be a stepping stone for the students to learn the skill to think on a higher level and view classroom participation and opinion giving in a different light. The aid provided is meant to inspire the teachers to continue to drive the students to think better using alternative methodologies and pedagogies.

Analysis of the collected data may enable Malaysian tertiary education bodies to better prepare their future graduates with greater competency in critical thinking, problem solving, and effective decision making. This may be accomplished by

assisting instructors to focus on thinking skills which are more valuable and challenging to students rather than fully concentrating on test-taking strategies (Lee & Wong, 2001). In addition, students could have the opportunity to incorporate higher level thinking with their English language learning which may aid their development as independent thinkers while enhancing basic language skills.

## 1.8    Definition of Terms

Below are the list and definition of the terms used in the thesis:

### 1.8.1    Higher Order Thinking (HOTs)

As used in the research, higher order thinking (HOTs) refers to a thinking process that goes beyond memorizing and recalling information. A student who practices HOTs is able to understand and infer from the facts, connect, categorize and manipulate them by putting the facts retrieved in a new way and apply them into a new situation or to solve a new problem. Bloom et. al. (1956) listed the following three skills as HOTs which are analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

### 1.8.2    Thinking Skills

In this research, thinking skills are mental processes or activities an individual student uses to solve problems, make decisions or process information (Purna Bahadur Kadel,

2014). Often time, thinking happens automatically but it could also be a conscious effort. For example; when a student is assigned to solve a certain problem.

### 1.8.3 Critical Thinking Module (CTM)

CTM is a module for English teachers who are teaching literature. The module is developed with a purpose to help teachers to infuse HOTs in the teaching through the medium of the literary texts assigned to the students. The module consists of a short story entitled *Mariah* by Che Husna Azhari and five lesson plans designed to teach plot, setting, themes, moral values and characters. CTM will also have in-class activities as well as follow up activities.

### 1.8.4 Literature Component

Literature component is a part of the Malaysian secondary schools' English syllabus. It is the study of literature focusing on small 'l' (Paramjit Kaur & Nooraida, 2014). The teaching and learning of Literature Component are divided into 3 genres. They are poems, short stories and novel. For the purpose of this study, the short story Mariah by Che Husna Azhari was used. Mariah is written by a local contemporary writer who discusses women's dilemma in being independent yet still stay true to their religion (Andrew Ng, 2009).

### 1.8.5    Generic Skills

Generic skills in this research refer to an individual student's personality, traits, social graces and communication ability (Sarita Rani, 2017). These skills cannot be developed overnight but it requires time and experience. For instance, collaborative skills, communicative skills and time management skills in carrying out classroom or group activities.

### 1.9    Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations in carrying out the study. The main limitation is the limited number of subjects. This research is making use of descriptive case study methodology. Therefore, the researcher limits her subject to nine students and two English teachers. According to Yin (2012), there is no suitable sample size with a case study as a case study requires exhaustive data collection and rigorous reading and interpretation of the data collected. Everything about the data has to be scrutinized so that no information is left out. As a case study has the ability to study a wide variety of evidence (Yin, 2009) therefore not many students can be the sample due to the time constraints of the research. Limiting the subjects to nine students and two English teachers help to make the amount of data collected manageable. Yin (2003) pointed out that an investigator who attempts to cover everything will soon find that they are trying to accomplish the impossible.

The subjects chosen for this case study are only from one school. As the data collected are very much confined to this specific group of students therefore the description of the teaching and learning of the module in the literature class cannot be generalized to students from other educational settings. The subjects chosen are nine Form Four students and two English teachers from an academic cluster school in Perak. Therefore, academic excellence is the priority for both the students and teachers. The Form Four subjects are chosen based on purposive sampling. The teachers are chosen because they are teaching the Form Four classes.

In addition, the subjects for this study are not randomly selected. They are chosen using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is used because the researcher is confident that it is the best way to find the answers to the research questions put forward. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to choose samples with specific attributes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) that is significant to the research. In Purposive sampling is also used after taking into consideration the students' availability and willingness to commit throughout the research period (Bernard, 2002). Though the samples chosen are not representative of the whole population but it is not a weakness. Instead, being able to hand-picked the samples helped the researcher to really find out the effects of the CTM on the students' HOTs. This is an advantage of purposive sampling.

Another limitation to the study is imbalance in the number of female to male subjects. The student-subjects consist of eight females and one male. They are Malays and have good to intermediate proficiency in the target language. The samples' mother tongue is Bahasa Melayu and English is their second language. The researcher

conducted the class herself since the teachers who are teaching English for the Form 4 classes refused to be video-taped and observed. However, to minimize personal interpretation and bias the test scripts were analyzed by the external examiners appointed. Though the essay tests are blind-scored and every class conducted is videoed but this may limit the understanding of the data to the researcher's own bias. The imbalance number of male-female students would not affect the result of the findings because the research questions do not look into gender differences. Both of the teacher-subjects are female. All of the English teachers who are teaching the Form Four classes are female. There is only one male English teacher and he is teaching Form 1.

The next limitation is the duration of the study. Due to time constraints, the study was only carried out for 18 weeks. However, the short duration of research is compensated by extensive instruction provided to the students. As the research is carried out by the researcher herself, the issue of biasness could occur. Therefore, to avoid biasness in handling the subjects of the case study, the researcher ensures that all of the subjects are allocated the same period of time exposed to the module, at the same length and depth and they are taught using the same literary materials.

## 1.10    Summary

Thinking skills can be divided into two main category which are creative thinking and critical thinking. HOTs are one of the sub-skills of critical thinking. For the purpose of this case study, HOTs which is considered imperative is looked into closely. It is

highly valued as it is one of the mechanisms currently in demand to ensure the country continues to be productive and competitive with the rest of the world. Its' importance is evident when each reform that take place in the education system in Malaysia emphasizes on the teaching and learning of HOTs either directly or indirectly. Realizing this fact therefore the research develops the CTM whereby HOTs skills is integrated in assisting the students to think on a higher level. The emphasize on HOTs does not mean that LOTs is irrelevant. Both HOTs and LOTs are needed and each play its own significant role in the thinking system. The following chapter will look into related literature pertaining to thinking skills, HOTs, the teaching of literature in Malaysia as well as other related factors.