

Thinking and Expression Skills Through Teaching Techniques

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Abstract

This study aims to examine teachers' perspectives on the possibility of developing students' thinking and expression skills through teaching techniques. The study adopts correlational research design. The study participants consisted of 412 primary school teachers. The chi-square test results show that there is a linear relationship between the study variables. The t-test results show higher values than the population value of averages. Also, the results of the teachers' perceptions of *interactive noting system for effective reading and thinking (INSERT)*, *SQ3R*, *roundtable*, *role play*, *think/pair/share*, and *brainstorming techniques* show the possibility of developing the student's thinking and expressing skills. This research offers a general alternative to improve students' thinking and expression skills through teaching techniques during classroom teaching process.

Keywords: *skill, thinking, expression, teaching techniques*

Introduction

The development of thinking and expressing skills heavily depends on practices and stimulating situations, in family, school, or society. In daily life, it is often said that individuals who read and watch movies have a broader vocabulary and knowledge, postulating that they have more developed skills to think and express themselves. This finding is in line with the study by Ekahitanond, (2011) claiming that watching movies improves thinking skills, and the study by Dickinson et al. (2012), emphasizing that the continuous reading books has the power to develop expression skills. Teaching techniques, in general, involve a wide range of actions in student learning process, which can be grouped into different aspects of the development of students' skills during the learning process. This study mainly focuses on developing students' skills to think and express themselves through teaching techniques. Goodman emphasized a vital role in improving

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thinking and expression skills (1990), in which the techniques of brainstorming, diagrams, and story maps were used with six students from II–VI classes during their learning process for a long time. After using the aforementioned techniques, the students learned to think more systematically by organizing and structuring their ideas in writing stories. The literature review identifies some actions of the teaching techniques that can develop students' skills to think and express, such as encouraging students to describe, communicate, read, discuss, explain, reflect, give ideas, opinions, argue, and write. Such actions have also been researched empirically based on teachers' perspectives.

Various studies in this field emphasized the role of teaching techniques in collecting ideas, organizing, arranging, and structuring them. One of the teaching techniques is brainstorming, which enables students to express their thoughts on a specific issue. The story map technique allows students to describe the story read or heard through illustration (Teaching and Learning Strategies, 2013). Another technique is the mind map, as a graphic organizer of ideas and thoughts, connections, ordering and summarizing their writing in general (Buzan & Abbott, 2012).

Literature Review

Thinking skills relate to how people understand the world surrounding them, including but not limited to problem-solving, reasoning, planning of actions, selection, and creation of new ideas. Development skills of thinking are on the theory of cognitivism, which considers students active creators of their knowledge and learning as a process of research to get the meaning out of those they interact with (Musai, 2014). The thinking skills include memory, forming concepts, planning, reasoning, imagining, problem-solving, decision-making, justification, description of thoughts in words, and so on (Cremin & Arthur, 2014). According to Metivier (2022), thinking types are distinguished from methods of thinking. Therefore, thinking methods stimulate different types of thinking. Writing, discussion, debate, mind mapping, and other methods improve thinking skills. These methods should be planned with certain topics to develop or improve thinking skills. Concrete thinking is the simplest form that primarily uses our perception, interpreting information absorbed by our senses to create thoughts (Kalive, n.d.). Abstract thinking refers to an individual's ability to form thoughts. Storytelling is an example of abstract thinking (Kalive, n.d.).

Reflective thinking is used when we try to solve complex problems. In reflective thinking, we reflect on and learn from past experiences (Kalive, n.d.). With reflective thinking, our thinking is deeply focused on something as a reaction to stimuli (Butterworth & Thwaites, 2013; Kaya, 2022). Critical thinking is the skill of thinking that originated from the old Greek word *kritikos*, which means capable of judging and distinguishing. The activities on which critical thinking is based are analysis, evaluation, and further argumentation. Analysis means identifying the main parts of a text. Evaluation indicates how successful the text is, while further argumentation is an explanation and justification for the text (Butterworth & Thwaites, 2013). Critical thinking involves the development of various auxiliary skills, such as observation, reasoning, decision-making, analysis, judgment, and persuasion (Polat, 2020; Tapung et al., 2018). It also includes distinguishing, comparing, and categorizing (Cottrell, 2005; Hanesova, 2014; Kaya, 2022). Divergent thinking emphasizes the quantity of thought, imagination while convergent thinking emphasizes the quality of thought and good judgment (Thinking Differently, 2007). Developing or improving thinking skills corresponds to developing expression skills, depending on the methods, techniques, and activities that encourage them. For example, students think about their actions and words with dramatization and role play techniques. In advance, the students read the text and design their dialogue and actions of the characters before performing the play (Zwiers, 2005).

Explanation is a thinking skill that shows why something is the way it is (Butterworth & Thwaites, 2013). Description is a thinking skill that is based on giving an account of how something is done or how something is (Cottrell, 2005). Argumentation is an assertion used to express certain types of reasoning. Thus, an argument is a conclusion derived from reasons or justified by certain reasons. Arguments are used to persuade others (Butterworth & Thwaites, 2013).

Expression encompasses a wide spectrum of an individual's ability to achieve goals. These skills should include communication, writing, and reading. Vocabulary is the set of keywords and expressions that help students organize and process basic knowledge and habits in schools (Zwiers, 2005). Skills of expression include communicating, writing, discussing, reflecting, and interpreting.

Communication is closely linked to the development of school vocabulary and necessary for constructivist learning. The constructivism method encourages social interaction and dialog during learning (Zwiers, 2005).

Communication involves a type of exchange between the speaker and listener to convey facts, opinions, and information through written words or signs. Two forms of communication are encountered in the educational process: verbal and written communication. Communication is one of the main habits that an individual should master; thus, in education systems, this habit is one of students' basic skills students should have (Musai, 2014).

Conversation, /communication, discussion, reflection, explanation, giving ideas and thoughts, description, argumentation, – all these actions of the teaching techniques describe different types of thinking, such as analytical thinking, creative thinking, critical thinking, concrete thinking, convergent thinking, and divergent thinking (Brownell & Rashid, 2020; Metivier, 2022; Palmer & Witanapatirana, 2020). Each technique develops the expression skill, the thinking skill, and vice-versa.

In developing students' thinking and expression skills, an important role have *dramatization* technique, *argumentative essay*, and *graphic organizers* that help to creating ideas, organizing information, creating connections between different pieces of information, creating connections with knowledge, and previous involvement in high-level thinking processes (Zwiers, 2005).

Writing is one of the most important forms of communication and a useful form of expressing feelings not easily expressed verbally. Critical thinking techniques may help students develop their writing skills. If students write essays or short reflective writings relaying what they learned, as they get older, they will develop more sophisticated writing skills (Colorado, n.d). According to the structure of the functions of some teaching techniques, the roundtable technique develops students' thinking skills, it is also recommended for the development of communication skills (Kagan, 2010). The application of the roundtable technique requires students to be divided into groups, each student writes an answer on their paper, then they pass the paper to their friend in a clockwise direction so that each student adds to the previous answer (Kagan, 2010). INSERT technique helps readers consciously interact with text to clarify their thinking (Anand & Hsu, 2020; Sriyati et al., 2019). Brainstorming is one of the most popular teaching techniques of idea generation (Crawford et al., 2005).

Group discussion helps students express their thoughts clearly, argue their opinions, and tolerate other views. Group discussion enables students to seek explanations, review their thoughts, pursue their interests, and take responsibility by assuming a leading role in the group. It also helps students evaluate ideas and synthesize personal views. Discussions are helpful when students try to

understand difficult concepts (Teaching and Learning Strategies, 2013). Students can understand the true meaning of messages by deliberating in groups, challenging each other, and evaluating possible explanations. Teachers ask questions, listen to students' answers, react, and probe students for more information. Students also ask questions, answer and react to each other's questions. Another technique that helps develop the skills of expression is *small group discussions* and *presentations*. Individual and group presentations are useful tools for learning important communication skills. Some students enjoy presentations, others may experience anxiety and fear (Teaching and Learning Strategies, 2013). Therefore, presentations will help students express their ideas and thoughts freely and make them more skillful at communicating, discussion, and interaction.

Socrates and Plato used discourse and reflection techniques to develop thinking (Hammond et al., 2001). "T, X, and Y Charts" are graphic organizers – a technique that allows students to recognize, understand, compare ideas, and information within (Teaching and Learning Strategies, 2013). "I feel, I think, I can" is a technique that also develops the skills of expression of students (Teaching and Learning Strategies, 2013).

In macro-aspect, interpretation is the skill of understanding the overall implicit meaning of a text. In micro-aspect, interpretation is the skill of decoding and using figurative language, including analogies, metaphors, comparisons, symbols, and multiple-meaning words. Techniques used to develop interpretation skills are using *images* – just like texts, pictures contain a lot of information. Images help students develop their interpreting and descriptive skills (Gollob, 2010).

This research aims to identify, from teachers' perspectives, the possibilities of developing students' thinking and expression skills through actions of teaching techniques in general during the student's learning process.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between the development of students' thinking and expression skills with actions of teaching techniques in the learning process?
2. How many opportunities do the INSERT, SQ3R, roundtable, role play, think/pair/share, and brainstorm techniques provide for developing students' thinking and expression skills in the learning process?

Research Hypotheses

H0- There is no relationship between the development of students' thinking and expression skills with the actions of teaching techniques.

HA- There is a linear relationship between the development of students' thinking and expression skills with the actions of teaching techniques.

Methodology**Research Design**

This study adopts the correlational research design. Correlational studies aim to explain the relationships between study variables (Creswell, 2009; 2012). In correlational studies, the variables (or datasets) fluctuate in the same direction, i. e., as one increases the other increases, or when one decreases the other decreases, there is said to be a positive relationship (Cohen et al., 2000; Fraenkel et al., 2012).

A linear relationship describes a positive linear relationship in which high scores of one variable are associated with high scores of the other variable. The degree of association indicates that the relationship between two variables has a correlation coefficient between -1.00 and +1.00. The coefficient value of 0.00 shows that there is no linear relationship (Creswell, 2012). In correlational studies, variables are not manipulated, they are only identified and examined (Cohen et al., 2018; Kumar, 2014).

Study Population and Sample

The research was conducted in the schools of some cities of Kosovo (Prishtina, Mitrovica, Gjilani, Ferizaj). The lottery method was used for the city selection. To fulfill the number of 30 schools, it was sufficient to include only the schools in four cities. The sample size selection was determined based on the 95% confidence level and 5% error probability. According to education statistics in Kosovo (2021/2022, 2022), there are 17,211 teachers. For 5% of the respondents, the sample should not be smaller than $N = 370$ teachers (Cohen et al., 2000). Considering the average number of teachers in an urban school with four parallels and five-grade levels with 20 teachers per school and other errors may appear during the research, it was necessary to include at least 30 schools. Of the 430 questionnaires distributed in schools, 412 questionnaires were collected despite

possible errors. Hence, the research sample consists of 412 primary school teachers from first to fifth grades. The study adopted a random sample method. In simple random sampling, each member of the population study has an equal chance of being selected, and the probability that a member of the population is selected is not affected by the selection of other members of the population (Cohen et al., 2018).

Research Instrument

The questionnaire contains demographic questions such as living location and study area. The instrument is based on a 5-point Likert scale: strongly disagree, disagree, 3-undecided, agree, and strongly agree. The questionnaire was divided into six sections. This paper summarizes the section on the development of students' skills to think and express themselves through teaching techniques. Reliability and validity analysis was used in this study.

Table 1

Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

Cronbach's alpha	No of items
.871	11

According to the alpha Cronbach model, the questionnaire has reasonable reliability for problem research, and its value is .871 out of 11 items. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used, and for the validity of the questionnaire, the value is $\alpha = .778$ and $p = .000$.

Data Collection

Data collection was performed over eight weeks. Questionnaires were distributed among schools in the first four weeks, and questionnaires were collected in the other four weeks. First, the school director and the teachers were informed about the purpose of the research and the anonymity of the questionnaire. After their approval, the questionnaires were left in the school, where the teachers completed the questionnaire in their spare time.

All teachers were informed that the completion of the questionnaire is on their own free will to fill out the questionnaire and have the right not to complete the questionnaire. All this information was given to teachers in the teachers' rooms of the respective schools, and then they completed

the questionnaire in their spare time. Thus, all the participating teachers were able to freely express their ideas without any pressure. After the questionnaires were collected, the data were coded and statistical analysis was performed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, Version 20).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, frequency, and percentage were used to describe the demographic data, while the mean and standard deviation, and t-test were used for the variables that show the actions of the teaching techniques. Standard deviation tells how much data is spread around the mean. The mean represents the data center point (Cohen et al., 2018). Chi-Square test was used to test the hypothesis, the linear relationship between the variables. The value of $p < 0.05$ verifies the linear relationship between the variables. To verify the actions of the teaching techniques one by one, the one-sample t-test was also used, by means of which it was determined whether the average was greater, smaller, or equal to the true average of the population (Agresti, 2007).

Study Findings

This section discusses the findings of the descriptive analysis, such as frequencies, averages, standard deviation, and hypothesis testing.

Table 2

Teachers by Cities

City	Frequency	Percent
Pristina	174	42.2
Gjilan	95	23.1
Mitrovica	75	18.2
Ferizaj	68	16.5
Total	412	100.0

Table 2 shows a total of 42.2% of the teachers participating in the research are from the schools of Prishtina, 23.1% of the teachers participating in the research are from schools in the city of Gjilan, 18.2% of the teachers participating in the research are from the schools of the city of Mitrovica and 16.5% of the teachers participating in the research are from schools in the city of Ferizaj.

Table 3*Teachers by Study Programs*

Program of studies	Frequency	Percent
Preschool	12	2.9
Pedagogy	41	10.0
Elementary	293	71.1
Other	56	13.6
Total	402	97.6

Table 3 shows that 2.9% of teachers completed the preschool program, 10% completed the pedagogy program, 71.1% of the participants have adequate preparation for the elementary program, and 13.6% of teachers graduated from other programs (Albanian language and literature, history, and music) but practice the teaching profession from first to fifth grade.

Table 4*Descriptive Statistics of Teaching Technique Actions and T-Test.*

Items	Mean	SD	T-test
TT develop students' thinking and expression skills	1.56	.693	16.237
TT encourage students to communicate, discuss	1.30	.518	11.634
TT encourage students to explain, interpret	1.35	.567	12.619
TT encourage students to give ideas, thoughts	1.33	.594	11.079
TT encourage students to reflect	1.43	.616	14.104
TT encourage students to argue	1.53	.661	16.056
TT encourage students to write	1.54	.649	16.894
TT encourage students to describe, demonstrate	1.46	.645	14.290
TT encourage students to read comprehensibly	1.47	.623	15.305

According to Table 4, the average and standard deviation do not differ considerably between the articles that show the teaching techniques' actions during the students' learning process regardless of the subjects. The t-test scores were found to be higher than the population's average and, thus, the hypothesis (H0) was rejected while the hypothesis (HA) was verified. The scores for the first article titled "Developing students' thinking and expression skills" are as follows: $M = 1.56$, $SD = .693$, and $t = 16.237$. The scores for the article titled "Encouraging students to communicate with each other, talk and discuss educational issues in the classroom" are as follows $M = 1.30$, $SD = .518$, and $t = 11.634$. The article titled "Encouraging students to explain, interpret, educational

topics" has the following scores: $M = 1.35$, $SD = .567$, and $t = 12.619$. The article "Encouraging students to give opinions/ideas in educational matters" has the following scores: $M = 1.33$, $SD = .594$, and $t = 11.079$. The article titled "Encouraging students to reflect on educational issues" has the following scores: $M = 1.43$, $SD = .616$, and $t = 14.104$. The scores for the article titled "Encouraging students to argue" are as follows: $M = 1.53$, $SD = .661$, and $t = 16.056$. The article titled "Encouraging students to write essays or free writing" has the following scores: $M = 1.54$, $SD = .649$, and $t = 16.894$. The article titled "Encouraging students to describe, demonstrate" has the following scores. $M = 1.46$, $SD = .645$, and $t = 14.290$. The scores for the article titled "Encouraging students for reading comprehension" has the following scores: $M = 1.47$, $SD = .623$, and $t = 15.305$.

Table 5

Relationship of Developing Students' Thinking and Expression Skills with Others' Actions of Teaching Techniques

Item	χ^2	p- value	r- value
TT encourage students to communicate, discuss	9,014	.000	.150
TT encourage students to explain, interpret	16,516	.000	.203
TT encourage students to give ideas, thoughts	30,375	.000	.276
TT encourage students to reflect	37,748	.000	.308
TT encourage students to argue	112,949	.000	.533
TT encourage students to write	84,325	.000	.461
TT encourage students to describe, demonstrate	75.927	.000	.437
TT encourage students to read comprehensibly	101,191	.000	.506

Table 5 shows a positive linear relationship between the possibility of teaching techniques in the development of students' skills to think and express themselves with other teaching techniques, which also proves the alternative hypothesis. In the first article, "Encouraging students to communicate with each other, talk and discuss educational issues in class," the value of $\chi^2 = 9.014$ is significant $p = .000$ and $r = .150$. The second article shown in the table titled "Encouraging students to explain, interpret educational topics" has the following scores: $\chi^2 = 16,516$, $p = .000$, and $r = .203$. The third article titled "Encouraging students to give opinions/ideas in educational matters" has the following values: $\chi^2 = 30,375$, $p = .000$, and $r = .276$. The scores of the fourth article titled "Encouraging students to reflect on educational matters" are as follows: $\chi^2 = 37,748$,

$p = .000$, and $r = .308$. The fifth article titled "Encouraging students to argue" has the following scores: $\chi^2 = 112,949$, $p = .000$, and $r = .533$. The sixth article titled "Encouraging students to write essays or free writing" has the following scores: $\chi^2 = 84.325$, $p = .000$, $r = .461$. In the seventh article titled "Encouraging students to describe, demonstrate," the scores are as follows: $\chi^2 = 75.927$, $p = .000$, and $r = .437$. The eighth article titled "Encouraging students to read comprehensibly" has the following scores: $\chi^2 = 101,191$, $p = .000$, and $r = .506$.

Table 6

Perceptions of Teachers' Experiences of Some Teaching Techniques that Develop Thinking and Expression Skills at the Same Time During the Learning Process

Technique	Yes	No	Missing
Roundtable	244	-	168
INSERT	260	-	152
SQ3R	215	-	197
Brainstorming	257	-	155
Think/pair /share	271	-	141
Role play	279	-	133

Of the 412 participants, 244 teachers claimed that the roundtable technique develops students' expression and thinking skills and 168 answers were missing. For the INSERT technique 260 positive answers and 152 were missing. For the SQ3R technique, 215 positive answers and 197 answers were missing. For the Brainstorming technique, 257 positive answers and 155 answers were missing. For the think/pair/share technique, 271 positive answers and 141 answers were missing. For role play technique, 279 positive answers and 133 answers were missing.

Discussion

The study findings reveal that there is a possibility of developing students' thinking and expression skills through teaching techniques. The study findings verify the actions of teaching techniques in general during the teaching process, such as encouraging students to communicate, discuss and debate, encouraging students to explain and interpret an event, encouraging students to give ideas, opinions for educational matters, encouraging students to reflect, encouraging students to argue, encouraging students to write essays or free writing, encouraging students to describe and demonstrate a drawing, an event and encouraging students to reading comprehension. Based on

these findings, H₀ was failed to be verified while H_A, determining the linear relationship between the variables was confirmed. These findings are similar to the those of other studies, which differently report the actions of teaching techniques as the possibility of developing students' thinking and expressing skills.

Goodman (1990) claimed that the application of the brainstorming technique, diagrams, and story maps during the learning process improved the students' thinking and expression skills. Abdikarimova et al. (2021) reported that student expression skills improve through questioning, conversation, communication, reflection, and presentation. Based on teachers' perspectives on the teaching techniques, such as roundtable, INSERT, SQ3R, brainstorming, think/pair/share and dramatization, we can point out that the application of these techniques during the teaching process can develop students' of thinking and self- expression skills. According to Marbun and Ernidawati (2015), the *INSERT* technique affected students' achievement in reading comprehension, which means that the two skills interact. Parmawati et al. (2020) reported that the students' expression improved continuously after applying the roundtable technique. Ernawati (2014) showed that using the brainstorming technique during the learning process impacted students' achievement in writing narrative paragraphs. Research by Sieck (2021) shows that the SQ3R technique helps in understanding the read information. Sapsuha and Bugis (2013) showed that applying the *think/pair/share* technique has improved students' comprehensible reading.

This research, based on teachers' opinions, generally provides an overview of the actions of teaching techniques during the teaching process as the possibility of developing students' skills to think and express themselves. However, further research is needed to identify all the actions of the teaching techniques in detail.

Conclusion

Based on the study findings, we can conclude that the research discovered and verified the action of teaching techniques as the special possibility to develop students' thinking and self-expression skills. We can also conclude that the research proved that *INSERT*, *SQ3R*, *roundtable*, *role play*, *think/pair/share*, and *brainstorming*, techniques contribute to the development of students' thinking and self-expression skills in the educational process.

Limitations and Future Research

This research has some limitations that can be addressed in future research. First, it is limited only to the actions of teaching techniques as the possibility of developing students' thinking and self-expression skills. Future research can also identify other actions of teaching techniques. Second, this research solely examined teachers' experiences. Further research can also examine students' experiences. The third research generalizes teaching techniques.

Further research may identify specific teaching techniques and delve deeper into their actions. Finally, the research uses the quantitative method to identify the actions of teaching techniques. Future research may also use the qualitative method to describe a particular technique's actions in detail.

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