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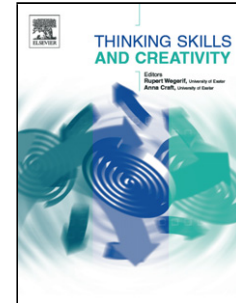
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Authors: Elcin Petek, Hasan Bedir

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## **An Adaptable Teacher Education Framework for Critical Thinking in Language Teaching**

**Elcin PETEK<sup>a\*</sup>**

<sup>a</sup>School of Foreign Languages, Cukurova University, Adana, Turkey

**Hasan BEDIR<sup>b</sup>**

<sup>b</sup>Faculty of Education, ELT Department, Cukurova University, Adana, Turkey

\*Corresponding author.

E-mail address: petekelcin@gmail.com (Elcin Petek)

### **Complete Address:**

Çukurova University, School of Foreign Languages, 01330, Balcalı, Adana, Turkey.

### **ABSTRACT**

Cultivating a culture of higher-order thinking has been one of the desired outcomes in the field of education for many decades. However, the devastating spread of information due to advanced digital technologies has brought critical thinking (hereafter CT) as a higher-order thinking skill to the fore recently. Like in other fields, the prominence of fostering this skill is acknowledged in English Language Teaching as well. On the other hand, to what extent prospective English teachers, who are the future gatekeepers in facilitating learners' thinking skills, are aware of the ways they could merge critical thinking with their teaching and how much they could transfer such awareness into practice if trained on the issue remains to be scarcely researched. Thus, the present study comprising of an action research design investigated the impact of a 14 week action plan implementation on 8 pre-service English teachers' awareness and teaching practices regarding the integration of critical thinking into language teaching. Data collection involved the use of CT tasks, semi-structured interviews, lesson plans, video-recorded macro teachings, and self-reflection journals of the participants. Both quantitative analysis in the form of descriptive statistics and qualitative analysis in the form of content analysis were performed to scrutinize the results. The findings indicated gradual perceptual improvement about the concept and how to integrate it into language teaching. This was also reflected in teaching practices of the participants thanks to sufficient and appropriate guidance despite some reported external and internal obstacles.

**Keywords:** Critical thinking; Pre-service teacher education; Action research; Language Teaching; 21st century learning skills

### **1. Introduction**

The new era of technology has brought with it many extraordinary challenges to humanity, such as security problems, global and cultural conflicts, preservation of natural environments due to diminishing energy resources, and maintenance of employment, education, and health care opportunities. To handle these interrelated problems and adapt to

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