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# Investigating the Integration of Critical Thinking in EFL Literature Classes at University level

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**Abstract**

It has long been acknowledged that to prepare the students effectively to the needs of global communication and professional world, it is highly important to integrate 21st-century skills into teaching of EFL. This research study aims to investigate the integration of the 4Cs including critical thinking skill, as a 21<sup>st</sup> century language education skill, to literary classes at the University of Duhok, Newroz and Zakho university. It also aims to determine the challenges EFL literature teachers encounter in respect to the incorporation of critical thinking skill in EFL literature classes. The study employed explanatory sequential mixed-methods design combining both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was given to 26 Kurdish EFL literature teachers including a structured interview addressed to 10 EFL literature teachers. The obtained data were analyzed by using SPSS version 27 software to measure their Frequency (Fr.), percentage (%), Mean (M), Standard deviation (SD) and T-test. The findings provided evidence the participants are aware of the 4Cs including critical thinking skills; however, they encountered a number of challenges in which hinder the incorporation of critical thinking in their classes. These insights emphasizes that specific professional development is necessary to assist the instructors in the process of incorporating higher-order thinking strategies in teaching of literature that would align better with literature teaching requirement to keep pace with the imperative of learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> -century.



**About the Journal**

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## 1. Introduction

Even though there are many studies investigating the impact of critical thinking on education (Rezaei et al., 2011; Elder, 2022; Stevkevaska et al., 2022; Kodama, 2023; Mukhamedov and Doniyorova, 2025 among others) not all college students can analyze an issue and share sensible ideas to support their case. Turouskaya and Turouskaya (2001) argued that developing important thinking skills is necessary for students who want to perform well at school and at their future jobs. Teaching and training students the art of CT will help them to be good learners and adjust to the requirements of their future career. The question remains whether the university education is truly preparing students to be critical thinkers. As early as 1956, Bloom et al. (1956) pointed out that critical thinking (CT) skills such as comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation are the key areas of learning and significant for learners. CT skills help students improve the way they think from surface thinking to more challenging concepts (Bloom et al., 1956). Facione (1990) argued getting students to think critically about an issue should be the main goal of teaching CT. CT teaching looks to enhance in students the cognitive and emotional qualities, which are essential for being a good learner and critical thinker. In addition, students who learn languages can sharpen their CT with the help of literature. Literature is able to impact how students view the world. The process helps students understand their lives, learning, and language. It gives learners an opportunity to look at things differently by questioning, analyzing, connecting, and discovering. Integrating CT in teaching EFL literature at today's universities is necessary. There is, for example, a lot of analysis present in literary texts and materials (Khatib et al., 2011). CT helps students learn how to tell when something has a hidden meaning rather than believing everything without questioning it (Graham et al., 2020). Literature lessons in English as a foreign language course should help students to make choices, combine information, organize knowledge, analyze details, look ahead, and utilize what they have acquired, so instructors are responsible for helping students develop these skills (Kaya, 2014).

### 1.1 Problem of the Study

Although there is an increased awareness of the necessity to incorporate 21<sup>st</sup>-century education skills, most teachers who already have a lot of obligations on their hands find it difficult to find out and apply these new skills in their respective classrooms. The Integration of CT is a specific challenge, and in particular, in the English language teaching. The researchers think there is a gap concerning the integration of CT skills in EFL literature classes at the departments of English under study. Accordingly, this research seeks to fill this gap by conducting research on the level at which the CT skill is being incorporated currently, the challenges encountered by the educators/teachers and the effects on the learning outcomes of the students.

### 1.2 Aims of the Study

This study aims to investigate the integration of CT skill, as a 21<sup>st</sup> century language education skill, in EFL literature classes at University of Duhok (UoD), Zakho University, and Newroz University, Kurdistan Region of Iraq. It also aims to determine the challenges EFL literature teachers encounter in respect to the incorporation of CT skill in EFL literature classes at university level.

### 1.3 Research Questions

The purpose of this paper is to find answers to the following questions:

1. Are EFL literature teachers aware of the 21<sup>st</sup> century 4Cs foreign language skills including CT?
2. Do teachers integrate CT in their EFL literature classes?
3. What challenges do EFL literature teachers face in integrating CT skills in their classes?

### 1.4 Significance of the Study

This research is likely to be of interest to EFL learners, EFL Literature teachers, applied linguists as well as syllabus designers. In the case of EFL learners, learning the 21<sup>st</sup> century foreign language education skills, which incorporate CT skills, help students both in their school and future lives. CT

helps students explore horizons and enhance their academic achievement (Shirkhani and Fahim, 2011). It also turns them into trained, critical thinkers, and self-regulated graduates who become life-long learners and are capable of competing worldwide. As for EFL literature teachers, they will have more insights on how to integrate CT into their lessons as this study will provide useful activities on developing CT skills. The study would also be useful to applied linguists who will have insights on how CT skills are required through language learning, and how learning a language is acquired through developing learners' CT. Moreover, this research is of significance to curriculum and syllabus developers because it will make them aware of the importance of considering CT as one of the 21<sup>st</sup> -century language education skills in their curriculum and syllabuses at the various levels of education.

## **2. Literature Review and Previous Studies**

### **2.1 Literature Review**

#### **2.1.1 CT: Definition**

CT has been regarded as one of the major thinking processes in modern educational systems (Shirkhani and Fahim, 2011; Magner et al., 2016; Azizi et al., 2022; Mukhamedov and Doniyorova, 2025). The definitions of critical thinking are many due to the fact that the skill may represent one thing to one group of individuals because it is a matter of perspective (Stevkovska et al., 2022). It could be defined as the capability of applying a higher-level thinking process in seeking meaning in an action or even the type of thinking that requires ask questions, doubt, compare and contrast, and make judgments (Stevkovska et al., 2022). Elder (2022, p. 4) defined CT as the “*intellectual and active process of successfully conceiving, applying, analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating knowledge acquired through experience, reflection, communication or observation, as a foundation of belief and action*”. In its optimal form it is grounded upon universal intellectual values that transcend disciplinary interests: clarity, correctness, precision, consistency, relevance, solid evidence, clear reasoning, depth, breadth, and justice.

In addition, St. Petersburg College (SPC) Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) aims at improving student learning through the development of CT skills. According to the Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC) of the same college, CT is a process that involves communication, problem-solving, evaluation, analysis, synthesis, and reflection individually and within communities to help facilitate an understanding, decision-making, and taking actions (2017), which this paper adopts.

#### **2.1.2 The Importance of CT in EFL context**

Being one of the most important components of education in the contemporary era, teaching students to think critically has been actively incorporated by researchers (Bloom et al., 1956; Rezaei et al., 2011; Magner et al., 2016; Elder, 2022; Stevkevaska et al., 2022; Mukhamedov and Doniyorova, 2025 among others), and has currently become a predominant area of study within the educational context in most educational institutions worldwide. Shirkhani and Fahim (2011) gave several reasons why the incorporation of lessons with CT in EFL programs is significant. First, an advantage of self-directed learning is that students evaluate their progress and enhance it. Second, CT skills explore the horizons of students and offer students a better understanding of the language being learned. Thirdly, academic achievement is highly connected with the students' CT skills.

Besides, the development of the foreign language learning and the teaching of higher-order thinking skills should not be separated; these two processes are inseparable. The success of teaching CT skills in combination with the foreign language, and language teachers has emphasized the importance of the approach to the training of higher-order thinking skills at the language lesson (Shirkhani and Fahim, 2011). Ultimately, Erdoğan (2019) contended that effective EFL class would not be successful unless instructors included practices, activities, and procedures that are interesting and thought-provoking to make learners do more than expressing themselves. The opportunities advanced by the 21st century education movement should therefore be looked critically by the teachers with the aim of improving their own teaching process and curriculum delivery strategies.

Furthermore, Lai (2011) postulated that one of the tools that instructors can use in order to stimulate CT is a constructivist pedagogical practice defined by being more student-centered than teacher-

centered. Constructivist education is less prescriptive than the traditional approach to education in that it gives regard to student agency rather than focusing on instructor as a knowledge broker (Lai, 2011). Teachers have to incorporate CT in their classes by presenting the way of thinking critically to students through demonstrations in their lessons and using an explanation of their reasoning behind such a practice. This can be achieved by making the instructor to think aloud as the students observe. This will enable students to observe the manner through which the instructor applies argument and facts to support his or her assertions (Lai, 2011).

Moreover, Mukhamedov and Doniyorova (2025) have recorded positive findings in the development of students' achievement in terms of their cognitive skills and their language competence where CT has been applied in the communicative language teaching approach. Educators observed that the ability of students to use language became high when they were requested to analyze, synthesize and evaluate contents (Zakaria et al., 2025). Consequently, the process of the development of CT and communicative competence can be viewed as quite systematic using Bloom taxonomy and cognitive engagement (Mukhamedov and Doniyorova, 2025). Also, the student-centered approach to teaching foreign language including literature offers possibilities of self-directed learning, promote knowledge construction, which are CT skills. (Hamdameen, 2025). Teachers can encourage their students to leave the mechanical performance stage to the reflective performance stage by providing assignments that fit both cognitive complexity (analysis, synthesis, and assessment) and competency levels (Mukhamedov and Doniyorova, 2025).

### **2.1.3 The Integration of CT in EFL Literature Classes**

To reiterate, the essential parts of CT are explanation, self-regulation, interpretation as well as inference. However, individuals whose skills in CT are still weak or immature are not expected to perform excellently in any of these thinking activities. Due to this reason, it is apparent that the area of CT has to be an element of the English language teaching (Saleh, 2019). Literature is quite effective in assisting language learners to enhance their CT. Literature can change the outlook of the students. Literary texts allow students to reflect about their life, their learning and language. It can make learners open their minds to new horizons by being able to question, analyze, find relations and explore, and the richness of the analysis content can be found in the instances of literature texts (Khatib et al., 2011).

According to Graham et al. (2020), through reading critically, it is possible that learners can start to challenge their own biases and to see the world differently, which can contribute to a more sophisticated approach to such social justice issues as religion and racism. Due to the fact that students can always draw some conclusions about the accompanying artwork along with paying critical attention to the text, it can develop a distinct environment of CT. Literature is useful in CT because of some reasons. Firstly, reading literature is a challenging experience in which a reader calls back to his/her previous experience and contemplates it to interpret the text. According to Tung and Chang (2009), readers participate in a number of mental actions or operations, such as explanation, analysis, synthesis, argumentation, interpretation, assessment, problem-solving, inference, logical reasoning, and application. Secondly, the subject matter and language in literary works give the reader real world settings to form meanings of self and existence (Graham et al., 2020).

Literature is a great tool for helping language students develops their critical thinking skills in novel classes since it has the power to influence students' perspectives. Students are able to contemplate their life, their learning, and language via this process. It has the potential to open learners' minds to new possibilities, letting them question, analyze, make connections, and explore. The abundance of analysis content exists throughout literature texts and other literary (Khatib et al., 2011). Tung and Chang (2009) postulated a work of literature recreates the world and is an expression of life. For example, in novels, with the development of the plot, themes and the relationship between characters readers can receive different perspectives and are urged to reviewing their ideas and actions once again. Good literary work not only enables readers to overcome the problems, develop CT skills, but also provokes them to improve and become better people (Tung and Chang, 2009).

Transferring this experience in the other areas of training is beneficial to promote self-direction, open-mindedness, self-confidence, cautiousness, and the idea of seeking the truth which are traits essential in CT (Tung and Chang, 2009).

Mohammed and Jasim (2024) pointed out that literature offers EFL teachers an abundance of different materials to present to the learners in order to encourage them to engage in language use. Poetry and short stories are some of the valuable materials when the matter concerns the enhancement of language learning experiences. Although each of these genres has individual advantages, it is important to combine them in order to master analytical skills, develop cultural awareness, and perfect linguistic skills. Mohammed and Jasim (2024) added, poetry, for example, presents special access to language learners. It is a good teaching tool based on a context setting approach, content, originality and language. Students get two advantages out of working in poetry. First, they dwell on the emotions, the mind, and perspectives of the author that influenced the poetry. Second, word meaning analysis in poetry enhances the acquisition of critical skills, and increases language affiliation. On the other hand, drama includes the reading of scenes or dialogue or other literary elements performed by students. Drama cannot be described as a simple thing that one reads as it is a chance to train public speaking and listening. The structure of a play is a set of quotations describing what the characters do and speak. In order to understand the meaning of the story of a play, students will have to rely on their thinking skills to directly correlate the story as well as implicitly connect and analyze it, and arrive at a conclusion (Kadek and Syamsi, 2023).

Teaching literature along with Critical Literary Approach enables CT in EFL literature classes. Stefanova et al. (2017) clarified that the supporters of CT as a teaching subject among EFL students focus on the interconnection between language and social transformations. The development of CT skills is usually perceived as an ideological construction. The critical literacy approach is based on socio-cultural language teaching where students learn to read reflectively and actively so as to provide a clearer understanding of the concepts of social injustice and inequality. It also accords importance to problem posing instruction to absorb the concept of CT in students. Saleh (2019) noted that effective teaching strategies to induce CT in EFL setting could be demonstrated by adopting a critical approach; some of the ways of doing this is to adopt methods of explicit instructions as well as by the use of questioning and active collaborative group learning methods through the use of group discussions, debates, and reciprocal inquiry among peers.

To teach Literature to EFL learners, CT is needed in the classroom that can be done by means of constructed activities. The following table summarizes some of the activities, adopted from Davies (1990); Lazar (1993); Furr (2004); Yadav (2014); Anuradha and Pushkala (2020), EFL literature teachers can make use of to develop their learners' CT skills:

**Table 1.**

*Communicative activities on CT adopted from Davies (1990); (Lazar, 1993); Furr (2004); Yadav (2014); Anuradha and Pushkala, 2020)*

NO.	Activity	Description
1.	<b>Literature Circle</b>	Students discuss the reading of a book, a short story, a play or a poem. The instructor or students can form groups. Every group would be receiving a literary text. Students can of course do a group project immediately after reading the book. The tasks that are assigned to students include leading a group discussion, summarizing, relating an idea to another, learning vocabulary and playing a role in a passage.
2.	<b>Fly with an Exit Slip</b>	Exit slips are sheets which contain prompts to acquire information on how students perceive a particular subject that will be shared with students. Students have an opportunity to reflect on what they have learnt and

		record their thinking. The teacher collects the Exit Slips of his or her students at the end of the lesson. As an example: Students shall read a short story and write on the themes of the story.
3.	<b>Mixed Text</b>	It is a type of jigsaw activity in which various objects are combined into a single task. A short literary work will be read out to the entire group of students by the instructor. The teacher divides the story into two different parts and gives each part to one group. One group is assigned the task of drawing based on the first half of the story and drawing the last section of the story is assigned to the other group. After completing their drawing, they then retell the story using their paintings.
4.	<b>Introduce the Literary Work</b>	The teacher assigns literary works to groups of students. Students working in groups come up with a number of interpretations until they find the one that fits. The groups may report their findings to other groups or the class altogether. Then, students present their solutions to the whole class.
5.	<b>Making posters</b>	This activity can be used in poetry lesson. Taking Blakes poem "London" as an example. Teachers will provide students with posters to record their ideas in groups and ask them to identify all reasons why people from village move to cities according to the poem. After finishing, they can compare their posters to others and debate their views. This technique in a poetry class allows students to critically analyze the poem and gain insights beyond reading.

## 2.2 Previous Studies

Le (2023) wrote a paper entitled “The Application of Critical Thinking to Short Story Analysis: An Experiment on a New Teaching Process” investigating a practical approach of integrating CT in EFL literature classes at Nong Lam university in China. The study utilized a qualitative approach to discuss the influence of the R.A.I.S.E- U.P (Read, Ask, Infer, Search, Expand, Unite, and Personalize) method on students’ CT in short stories. The researcher included 35 English majors, and used interviews and content analysis to know the effect of engagement and CT on the educational process. The findings indicated that R.A.I.S.E-U.P. approach encouraged CT and participation in EFL literature classes. Le aimed at increasing the attention and CT concepts in students as it aimed at inculcating in the students a sense of wonder and admiration of literature by means of introducing the element of CT in their literature classes. In contrast, the current research examines how EFL literature teachers perceive the integration of CT in their classes.

Kodama (2023) in his paper “The Effects of Using Literature on EFL Students’ Critical Thinking: Fostering Critical Thinking Skills in Foreign Language Learning” examined the integration of literature in EFL classes in fostering CT skills in Japanese students. The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which the inclusion of literature into an EFL classroom influences the CT skills of EFL students. The researcher utilized quasi-experimental with 35 university students by a pre- and post-test survey. The participants attended a class activity of 15 weeks that centered on the reading of a new short story in each lesson. The findings, as proven by the tests revealed that students enjoyed their reading classes in literature and there was a significant change in fostering their CT skills. This research shows that using literature can contribute to building the problem-solving skills of EFL learners.

In the same vein, Mohammed and Jasim's (2024) paper "The Effect of a Critical Thinking-Based Approach on EFL University Students' Attitudes Towards Studying English Literature" at University of Mosul investigated the impact of CT in the English EFL literature classes. The main goal of the study was to review the effectiveness of integrating CT in EFL curriculum, and to examine the possibility of change in the attitudes of EFL students by integrating CT in Literature. They used an experimental quantitative research method that involved a control-experimental pre-test and post-test. In order to evaluate students' perceptions, the researchers provided students with a questionnaire, before and after the teaching intervention that was CT-based. The findings revealed that the use of CT in the classroom can significantly increase students' ability to analyze and interpret works of literature in English. What distinguishes the study by Mohammed and Jasim's (2024) from the current one is that they examined the integration of CT through the eyes of the students and used other research tools including the use of pre-test and post-test.

Essia and Khallaf (2025) conducted a study titled "Critical Thinking: EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Barriers" to analyze the way EFL teachers understand CT and the challenges they face attempting to instill this into their students in Dhofar University in Oman. The researchers applied mixed method research by doing a survey and semi-structure interviews with 16 EFL teachers. The findings revealed that most teachers held a general agreement that students should be able to think critically in the modern-fast world, however, they still faced numerous challenges to implement that concept in the classroom. Among these challenges one can distinguish the unwillingness of students to do CT exercises, examination-oriented education, poor professional development opportunities and rigid curriculum. The researchers suggested that to enable EFL teachers to effectively instill the CT skills in their learners, there should be a change in the curriculum, afford the teachers specific responsibilities and support the process through academic and educational institutions. Eissa and Khalaf's (2025) study is almost close to our study as it specifically involves EFL literature teachers.

### **3. Methodology and Data Collection**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study employed explanatory sequential mixed-methods design combining both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. According to Wei (2021) there is a set of steps in a typical sequential design. In terms of the explanatory one, the first half seems to have a dominance of the quantitative technique whereas the qualitative part elaborates more on the design in the second portion. Therefore, the EFL instructors were invited to respond to a regular questionnaire to address teachers' awareness about CT in EFL literature classes. To get into the experience, opinions, and pedagogical practices regarding these capabilities deeper, semi-structured interviews were implemented in the aftermath of the quantitative stage.

#### **3.2 Participants**

The participants of the current study are 26 EFL literature university level teachers; 12 males and 14 females from English departments, colleges of Basic Education, Languages at University of Duhok and Nawroz University, as well as Zakho University in Kurdistan Region of Iraq, whose consent was initially taken beforehand. All the 26 EFL literature teachers took part in the questionnaire, yet in the interview, a purposeful sampling was carried out. According to Palinkas et al. (2015) this involves the finding and selection of individuals with important knowledge and / or experience on the topic of concern.

#### **3.3 Data Collection Instruments**

The questionnaire in the present study was adopted from a survey pertaining to measuring 21st Century Teaching and Learning, which had been previously developed and completed in the state of West Virginia of the USA by Ravitz (2014). This survey includes the use of technology as well as the four Cs skills which have been studied during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Even though the original questionnaire had six sections, the study only employed the sections that are related to the participants' awareness of CT skills and views. The questionnaire starts with the definition of CT, then some examples of activities, practices, and understanding how students may learn CT skills, are regarded as the items of the questionnaire. The participants were requested to rate how

frequently they employ \or exercise CT skills based on a 5- point Likert scale as follows: 1- almost never; 2- a few times a semester; 3- 1-3 times per month; 4- 1-3 times per week and 5- almost daily. See Appendix 1). The obtained data were analyzed by using SPSS version 27 software to measure their Frequency (Fr.), percentage (%), Mean (M), Standard deviation (SD) and T-test.

In addition, to corroborate the quantitative results, qualitative data were gained by organizing semi-structured interviews with the selected EFL literature university level teachers. A total of 10 questions were employed by the researchers; three of them were adapted from Bedir (2019), whereas the rest of the questions were written by the researchers themselves (see appendix 2). The interview questions were prepared in advance. To reiterate, the researchers got the teachers' consent beforehand, and they selected the time convenient for them. Each interview took around 10 to 15 minutes, and was audio- recorded.

### 3. 4 Validity and Reliability of the Tools

The questionnaire was sent to six professors; three applied linguists and three general linguists, who gave their opinions regarding its validity on various factors including, the clarity and practicality of its items, readability, structure and style. It should also be mentioned that Ravitz in 2014 tested the original survey for validity and reliability where the CT skills part was approved to be valid and reliable (Ravitz, 2014).

Most importantly, a pilot study was employed with only five individuals to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire. The internal consistency was assessed of our instrument using the split-half in the SPSS version 27. According to the data, the whole scale dependability coefficient value was 0.895 that exceeds the minimum acceptable level of 0.60. The Cronbach Alpha of odd number (11 items) was 0.821 and 0.931 of the even number. These outcomes as revealed in (Table 2) indicate that the items in the questionnaire are quite reliable.

**Table 2.**

*Reliability Test Results*

Items	Cronbach Alpha	Items No.	Mean	STD	Interrater Sample
Odd	0.821	11	3.808	0.484	5
Even	0.931	11	3.200	1.079	
Total	0.895	22	-	-	

Internal consistency was further assured by conducting a correlation analysis of the odd and the even items. As Table 3 indicates that the correlation co-efficient was 0.867, and p-value was 0.000, which was found to be significant. This high, but not entirely significant correlation confirms the construct validity of the questionnaire, indicating that the items are suitably linked to each other, and evaluate the concepts in mind.

**Table 3.**

*Validity Test*

Items	Odd	Even	Sig.
Odd	1.00	0.867	0.000
Even	0.867	1.00	

To ensure the validity of the interview, the interview questions were sent to three professors of Applied Linguistics and the questions were read and discussed face-to-face with one of the professors. Having thoroughly read them, the professionals have confirmed the relevance of every question to the study. This procedure ensured that the questions applied in the interview were relevant and suitable; i.e. valid.

## 4. Results and Discussion

In order to answer the research questions, this section introduces the results of the study and

discusses its findings based on descriptive statistics analysis.

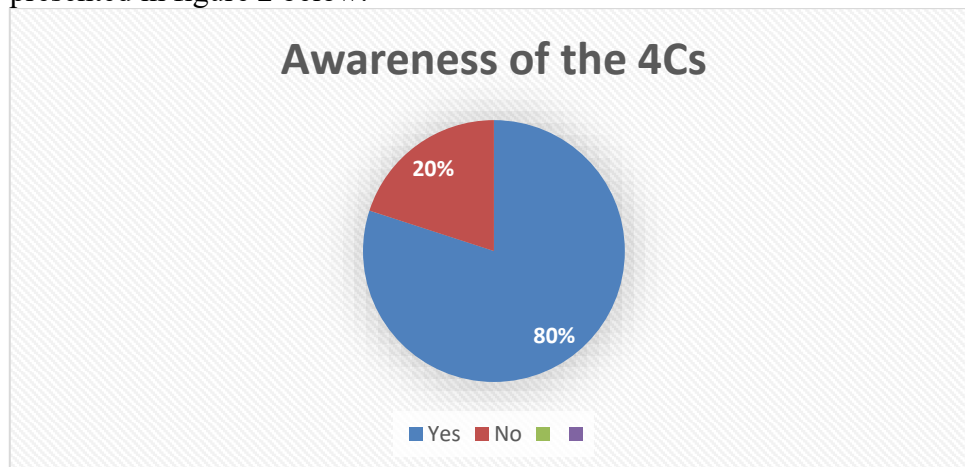
### Research Question # 1

#### “Are EFL literature teachers aware of the 21<sup>st</sup> century 4Cs foreign language skills including CT?”

To answer the above question, the structured interview question below was addressed to 10 Kurdish EFL literature teachers who were teaching different genres of literature at the departments of English at UoD, Nawroz University and Zakho University.

*Interview Question 2. “Are you aware of the 4Cs skills (Critical thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity) in Education?”*

The results showed that 80% of the participants were aware of 4Cs, whereas 20% were not as presented in figure 2 below:



**Figure 1.** Teachers' awareness of the 4Cs

The above figure demonstrates that almost all of the participating teachers claimed they were aware of the concept of the 4Cs including CT skills. To reiterate, 8 (80%) interviewees had encountered the term at some point in their careers, which indicates they were aware of the term. For instance, Teacher 7 said “*Yes, definitely. We took six months of pedagogy.*”, Teacher 8 said “*Yes, of course. I am aware of these concepts*”, and Teacher 9 also said “*Yes, I'm aware of all of these.*”. However, it should be maintained that being aware of the term is not necessarily an indicator of their familiarity with its deep or practical knowledge (Orak and İnözü, 2021). On the other hand, 2 (20%) of the participating teachers were not aware of the 21<sup>st</sup> century foreign language skills as their responses show. Teacher 4 said “*Maybe I am not aware of the term of 4Cs but I am aware of the skills*”, teacher 10 answered “*Could you explain to me what they are?*” after explaining he answered “*Yes, I understand*”.

These findings demonstrate that, in general, our teachers are aware of these skills. Our results are in alignment with the results obtained by Bedir (2019), Orak and İnözü, (2021), Naqvi et al., (2023), Ayoub et al., (2024) who showed that their participating teachers within the context of EFL pedagogy were aware of the 4Cs at the conceptual level. For instance, Ayoub et al. (2024) who investigated 21st Century Skills 4 Cs in Higher Education English Language Classroom in Pakistan found out that their prospective EFL teachers were aware of the 4Cs, although integration differed. Moreover, Naqvi et al., (2023), who studied teachers' perceptions, overcoming barriers, and introducing an effective framework for incorporating and evaluating 21st Century skills in classrooms concluded that their teachers showed competency in the four Cs of 21<sup>st</sup>-century teaching and learning. Both aforementioned studies confirmed that the 4Cs mastery is essential in developing teachers' professional growth and they foster and enhance independent thinking. It is worth pointing out that those two studies used one research methodology; i.e. Naqvi et al., (2023) used a qualitative research method and Ayoub et al., (2024) used a quantitative research method, whereas the current

study adopts a mixed methodology and thus, triangulates the data gathered using both a qualitative narrative interview and a quantitative questionnaire data. Therefore, it provides a more differentiated understanding of the investigated phenomenon.

### Research Question # 2

#### “Do teachers integrate CT in their EFL literature classes?”

In order to answer the above research question both a questionnaire and an interview question were used. A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was given to 26 EFL literature teachers who teach different genres of literature at the departments of English at University of Duhok, Nawroz University and Zakho University. As mentioned in the methodology section, it included six items that aim to capture different instructional practices to be employed in order to promote students' CT skills in their classes. The scale of the questionnaire goes as follows in terms of the frequency of using CT skills; almost daily, 1-3 times per week, 1-3 times per month, a few times a semester, and almost never (see Appendix 1). Table 3 below shows the means, the standard deviations, frequencies and percentages of each item.

**Table 4.**

*Descriptive Statistics for the integration of CT Skills in EFL Literature Classes*

Ques.	Almost daily		1-3 times per week		1-3 times per month		A few times a semester		Almost Never		Mean	STD
	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%		
1	6	23.1	6	23.1	5	19.2	8	30.8	1	3.8	3.308	1.258
2	8	30.8	9	34.6	7	26.9	2	7.7	0	0	3.885	.952
3	12	46.2	7	26.9	3	11.5	4	15.4	0	0	4.038	1.113
4	8	30.8	13	50.0	4	15.4	1	3.8	0	0	4.077	.796
5	15	57.7	2	7.7	4	15.4	4	15.4	1	3.8	4.000	1.327
6	4	15.4	10	38.5	7	26.9	3	11.5	2	7.7	3.423	1.137
Average	-	34.0%	-	30.1%	-	19.2%	-	14.1%		2.6%	3.788	.722

The above table shows how often the teachers considered in the study use and integrate each of the six CT skills mentioned in the six questions below, in their literature classes. The item of the questionnaire reads as follows: In your teaching of your classes, how often have you asked students to do the following:

1. Compare information from different sources before completing a task or assignment?
2. Draw their own conclusions based on analysis of numbers, facts, or relevant information?
3. Summarize or create their own interpretation of what they have read or been taught?
4. Analyze competing arguments, perspectives or solutions to a problem?
5. Develop a persuasive argument based on supporting evidence or reasoning?
6. Try to solve complex problems or answer questions that have no single correct solution or answer?

As regard to the first question; “How often have you asked your students to compare information from different sources before completing a task or assignment?”, the above table demonstrates the following results: 6 teachers (23.1%) used this skill almost every day, 6 teachers (23.1%) used it 1-3 times a week, 5 teachers used it 1-3 times a month, 8 teachers (30.8%) used it a few times a semester, and 1 teacher (3.8%) never used this skills. The mean value of the responses to this question is 3.308 with a standard deviation of 1.258, which indicates that on average teachers ask students to compare information from different sources slightly more than once every few weeks. These results indicate, in general, our teachers use and integrate this skill in their EFL literature classes inconsistently and at varying degrees. It also means that they are aware of the importance of

integrating this CT skill in their classes.

The responses to question 2; *“How often have you asked your students to draw their own conclusions based on analysis of numbers, facts, or relevant information?”* provided the following results: 8 teachers (30.8%) said they used this skill almost daily, 9 teachers (34.6%) reported they used it 1-3 times per week, and 7 teachers (26.9%) used these skills 1-3 times per month. The total mean value of all responses is 3.885 with a SD of 0.952, which indicates a moderate degree of consistency in answers. These results indicate that our teachers use and integrate this skill though at varying degrees, which also mean they are aware of its importance in developing their learners' CT skills.

Question 3; *“how often have you asked your students to summarize or create their own interpretation of what they have read or been taught?”* The participants' answers are as follows: 12 teachers (46.2%) choose almost daily, 7 teachers (26.9) used 1-3 times per week, 3 teachers (11.5%) used 1-3 times per month, 4 teachers (15.4%) reported a few times a semester. The total mean value of this inquiry is 4.038 indicating that teachers involved this activity in their EFL literature classes on a regular basis, almost every single day. Though most of the interviewees responded that they used this CT skill on a regular basis, there was a little bit of variance in the response as shown by the standard deviation of 1.113. The results revealed that our EFL literature teachers often ask their students to summarize and then examine the topic in their own, which is a positive sign of developing CT skills (Shokrpour et al., 2013). Writing summaries helps students to work with knowledge, identify the key points, filter unnecessary information, and rephrase the arguments in their own words, which are all activities of critical analysis and evaluation (Shokrpour et al., 2013).

Regarding question 4, which reads *“How often have you asked your students to analyze competing arguments, perspectives, or solutions to a problem?”*, Table No 3 above shows that 8 teachers (30.8%) answered almost daily, 13 teachers (50.0%) in the study reported doing it 1-3 times per week, 4 teachers (15.4%) used this activity 1-3 times per month. The total mean value is the highest; 4.077, compared with other questions, and the responses show a relatively high degree of consistency as the standard deviation is 0.796, which means that the majority of teachers' replies are almost similar. Moreover, the unified character of teachers' answers implies they all understand the importance of developing this skill in their EFL literature classes, which also means that they are aware of this skill in developing their learners' CT.

Furthermore, the responses to question 5 *“How often have you asked your students to develop a persuasive argument based on supporting evidence?”*. Table 3 exhibits that 15 teachers (57.7%) answered almost daily, 2 teachers (7.7%) reported 1-3 times per week, 4 teachers (15.4%) responded 1-3 times per month, 4 teachers (15.4%) responded a few times per semester, and one teacher (3.8%) said almost never. These results indicate that all the teachers are aware of the importance of this CT skills, and thus they practice it in their classes as the average mean value is 4.000. However, their use seems to be inconsistent as indicated by the SD value of 1.327, which is considered a substantial variability. Statistically, a high SD means that responses are widely dispersed and this is a sign of a variability among the teachers (Guth et al., 2025). This variety of results demonstrates that the teachers do not necessarily adhere to the same approach when teaching this skill (Fernandes et al., 2025). Such a radical difference shows that there is no standard way how this skill can be implemented in classroom practices (Fernandes et al., 2025).

Finally, regarding question 6 *“How often have you asked your students to try to solve complex problems or answer questions that have no single correct solution or answer?”* the teachers' responses are as follows: 4 teachers (15.4%) used this CT skill almost daily, 10 teachers (38.5%) used it 1-2 times per week, 7 teachers (26.9) used it 1-3 times per month, 3 teachers (11.5%) reported they used it a few times a semester, 2 teachers (7.7) almost never used it. The total mean value of 3.423 means that our teachers moderately use this skill, and thus they are aware of its importance in their EFL literature classes. However, the SD of 1.137 indicates that there was a little variance in the teachers' responses. The results indicate that though most teachers see the usefulness of this skill, its practical use is inconsistent. This disparity in their answers to question 6 could be

explained by the complexity of this skill, the teachers' lack of confidence or time and the insufficient support of the textbooks or the curriculum (Harahap and Fithriani, 2024). Also, it is possible that our teachers have various opinions regarding the necessity or effectiveness of applying higher-order thinking in everyday lessons (Allehyani, 2025).

In total, table 3 depicts that the average percentage frequency integration of each all the six skills is as follows: almost daily: 34.0%, 1-3 times per week 30.1%, A few times a semester 14.1%, almost never 26% with a mean value of 3.788 and SD of 0.722. The average standard deviation value shows that there is consistency in the responses of the participants. These results indicate that all the CT skills included in the questionnaire were used or integrated by our EFL literature classes, which also mean they are aware of them.

In order to have more insight into the second research question, which asks if the participating teachers integrate CT skills in their EFL literature classes, questions 3, 4 and 5 of the interview questions (See appendix 2), were addressed to the participants as follows:

*Interview Question 3. "How important do you think the 4Cs are in language, and in teaching of literature in particular?"*

Responding to this question, all the teachers (100%) who took part in the research positively confirmed the importance of the skills. They all agreed that the 4Cs skills can help develop both students' language skills and life skills. Examples: Teacher 2 said, *"These skills are highly important as they make the understanding of students deeper and develop their engagement in literature classes."* Teacher 4 reported, *"As I said, these are very important. This is basically one of the measures by which you can evaluate your students' efficiency and competence."* The participants also emphasized the importance of CT in literature classes as one of the essential skills that improve the students' level of analytical skills and creative thinking. Some of the teachers' responses are:

**Teacher 6:** *"They are part of my literature classes and I'll tell you how. For example, in my poetry class, I divide my students into several circles. In these circles there are certain roles. The summarizer: the student gives a short summary of the poem. The illustrator: the student looks at the form of the poem and the literary devices used in the poem. The language master: the student looks up the meaning of the difficult words in the poem. The culture expert: try to make connections between the culture of the poem, which could be English, British, or Canadian, depending on the poet that we are studying, to our own culture or to some experiences that students could be familiar with. So, we are not teaching just the content, we are teaching them important skills in life."*

**Teacher 7** *"When you say literature, the first thing that pops in your head is CT. Yes, exactly. So, we have a literary work and we need to analyze that. How would you analyze a text? It's a challenge for students to use their CT to be able to analyze."*

These results show that the growing tendency to emphasize these skills in the modern education is confirmed by the fact that teachers believe that CT skills are essential (Harahap and Fithriani, 2024). This shared philosophy suggests that teachers begin to recognize that learning a language is more than learning the four language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing, but it goes further to include transferrable skills learners can make use of when pursuing their own personal, academic, and professional goals in life (Harahap and Fithriani, 2024). Moreover, the participants emphasized that literature cannot be only the source of developing students' linguistic and cultural awareness, but also it can be a mighty tool for pursuing other educational objectives, including the development of analytical and CT as well as self-reflective abilities.

*Interview Question # 4 "Have you ever integrated them[4Cs] in your class?"*

Among the 10 EFL literature teachers, 8 (80%) teachers answered yes, *"we incorporate these skills in our classes on a daily basis"*. This indicates that most of the teachers are aware of the importance of the 4Cs including CT skills and they integrate them in their classes. On the other hand, 2 (20%) teachers were not absolutely sure about integrating them in their classes. For example, teacher 5 said *"Maybe not all of them, but some of them"*, and teacher 10 said *"Most of the time, but maybe"*

*I would not put them under this name or I use them subconsciously*". The researchers believe that there is unintentional incorporation of higher order thinking by our EFL literature teachers in spite of the fact that they are not aware of them and do not use them either. However, some teachers incorporate activities that include analysis, evaluation and reasoning into their classes without being aware of their technical labels as CT skills, and such activities help to improve students' CT skills. It is worth pointing out that CT is not usually regarded as a learning goal, but as an outcome of quality teaching strategies. According to Facione (1990) interpretation skills, inferential skills, analysis skills, and self-regulatory skills can be achieved through various general activities in the classroom.

*Interview Question # 5 "What techniques or strategies do you use to incorporate CT in your literature class?"*

We addressed the above question to the teachers in order to make sure that they practically integrate CT skills in their literature classes. The activities they used are listed in table 4 as follows:

**Table 5.**

*Critical Thinking Activities*

Activities	Teacher Code	Percentage
Text Analyzing	T1, T6, T7, T8	40%
Asking Critical Questions	T1, T2, T3, T5, T6, T7	60%
Discussions	T1, T9, T10	30%
Decision making activities	T2, T5, T6, T7	40%
Debate	T5, T6, T10	30%
Presentations	T6, T8, T7	30%
Project- Based activities	T3, T4, T10	30%

The above table demonstrates the activities used by the teachers to promote and enhance students' CT are as follows: asking students critical questions was used by 60% of the teachers as an activity that promotes CT, text analysis was used by (40%) of as a CT activity that involves asking students to analyze a literary text in term of themes, characters, and events. This activity promotes analytical skills, which in turn promotes CT (Magner et al., 2016). Moreover, decision making activities was used by 40% of the teachers. Teacher 2, for example, said *"To encourage students to put themselves in the place of literary characters is a powerful way to enhance their CT. I use decision making activities: What would you do? What kind of questions the most pivotal moment of the story? Here the students are required to justify their decisions based on the personal reasoning and textual evidence."* Moreover, discussions were used by 30% of the teachers which included group, peers, and class discussions, debates were used by 30% of the teachers, presentations were practiced by 30%, and project- based activities were employed by 30%. All these activities that the teachers used provide evidence that our teachers use and integrate CT skills in their EFL literature classes. These activities improve students 'CT skills that have been deemed important in the 21st century education (Magner et al., 2011).

In conclusion, the teachers' responses to the questionnaire items and interview questions confirm that they use and integrate CT skills in EFL literature classes, and they are aware of them, which answer the second research question. The results of research question # 2 correspond with the results of studies that confirm the hypothesis that literature is one of the best subjects that contribute to the development of students' CT skills (e.g. Khatib et al., 2011; Azizi et al., 2022; Elder, 2022; Kodama, 2023; Le, 2023; Eissa and Khalaf, 2025; Mukhamedov and Doniyorova, 2025, among others). For instance, the present study confirms Eissa and Khalaf's (2025) study who investigated the importance of teachers' awareness in developing CT skills in EFL classes.

Our findings also correspond with the available literature on CT including Khawaji (2024) who studied the ability of Saudi Arabian English curricula to use exercises and activities that promote CT. Both the current study and Khawaji's (2024) revealed that CT is appreciated by teachers, who tend to engage students in activities such as analysis, discussions, and project problem-solution.

Though the results of the two mentioned studies revealed the importance of CT skills by EFL literature teachers, there is some disparity in their integration in their classes, which could be due to the assumption that some teachers are not familiar enough with new concepts of 21<sup>st</sup> century language education as they did not receive training and updating on the modern education. These shared results outline the necessity of continuous professional development programs and the support of the curriculum that can be able to provide effective and consistent integration of CT in EFL classes.

### Research Question # 3

#### “What challenges do EFL literature teachers face in integrating CT skills in their classes?”

Interview question 10 aimed to answer this question. It was found out that there exist some barriers to the integration of CT skills in EFL literature classes, which make it a challenge to the teachers. Table 5 below exhibits a list of the categorization of those challenges.

**Table 6.**

*Challenges of Integrating CT skills in EFL Literature Classes*

Challenges	Teacher Code	Percentage
Class size	T1, T4, T7, T9	40%
Students' resistance	T2, T3, T4, T5, T8	50%
Limited Language Proficiency	T4, T5, T7	30%
Time Limitation	T4, T9	20%
Lack of Motivation	T6, T8, T10	30%
Curriculum Requirements	T2, T3	20%
Lack of Professional requirement	T3	10%

Interestingly, Table 5 above, shows 50% of the teachers reported that students' resistance is one of the major challenges when it comes to involve them in CT activities. For instance, teacher 3 said *“The big problem is resistance. There are sometimes students who are resisting because they don't know why they are there. They don't understand the purpose of taking these classes”*. According to teacher 4, *Students are not willing to participate all the time. And even if they do, it's just like 10-15% of them who are willing to participate*. Moreover, teacher 8 reported *“When you are teaching a group of people and when you see they are not asking questions or putting you in a difficult situation. Even when you go home, you are not going to work on yourself and get more knowledge about your topic. This makes us also not to work harder for them”*.

Another challenge pointed out by the teachers was that of large numbers of students in the classroom; 40% of them said they found difficulties in implementing CT activities since the number of students is bigger than it should be. Teacher 4, for example, said *“These skills can be developed through some special techniques, strategies or activities. And to do the activities, you will need a smaller size”*, which means a smaller number of students in the classroom. Moreover, 30% of the participants (see table 5) reported that their challenge is students' low level of English language proficiency, which restricts their understanding and participation.

Furthermore, 30% of the participants reported that lack of motivation is another challenge. Teacher 6, for example, said *“Well, lack of motivation because it's unfortunate that you cannot always get students motivated to be part or to actually actively participate in the designed activities unless there is a kind of incentive or reward for them”*. 20% of them said that the duration of both the course or semester and the lecture is too limited to allow them to dig deeper to develop students' CT skills. For example, teacher 4 said *“In bologna system. You have to be always aware of the fact that numbers of weeks are limited. And you have to collect at least 50% of your mark, of the 100% of your mark. And you have to do many assignments, quizzes and so on”*. Teacher 9 said *“I like to focus on these skills, but sometimes it is not workable because the number is huge. And it takes time. Sometimes one hour is not enough for such a kind of activity”*.

In addition, 20% of the teachers reported that there were specific curriculum requirements, which they have to follow, and this pose a challenge for them to integrate CT skills in their classes. Several studies such as (Wang and Han, 2021; Khawaji, 2024) highlighted that time and guidance to develop higher-order thinking skills were also missing due to curriculum that is mainly form-based.

Finally, 10% reported that the lack of professional development programs might also be a challenge. Teacher 3 said “*Teachers also should be very creative. They should come up with some techniques that will also attract the students who are resisting this negatively and so on. And sometimes it is the other teachers who make them dependent, parrot, and then it affects also sometimes literature classes because they are not used to it*”. The above results indicate that some teachers experienced challenges in integrating CT skills in their classes though they attempt to use them.

These findings correspond with Anggraeny and Khongput (2022), Khawaji (2024), Harahap and Fithriani (2024), Fernandes et al. (2025), and Eissa and Khalaf (2025) who reported several challenges teachers face in implementing CT skills in their EFL classes. For instance, several similarities exist between the present study and Fernandes et al. (2025), who examined the perceptions of high school teachers in Indonesia with regards to assisting their students in developing the skills of CT in the context of EFL classroom. The current study and Fernandes et al. (2025) noted that teachers recognize the importance of CT, which is particularly true when it comes to such activities as problem-solving, analysis, and discussion. Moreover, Anggraeny and Khongput, (2022) concluded that CT is not applied in every case and this is typically due to a situational barrier such as curricular requirements and reliance on textbooks.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper has come up with the following conclusions: The EFL literature teachers included in the study were aware of the 4Cs including CT skills in their classes though at different degrees. They also used activities that promote developing CT skills in their EFL literature classes. However, they faced certain challenges in incorporating these skills in their classes including time constraints, learners’ level of language competency, large number of students in one classroom, curriculum demands and lack of motivation. Moreover, a disparity persists between their awareness and the practical incorporation of critical thinking abilities in the classroom. These findings necessitate targeted actions. There must be several possibilities for developing higher-order thinking skills, especially in literary courses. To meet these potentials, teachers require more in depth knowledge about recent pedagogical approaches, especially those of 21<sup>st</sup> century, better access to a variety of different texts and more professional development programs. Frequent practice of communicative, reflective, and learner-centered activities can increase learners’ linguistic competence and simultaneously equip them with cognitive tools that constitute the basis of academic success and effective use of CT, problem-solving and decision-making skills in the real world. In a nut shell, in order to define a new paradigm in integrating CT skills in literature classes, both instructional design and pedagogical outcomes should be reconsidered by our education policy makers and institutions.

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## Appendix #1

Teachers' Questionnaire

### Dear participant

**This questionnaire is for purely academic purposes. Your responses will be kept anonymous. The researcher will be grateful if you can kindly fill in and respond to the items of this questionnaire where appropriate.**

**The research title:** “Investigating the Integration of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Skills in the Literature EFL Classes at University Level”

The aim of the above-entitled paper is to investigate the integration of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Skills in your literature EFL classes.

The skills to be investigated are the 4Cs as follows:

Critical Thinking

Collaboration

Communication

Creativity & Innovation

For each of the above you will be asked about your general teaching of these skills in the classes you teach, and about a few specific practices you may have used.

There are no correct or incorrect answers and all responses as said above will be kept confidential.

In fact, the items of the questionnaire have been adopted from a comprehensive survey measuring 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning skills (Ravitz, 2014), but we only included the 4Cs mentioned above.

Your cooperation and responses are very much appreciated in advance.

## 1. Part one

### General Information (demographic details and variables)

Please tick out ( ✓ ) what applies to you below

1. Teacher's Name: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender: **Male**  **Female**
3. Title: **Assistant Lecturer**  **Lecturer**  **Assistant Professor**  **Professor**
4. Degree: **Postgraduate Diploma**  **Master's**  **PhD**
6. Your college: Basic Education  Languages
7. Your literature genre specialization: Novel  Poetry  Drama
8. Number of years of teaching at the university: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Part Two

**CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS refer to students being able to analyze complex problems, investigate questions for which there are no clear-cut answers, evaluate different points of view or sources of information, and draw appropriate conclusions based on evidence and reasoning.**

### 1. Here are some examples of practices that may help students learn CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS.

In your teaching of your classes, how often have you asked students to do the following	Almost never	A few times a semester	1-3 times per month	1-3 times per week	Almost daily
a. Compare information from different sources before completing a task or assignment?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Draw their own conclusions based on analysis of numbers, facts, or relevant information?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Summarize or create their own interpretation of what they have read or been taught?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Analyze competing arguments, perspectives or solutions to a problem?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Develop a persuasive argument based on supporting evidence or reasoning?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Try to solve complex problems or answer questions that have no single correct solution or answer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**COLLABORATION SKILLS** refer to students being able to work together to solve problems or answer questions, to work effectively and respectfully in teams to accomplish a common goal and to assume shared responsibility for completing a task.

**1. Here are some examples of practices that may help students learn COLLABORATION SKILLS.**

In your teaching of your classes, how often have you asked students to do the following	Almost never	A few times a semester	1-3 times per month	1-3 times per week	Almost daily
a. Work in pairs or small groups to complete a task together?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Work with other students to set goals and create a plan for their team?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Create joint products using contributions from each student?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Present their group work to the class, teacher or others?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Work as a team to incorporate feedback on group tasks or products?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Give feedback to peers or assess other students' work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**COMMUNICATION SKILLS** refer to students being able to organize their thoughts, data and findings and share these effectively through a variety of media, as well as orally and in writing.

**1. Here are some examples of practices that may help students learn COMMUNICATION SKILLS.**

In your classes, how often have you asked students to do the following	Almost never	A few times a semester	1-3 times per month	1-3 times per week	Almost daily
a. Structure data for use in written products or oral presentations (e.g., creating charts, tables or graphs)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Convey their ideas using media other than a written paper (e.g., posters, video, blogs, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Prepare and deliver an oral presentation to the teacher or others?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Answer questions in front of an audience?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Decide how they will present their work or demonstrate their learning?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION SKILLS** refer to students being able to generate and refine solutions to complex problems or tasks based on synthesis, analysis and then combining or presenting what they have learned in new and original ways.

**1. Here are some examples of practices that may help students learn CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION SKILLS.**

In your teaching of your classes, how often have you asked	Almost	A few times a	1-3 times per	1-3 times	Almost
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students to do the following	never	semester	month	per week	daily
a. Use idea creation techniques such as brainstorming or concept mapping?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Generate their own ideas about how to confront a problem or question?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Test out different ideas and work to improve them?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Invent a solution to a complex, open-ended question or problem?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Create an original product or performance to express their ideas?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendix #2

### Teachers' interview inquiries

University of Duhok

College of Basic Education

Department of English

### Consent to Participate in Research

**Study Title:** Investigating the Integration of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Skills in the Literature EFL Classes at University Level

**Purpose of the Study:**

You are invited to engage in a research project to better understand how particular skills—specifically, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity (commonly referred to as the 4Cs) develop in literature classes. This research will help us understand how these abilities are incorporated into classroom activities, as well as what you, as an instructor, go through while teaching.

### Study Procedures:

You will be interviewed for around 15- 30 minutes, if you consent to participate. Your experiences, approaches, and opinions on incorporating 21st-century skills into your literary classrooms will all be discussed during the interview. To guarantee that your answers are accurately preserved, the interview will be audio recorded with your consent.

### Confidentiality:

Your replies to the interview will be entirely private. Your identity will not be revealed in any reports, and all information gathered will be utilized purely for research reasons. Only the researcher and authorized team members will have access to your information.

### Consent:

Please sign here if you consent to participate in this research. By signing, you attest to your voluntary participation in the research and your understanding of its goals, methods, and confidentiality.

Teacher's

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

workplace: \_\_\_\_\_

### Interview Questions:

- 1-What literature genre do you teach?
- 2-Are you aware of the 4Cs skills (Critical thinking, Communication, Collaboration and Creativity) in Education?
- 3-How important do you think the 4Cs are in language in teaching of literature in particular?
- 4-have you ever integrated them in your class?
- 5-What techniques or strategies do you use to incorporate critical thinking in your class?
- 6-In your opinion what helps students to be effective communicators in class?
- 7-How do you incorporate collaboration in your literature class?
- 8-What do you do in order to enhance students' creativity in your literature class?
- 9-Can all the 4cs be integrated or incorporated in your literature class?
- 10-What challenges do you face in incorporating the 4Cs in your literature class?



