**Critical thinking:**

**Introduction:**

The writer of an article, for example, can present information as factual or true through sophisticated use of language.

A writer can disguise his or her bias, offer facts when in reality they are opinions, or use emotive words that will appeal to a reader’s own feelings or inclinations. In order to deal with these more complex areas, we need a variety of sub-skills and abilities in order to think critically.

Students need to comprehend the meaning, analyze the fact from the opinion, match the argument to the supporting evidence, and then express their own view in response to the text.

**Critical thinking: definition:**

Critical thinking involves the use of a system of thinking that would go beyond **traditional rote** **learning** (learning based on memorization) in education and encourage **“higher- order thinking”.** This process of thinking consists of a series of cognitive skills known as **“Bloom’s taxonomy”** or classification, elaborated by a committee of educators chaired by the educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom.

**Bloom’s taxonomy:**

It is a classification system used to define and distinguish different levels of human cognition or “thinking skills”, it classifies thinking to six cognitive levels. The categories are ordered from simple to complex (or from lower- order thinking skills to higher –order thinking skills)



**1-Remembering (recalling) :**

*In this level, the learner will be able to recall basic facts about the book through memorizing and be able to answer general questions about the book.*

**2- Understanding:**

When we read or listen to a text, we process it and then try to understand it. In our native language this is simply a case of knowing what we are reading, seeing or listening to. For the language learner doing this in a foreign language, this stage will of course take longer. The teacher might need to ask questions such as ‘What kind of text is it? Is it from a newspaper? Where would you read it

**3- Applying:**

Having studied a text, we take the new information and apply it to something. In the language classroom this often means answering some comprehension questions or filling in a table with some facts or figures in the text. In other words, it is about task completion with the new information that we have understood.

**4- Analyzing:**

 The analysis stage is where we return to the text and start to question how the author’s information is presented. For example, the students might have found information in the text but next we want them to find evidence supporting the main point(s). Often the task involves identifying how a text or its arguments are constructed. In other words, students are becoming more critical of the text and not accepting it at face value.

**5- Evaluating:**

 Is one of the key ‘higher-order’ critical thinking skills. It’s the stage at which students have isolated the author’s arguments and views and start to evaluate the validity and relevance of the information. This could involve asking students to assess how much of the text is fact supported by evidence and how much is the opinion of the author. If they are going to use the information in the text to support their own writing then they need to be sure it is both valid and relevant. Evaluating is probably the most complex stage for many language learners as it can require very high-level language skills.

**6- Creating:**

This is the last of the five sub-skills. Having studied a topic by drawing on a number of texts, students need to apply their new knowledge and to create something of their own out of it. For example, perhaps they are writing an essay expressing their own opinion but based on the facts and evidence they have researched. Or perhaps they do a group presentation with other students in which they present all the arguments for and against a view before then presenting their own conclusions.

**Importance of critical thinking in academic research:**

Developing critical thinking skills allow the learner to:

Distinguish between facts and opinions

Differentiate between accurate and vague language

Check the reliability of data and sources