

Developing Students' Critical Thinking Skills through the Organization of Learning Activities in Grade 11 Literature

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<p><i>The development of critical thinking skills for students in Grade 11 Literature is essential in the context of educational innovation, aiming to cultivate proactive, creative, and independent learners. This study analyzes both theoretical foundations and practical conditions to propose three key strategies for fostering critical thinking through classroom activities. First, questioning activities encourage students to identify issues, challenge information, and expand their perspectives on literary phenomena, stimulating independent thinking and analytical skills. Second, debate and dialogue activities provide an environment for students to construct arguments, defend viewpoints, and respond critically based on evidence, enhancing logical reasoning, evaluative capacity, and academic communication skills. Third, role-playing and perspective-shifting activities allow students to approach texts from multiple roles and viewpoints, promoting creative imagination and multidimensional thinking—an essential characteristic of critical thinking. Implementing these approaches helps students engage actively with literary texts, reflect on diverse perspectives, and develop well-rounded critical thinking skills. The findings also provide a basis for teachers to adjust instructional methods to better support the development of students' competencies within the current literature curriculum.</i></p> <p>Keywords: Critical thinking, Literature education, Learning activities, Questioning strategy, Debate and dialogue, Perspective-shifting.</p>
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1. Introduction

In today's era of globalization and information explosion, cultivating critical thinking in students has become exceedingly important. Developing critical thinking is one of the indispensable goals of a modern, advanced education system worldwide. Particularly in the context of comprehensive and fundamental reforms in general education toward competency development, critical thinking is considered one of the core competencies of learners in the 21st century. Resolution 71-NQ/TW on breakthrough solutions for educational development also emphasizes the necessity of fostering citizens' qualities and competencies associated with independent thinking, creativity, and self-directed learning. This aligns with the spirit of the 2018 General Education Curriculum, which stresses the development of language competence, literary competence, communication skills, and problem-solving abilities—within which critical thinking plays a central

role, enabling students to analyze, evaluate, and respond to information independently and with sound justification.

Literature as a subject offers exceptional conditions for nurturing and enhancing critical thinking through reading comprehension, dialogue with texts, discussion, debate, and argumentative writing. Notably, the Grade 11 Literature curriculum is designed with openness and flexibility, emphasizing exploratory activities, group discussions, experiential learning, and problem-solving tasks. These features create important foundations for organizing learning activities that foster critical thinking skills.

However, for critical thinking to be genuinely cultivated, teachers must employ appropriate instructional strategies that create an environment encouraging students to ask questions, express personal viewpoints, engage in multi-dimensional analysis, and critique differing perspectives. Therefore, studying and proposing solutions to develop

critical thinking in Literature instruction holds significant theoretical and practical value. It contributes to concretizing the orientation of educational innovation and enriches the scientific basis for competency-based teaching.

2. Content

2.1. Overview of Critical Thinking

The understanding of critical thinking has been formed and developed for more than 2,500 years, beginning with the philosophical inquiries of Socrates—the ancient Greek thinker. Over time, many scholars such as John Dewey, Edward Glaser, Robert Ennis, Richard Paul, Michael Scriven, and Linda Elder have continued to expand and systematize this concept. According to a synthesis by Geng (2014), there are up to 64 different definitions of critical thinking. Despite their varied expressions, most definitions share core components such as analysis, synthesis, judgment, evaluation, and reflective thinking.

Robert Ennis (1987) defined critical thinking as “reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do.” Wikipedia also describes critical thinking as a dialectical cognitive process involving the analysis and evaluation of information from multiple perspectives in order to clarify, verify, and confirm the validity of an issue. Critical argumentation requires clarity, logical reasoning, sufficient evidence, and fairness in evaluation.

In its simplest sense, critical thinking refers to the ability to think multidimensionally; that is, not accepting information passively but constantly examining, comparing, and questioning to uncover the essence and truth of a matter. It involves a proactive analytical process, including the ability to challenge inadequate arguments and establish the accuracy and value of information. Critical thinking is closely connected to logical reasoning and inferential skills, helping individuals select key information, generate ideas, and articulate them coherently and persuasively.

As a result, critical thinking contributes to improving problem-solving skills, organizing information, and presenting issues clearly and concisely. Practically, it guides sound decision-making, helps individuals break free from conventional thinking patterns, reduces the influence of biases, and opens up new approaches supported by well-founded reasoning.

It can be affirmed that cultivating critical thinking is a crucial foundation for fostering students’ autonomy and creativity, while also motivating and engaging them in the process of exploring and mastering knowledge.

2.2. Measures to Develop Critical Thinking Skills for Students through Learning Activities in Grade 11 Literature

2.2.1. Developing Critical Thinking through Questioning Activities

a) Objectives

– Developing students’ questioning ability

Through questioning activities, students learn to identify issues in a text instead of waiting for the teacher’s questions. They can detect contradictions, ambiguities, or debatable aspects within a literary work. Students learn to pose exploratory questions that show interest in the underlying meanings of the text rather than simply recalling information. Formulating deeper questions indicates a shift from passive reception to active and independent thinking.

– Enhancing analytical and evaluative skills

Questioning helps students avoid accepting information at face value. Instead, they examine, compare, and seek explanations. They learn to analyze textual evidence and develop questions related to cause–effect, purpose–meaning, and artistic value–content. Through questioning and self-answering, students build evaluation skills, including the ability to critique and compare different viewpoints on the same issue.

– Creating a positive classroom environment that encourages personal voice

Questioning transforms the classroom from the traditional “teacher explains—students record” model into a space for dialogue, debate, and collaboration. Students can express personal viewpoints, even opposing ones, while maintaining respect for peers and teachers. From questioning, they also develop the ability to defend their ideas and use textual evidence to justify their claims.

– Developing linguistic and argumentative skills in Literature

The process of questioning requires students to use precise, clear, and coherent language, thereby improving their expressive abilities. Students develop logical thinking habits and learn to construct purposeful, focused questions rather than vague or unfocused ones. Using questions as tools for exploring texts allows students to understand deeper layers of meaning and the artistic messages of literary works. This also forms a foundation for improving their argumentative writing skills, including writing critical responses or multi-perspective analyses.

b) Implementation Procedures

Step 1: Eliciting and guiding students in questioning techniques

The teacher introduces typical types of questions that promote critical thinking, accompanied by illustrative examples: clarification questions (“Why does the author

choose this detail?”), cause–effect questions (“What leads to the character’s change in emotion?”), comparison–contrast questions (“How is the use of light in Text A similar to or different from Text B?”), evaluative questions (“Is this choice of narrative point of view appropriate?”), and hypothetical questions (“How would the message change if the story ended differently?”)

–Students learn to distinguish between shallow questions (content-check questions with one fixed answer) and deep questions (those requiring inference, analysis, and evaluation), as well as closed questions (requiring short, limited responses) and open questions (requiring analysis, evaluation, and creative reasoning).

–The teacher organizes a model activity: students are given a short passage and asked to formulate questions in all five categories. Students then revise their questions based on teacher feedback.

Step 2: Designing reading–comprehension activities based on questioning

Before the lesson, the teacher assigns students to read the text at home and prepare three to five critical or exploratory questions following the guided formats. This preparation encourages active learning: students identify issues they care about and intend to explore more deeply. They record their questions on learning sheets or submit them to the class group, enabling the teacher to monitor students’ initial critical-thinking abilities and helping form a habit of questioning.

During the lesson, the teacher organizes a sequence of activities to maximize the use of student-prepared questions. In the first activity, students work in groups of four to six, sharing their questions and selecting one or two that are the most insightful, unique, or discussion-provoking. In the second activity, groups exchange questions: each group answers the selected questions from another group, after which the questioning group responds or challenges the answers, creating a two-way critical dialogue. The teacher acts as facilitator, providing feedback and ensuring discussion remains focused. In the third activity, discussion becomes more open as groups “challenge” one another with difficult or unconventional questions, fostering multidimensional interaction and increasing students’ engagement.

At the end of the lesson, the teacher compiles high-quality questions—those showing independent thinking, strong textual analysis, or creative interpretation. These are stored in a “class critical-question bank,” both to

recognize student contributions and to build a valuable resource for future lessons. This practice sustains the questioning habit and motivates students to continually improve their critical-thinking abilities.

Step 3: Expanding critical-thinking activities through questioning

The teacher guides students to approach the text from more multidimensional perspectives, encouraging not only basic questions but also deeper inquiries into inconsistencies, controversial details, or potentially conflicting interpretations. Students are asked to think critically about artistic details, character actions, and the author’s message, raising questions that demonstrate hesitation, doubt, or reasonable skepticism. Before class, the teacher may suggest prompts such as: “What part of the text seems unconvincing to you?” or “Which detail makes you want to question the author?”

In class, the teacher expands the space for critical interaction. Students are encouraged to question the author, the characters, or the plot structure, and they must justify the basis for their challenges. Questions such as “Is this detail reasonable?”, “Why does the character make this choice?”, or “Could this action be interpreted differently?” are integrated into group discussions. By introducing hypothetical situations or asking students to propose alternative interpretations, the teacher helps them practice seeing issues from multiple angles rather than accepting a single, fixed reading of the text. Throughout these exchanges, the teacher guides and prompts students to broaden their critical perspectives consciously and methodically.

At the end of the lesson, the teacher provides time for a “Critical Q & A Corner,” where students freely raise unresolved questions, opposing viewpoints, or arguments that remained unclear during discussion. This final step closes the lesson in an open-ended manner, allowing students to continue reflecting and exploring. Excellent or debate-provoking questions are added to the “class critical-question bank,” creating a valuable resource for subsequent lessons and reinforcing students’ motivation to maintain high-level questioning habits. Through this activity, critical thinking in Literature gradually becomes an authentic part of students’ cognitive practice rather than an isolated skill.

Step 4: Evaluation and feedback

Evaluation criteria are developed to help teachers and students recognize the quality of each critical question. A question is considered effective when it demonstrates

logical clarity—being explicit, coherent, and faithful to the text’s meaning. Originality is also essential: the more a question reflects personal insight or identifies new issues, the stronger the student’s critical thinking. The value of a question additionally lies in its openness—its ability to provoke discussion and generate multiple interpretations. Finally, content relevance ensures that questions are connected directly to the text, the lesson’s theme, and the students’ reading process.

Assessment methods are implemented flexibly to encourage active student participation. The teacher may grade students’ critical-thinking performance through comprehension tasks, presentations, or group products, and provide immediate in-class feedback for timely improvement. After each topic, the class may display a “question map” summarizing outstanding student contributions, creating an open learning environment and promoting collaboration. Assessment thus emphasizes not only outcomes but also the learning process that develops students’ critical-thinking abilities.

Recognition and encouragement play a crucial role in sustaining motivation. The teacher may praise excellent questions during the lesson, offering immediate positive reinforcement. Students with outstanding contributions may receive bonus points or titles such as “Golden Question,” helping them value their intellectual efforts. Posting selected questions on the class bulletin board further spreads a positive learning spirit and cultivates healthy academic competition.

To be effective, the question system must be appropriate to the genre of text, remain open-ended and multidirectional, and allow broad student participation. – For expository and argumentative texts, questions may clarify social issues, analyze causes and effects, evaluate the author’s viewpoint, and require students to argue and express their own stance. Examples:

- i. Identification: What is the main issue discussed in the text?
- ii. Analysis: What arguments and evidence does the author use?
- iii. Evaluation: Are these arguments convincing? Why or why not?
- iv. Critical response: Do you agree with the author’s viewpoint? Provide reasoning and evidence.

– For narrative texts, questions focus on characters, conflicts, plot situations, and thematic messages. Examples:

- i. Identification: Identify the key events of the plot.
- ii. Analysis: Analyze the actions or psychology of

character X in situation Y.

- iii. Evaluation: Are the character’s actions reasonable? What aspects might require reconsideration?
- iv. Critical response: If you were the character, what alternative actions would you choose? Why?

– For lyric poetry, questions should inspire aesthetic appreciation while encouraging multidimensional thinking. Examples:

- i. Identification: Identify striking images or language used in the poem.
- ii. Analysis: Explain the effect of literary devices in expressing emotion.
- iii. Evaluation: Is the dominant mood of the poem presented consistently?
- iv. Critical response: Do you have a different interpretation of any image or emotion in the poem? Explain your reasoning.

c) Illustrative Example: Reading Comprehension of Chi Pheo (Nam Cao) (Literature 11, Volume 1)

In Step 1 – Introducing and Guiding Students in Question-Forming Techniques, the teacher briefly introduces key types of critical-thinking questions such as clarification questions, hypothetical questions, evaluative questions, and extension questions. Before starting the lesson, the teacher uses familiar prompts to activate students’ thinking, for instance: “If Chi Pheo had never met Thị No, would his life have changed?” or “Why is Chi Pheo the only one in Vu Dai Village who becomes corrupted to the extent of becoming a ‘demon’?” From these examples, the teacher guides students to formulate questions based on internal conflicts in the text, unusual details, or cause–effect relationships between events. This helps activate students’ thinking and equips them with techniques for generating questions before engaging deeply with the text.

In Step 2 – Designing Reading–Comprehension Activities Based on Questions, the teacher organizes the learning process in three phases: before class, during class, and after class. Before class, students are assigned to read Chi Pheo and prepare 3–5 critical or inquiry-based questions, such as:

“Why are the villagers afraid of Chi Pheo but never resist Ba Kien?”; “Is Chi Pheo truly at fault for becoming a henchman?” “When Chi kills Ba Kien, is it an act of revenge or an awakening of his humanity?”

Students submit their questions in the class group or record them on reading worksheets. During class, students work in groups to share their questions and select one or two of the most thought-provoking ones for discussion. For example,

a group may choose the question: “Is Thi No a ‘symbol of humanity’ or merely a situational detail?” Another group is then responsible for answering, after which the questioning group responds or challenges the answer, creating multidimensional dialogue. The teacher further organizes an “inter-group challenge,” where each group poses a difficult question to another group to increase competitiveness and deepen critical engagement. At the end of class, the teacher compiles the most insightful questions and adds them to the class’s “critical-thinking question bank.”

In Step 3 – Expanding Critical Inquiry through Questions, the teacher encourages students to extend their questions beyond the text itself. From *Chí Phèo*, students may generate deeper questions about social context, moral corruption, or the humanistic message conveyed by Nam Cao. Examples include: “If Chi Pheo lived in modern society, how could he be redeemed?” “Why do the people who cause Chi’s tragedy never face proportional consequences?”. Students may also engage in intertextual comparison, such as: “How is Chi Pheo’s fate similar to the character Hộ in *Đôi thừa*?” By expanding inquiry to new interpretive layers, students not only gain deeper textual understanding but also gradually develop critical thinking on social and human issues.

In Step 4 – Evaluation and Feedback, the teacher uses criteria such as logical coherence, openness, originality, and relevance to the text to assess the quality of students’ questions. Questions that demonstrate deep analysis or broad interpretive potential receive detailed feedback during class and may be awarded bonus points or recognized as the “golden question of the lesson.” For example, the question “Is Chi Pheo truly a victim only when he does not yet understand what it means to live as an honest person?” might be highly valued because it reflects a personal perspective and probes the psychological dimension of the character. Outstanding questions are added to the class’s question map or bulletin board to promote positive learning spirit. Through clear evaluation and feedback, students learn to reflect, adjust, and continually improve their critical-thinking skills across lessons.

2.2.2. Developing Critical Thinking through Debate and Dialogue in Literature Lessons

a) Objectives

This strategy aims to develop in students the ability to actively and confidently participate in debates and dialogues with well-supported reasoning. Through debate activities, students practice analyzing issues, identifying and evaluating arguments, detecting contradictions, and pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of opposing

viewpoints. They learn to express their personal voice while respecting others, listening attentively, and providing rational responses.

Debate and dialogue help students develop independent thinking, critical thinking, the ability to cite evidence and organize arguments, while broadening their understanding of the issues addressed in literary texts. In particular, debate in Literature nurtures text appreciation skills, character evaluation, and interpretation of phenomena, thereby strengthening the connection between literary knowledge and real life.

b) Implementation Method

Step 1: Identifying key issues that can generate diverse viewpoints.

The teacher analyzes the lesson to select issues that are central to the text yet open to multiple interpretations or contain controversial aspects. These should be sufficiently open-ended for students to adopt their own stances—such as evaluating a character’s actions, determining the rightness or wrongness of a choice, or interpreting the artistic message of the work. Selecting the right issue provides a solid foundation for productive debate and optimizes the development of critical thinking.

Step 2: Formulating debate topics in the form of guiding questions.

After identifying the issue, the teacher develops it into key guiding questions that encourage multidimensional thinking. These may include: “Is the character’s action justified?” “What message is the author conveying?” or “Why do opposing interpretations exist regarding this detail?” These questions guide, but do not restrict, students, allowing them to gather evidence, interpret the text, and construct independent lines of reasoning.

Step 3: Organizing groups to prepare arguments and evidence.

The class is divided into two or three groups, each representing a different position on the issue. Each group identifies core arguments, gathers textual evidence, and incorporates real-life connections to strengthen their position. They also prepare rebuttal strategies by anticipating opposing arguments and crafting logical, persuasive responses. This process trains students to analyze and structure arguments systematically.

Step 4: Facilitating debate and dialogue during class.

During the debate, the teacher organizes discussion rounds following the sequence: presentation of arguments → rebuttal by the opposing group → response from the initial group → temporary conclusion by the teacher. Throughout this process, the teacher acts as facilitator and moderator,

ensuring fairness, respect, and focus. The teacher observes how students construct arguments, question others, respond to challenges, and handle criticism to assess their critical-thinking development.

Step 5: Providing feedback and guiding further development of critical thinking.

After the activity, the teacher provides comprehensive feedback on each group's reasoning, identifying strengths, limitations, logical coherence, depth of evidence, and engagement with multiple perspectives. The teacher highlights effective argumentative strategies and points out weaknesses such as emotional reasoning, insufficient evidence, or lack of logic. This feedback helps students refine their debate skills and continue strengthening their critical-thinking abilities in future lessons.

c) Illustrative Example of Organizing Discussion and Debate Activities in the Speaking and Listening Lesson "Discussing and Debating a Social Issue" (Literature 11, Volume 2)

Sample topic: "Should students be prohibited from using mobile phones at school?" (This topic is close to students' real-life experiences, contains contrasting viewpoints, and is suitable for fostering critical thinking.)

Step 1: Selecting a central issue that can generate multiple viewpoints.

The teacher analyzes the lesson and selects the topic "Banning students from using mobile phones at school." This issue is closely tied to school life, is open-ended, and can generate diverse perspectives. It relates to the right-wrong dimension of behavior, the rationale behind school regulations, and encourages students to form personal stances based on analyzing benefits and drawbacks. Choosing an appropriate issue builds a solid foundation for debate and maximizes students' critical-thinking potential.

Step 2: Developing the debate topic through a system of guiding questions

After determining the topic, the teacher creates a set of leading questions such as: "What benefits do mobile phones bring to learning?", "What negative impacts do mobile phones have on students?", "Should they be completely banned or only partially restricted? Why?" "If not banned, what alternative management measures could be used?", "Why do many schools around the world still allow mobile phone use?"

These questions guide but do not impose viewpoints. They help students explore the issue from multiple angles, independently search for evidence, and build their own arguments.

Step 3: Organizing groups and preparing arguments and

evidence.

The teacher divides the class into two main groups:

Group 1: Supports banning phone use at school.

Group 2: Opposes a complete ban and proposes flexible management.

Each group prepares:

Core arguments (why their stance is reasonable).

Real-life evidence: survey data, examples from other schools, personal experiences.

Life connections: impacts on learning, discipline, and mental well-being.

Rebuttal strategies: predicting opposing arguments and preparing logical, persuasive responses.

For example:

Group 1 prepares evidence about students' addiction to phones or distraction during class.

Group 2 gathers research indicating that phones support digital learning and quick information retrieval.

This preparation stage trains students to analyze and construct systematic arguments and critical reasoning before entering the formal debate.

Step 4: Facilitating the in-class debate and dialogue

The teacher organizes the debate as follows:

Group 1 presents its viewpoint (3–5 minutes).

Group 2 responds with rebuttals (3 minutes).

Group 1 replies (2–3 minutes).

Then the roles are reversed:

Group 2 presents its viewpoint.

Group 1 responds.

Throughout the debate, the teacher acts as moderator, ensuring respect and fairness; preventing personal attacks; encouraging evidence-based reasoning; observing how students present arguments, question others, and respond to challenges; and noting argumentation strategies for assessing critical-thinking skills.

Example of rebuttal:

Group 1: "Phones cause many students to play games during class. Without a ban, it's difficult to control."

Group 2: "Gaming results from ineffective management. A total ban deprives students of access to digital learning materials."

Group 1 responds: "We could allow phone use during specific times rather than unrestricted use."

The debate proceeds in an atmosphere of respect and academic inquiry.

Step 5: Giving feedback and guiding the development of

critical thinking

At the end, the teacher evaluates each group using criteria such as:

Logical coherence of arguments

Persuasiveness of evidence

Ability to rebut and pose counter-questions

Cooperation and attitude when being challenged

Creativity in proposing solutions

The teacher highlights:

Strengths: effective use of data, persuasive evidence, clear delivery.

Weaknesses: emotional reasoning, vague evidence, shallow rebuttals.

Suggestions for improvement: enhance cause–effect analysis, compare contrasting perspectives, use more diverse data sources.

Feedback enables students to refine their debating skills and strengthen their critical-thinking abilities in subsequent lessons.

Organizing debate and dialogue not only allows students to practice critical thinking directly and dynamically, but also creates an active learning environment where they express personal viewpoints, receive and evaluate others' ideas. The teacher can observe, provide timely guidance, and accurately assess each student's critical-thinking progress. This solution is both feasible and suitable for classroom conditions, contributing to improved Literature learning outcomes and fostering critical thinking in Grade 11 students.

2.2.3. Developing Critical Thinking through the “Role-Playing – Perspective Switching” Activity

The role-playing–perspective switching activity requires students to step into the position of a character or another subject in the text to retell the story, express thoughts, or present viewpoints from a new perspective different from the original narrative. Instead of receiving the story passively from the narrator's or author's viewpoint, students “live” in the character's position and experience their circumstances, psychology, and motivations. This immersive engagement allows them to break away from one-dimensional reading, broaden their understanding, and actively re-evaluate issues. Thus, role-playing–perspective switching becomes an effective method to stimulate analytical, interpretive, and evaluative thinking.

This activity plays an important role in developing students' critical thinking because it encourages them to approach issues from multiple angles. When switching perspectives, students must reconsider events, motives, and actions more deeply, realizing that a literary issue never has

a single explanation. This shift prompts questions such as: Why did the character act that way? Is my usual interpretation one-sided? Are there deeper causes I haven't uncovered?

This self-questioning process cultivates reflective thinking, comparison, verification of information, and logical reasoning. At the same time, when taking the position of a vulnerable or morally ambiguous character, students learn empathy and reduce bias—an important aspect of humanistic critical thinking.

a) Principles

The activity operates on the principle that each character has unique circumstances, status, and emotions, which shape their perspective. When students switch viewpoints, they also shift their way of understanding and evaluating issues; thus, the processes of analyzing, reflecting, and comparing occur naturally, facilitating critical thinking. This perspective shift requires students not merely to retell content but to deeply understand psychological mechanisms, motivations, and character relationships. Therefore, the most essential principle is respecting the diversity of perspectives and allowing students to explore issues through new approaches without imposing a single interpretation.

b) Implementation Procedure

Step 1: Warm-up and identifying the perspective for role-taking

The teacher introduces the activity, guiding students to understand the purpose of shifting perspectives and asking each student to choose a character or a new narrative viewpoint in the text. At this stage, the teacher helps students identify potential characters, their circumstances, and the hidden aspects of the story so that they have a solid basis for role-taking.

Step 2: Choosing an appropriate role-taking format

After determining the viewpoint, students select a mode of expression such as writing a character's diary, composing a letter to another person, creating an imagined dialogue, or retelling the story from a different first-person perspective. The teacher clarifies the features of each format: diaries reveal inner thoughts; letters express feelings to a specific recipient; dialogues reveal conflicts; first-person retellings reconstruct events entirely from a new point of view.

Step 3: Studying the text and analyzing the character's psychology before role-taking

The teacher requires students to return to the text, reread details related to their chosen character, and analyze the context, motivations, and psychological developments. Students then infer what the character might think, feel, or

say that is not explicitly stated in the text. This step ensures that the role-taking product is logical, convincing, and not based on pure emotion.

Step 4: Writing or presenting the role-taking product

Students begin to express the new viewpoint through the chosen format. They must mobilize creative imagination, analytical ability, and reasoning skills to justify the character's actions. The teacher observes and provides support when needed, guiding students in maintaining appropriate tone, language, and emotional flow to remain consistent with the original text while still being creative.

Step 5: Presenting products and sharing new perspectives

Students read, perform, or present their role-taking products to the class. They listen to peers, ask questions, and comment on the new viewpoints. The teacher encourages students to compare perspectives, identify strengths and weaknesses, and develop skills in evaluation, questioning, and analysis.

Step 6: Feedback, consolidation, and fostering critical thinking

The teacher evaluates the logic, creativity, psychological insight, and reasoning ability shown in students' products. Through this activity, students learn to view issues from multiple angles and recognize that each character occupies a different position. Changing perspectives enables students to reassess the situation critically, thereby developing deep, sustainable critical thinking skills.

c) Illustrative Example: Organizing the Activity in Teaching the Excerpt "Trao duyên" (The Tale of Kieu, Nguyen Du) (Grade 11 Literature, Volume 2)

Step 1: Warm-up and identifying the perspective for role-taking

The teacher introduces the activity by emphasizing that shifting perspectives in literature—particularly in the excerpt "*Trao duyên*"—helps students explore the characters' inner world more deeply. The teacher poses guiding questions: besides Kiều, which characters can observe or be affected by this event? Students may choose Thuy Vân—the recipient of Kiều's love debt; Kim Trong—absent yet the emotional center; or even the narrator or a servant who witnesses Kiều's despair. The teacher helps students identify the character's circumstances, emotions, and untold aspects so they can select an appropriate viewpoint for creation.

Step 2: Choosing an appropriate role-taking format

After choosing their character, students select a format such as writing Thuy Van's diary after the night she received the "love debt," composing an imagined letter from Kim Trong

to Kiều upon learning the truth, or creating a dialogue between Kieu and Van that Nguyen Du did not record. The teacher explains that diaries reveal personal emotions, letters express sentiments toward someone specific, dialogues highlight inner conflict, while first-person retellings recreate the entire "*trao duyên*" event from a different emotional lens. Each viewpoint and format will result in its own tone and depth.

Step 3: Studying the text and analyzing character psychology

Students return to the excerpt, carefully reading lines that reveal Kieu's emotions, Vân's reactions, or Kim Trong's symbolic presence. They analyze the heartbreaking situation that forces Kiều to give up her love, Van's surprise and emotional burden, or the anguish Kim Trong might feel if he learned the truth. Through this, students infer what the characters might think or wish to express even though the original text does not state it explicitly. This ensures that creative products remain grounded in Nguyen Du's spirit rather than becoming overly subjective.

Step 4: Writing or presenting the role-taking product

Based on their chosen viewpoint and format, students begin composing. A student portraying Thuy Van in a diary may express confusion, sympathy, and the pressure of accepting a love she did not choose. A student role-playing Kim Trong might describe the pain of learning that Kieu sacrificed herself for her family. The teacher monitors and supports students in maintaining appropriate tone, emotional coherence, and stylistic alignment with the excerpt's tragic atmosphere.

Step 5: Presenting the product and sharing new perspectives

Students present by reading, performing, or explaining their work. They listen to peers and ask questions about the logic of the new perspective, such as: "If you were Thuy Van, would you feel overwhelmed by the burden placed on you?" or "How might Kim Trong react if he witnessed the scene firsthand?" The teacher encourages discussion and comparison of viewpoints to highlight the richness and diversity of interpretations. The classroom becomes a space for dialogue, inquiry, and deeper exploration of meaning.

Step 6: Feedback, consolidation, and fostering critical thinking

The teacher evaluates logic, creativity, psychological insight, and reasoning in students' work. Strengths may include a convincing explanation of Kiều's decision, a nuanced portrayal of Thuy Van's inner conflict, or an emotionally coherent depiction of Kim Trọng's pain. Weaknesses are addressed with constructive suggestions.

Through this activity, students understand that each character views events differently. By shifting perspectives, they reassess the issue from multiple dimensions, developing natural, profound, and enduring critical thinking skills.

3. Conclusion

Developing students' critical thinking skills in Grade 11 Literature is an urgent requirement in the context of educational innovation, aiming to cultivate learners who are proactive, creative, and capable of independent thought. Based on theoretical analysis and practical investigation, this paper proposes three key measures to support teachers in organizing learning activities that foster students' critical thinking.

First, question-posing activities help students identify issues, scrutinize information, and expand their perspectives on literary phenomena. Purposeful and varied questioning stimulates independent thinking and enhances analytical ability.

Second, debate and dialogue activities create an environment in which students can develop arguments, defend their viewpoints, and respond critically based on evidence. Through academic exchange, students refine logical thinking, improve their evaluative and comparative skills, and gain experience in scholarly communication.

Third, role-taking and perspective-shifting activities allow students to approach texts from multiple roles, viewpoints, and contexts. Changing the speaker/writer/character's position encourages creative imagination and develops multi-dimensional thinking—a key feature of critical thinking.

In conclusion, organizing learning activities through questioning, debate and dialogue, as well as role-taking and perspective-shifting, is an effective approach to cultivating critical thinking in high school students. This also provides an important foundation for teachers to continuously adjust their teaching methods toward the goal of developing learners' competencies within the current general education curriculum.

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