

DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH: THE IMPACT OF CRITICAL THINKING IN ENGLISH AS

A FOREIGN LANGUAGE ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING IN COLOMBIA

Documentary Research: The Impact of Critical Thinking in English as a Foreign

Language Argumentative Writing in Colombia

Investigación Documentada: El Impacto del Pensamiento Crítico en la Escritura

Argumentativa en inglés como lengua extranjera en Colombia

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To Emmanuel, light of my life, my true north.

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Acknowledgments

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Abstract

Argumentative writing is an important skill that has been on the spot in the educational settings; developing this skill helps students have a deep understanding of any topic by analyzing, inferring, and respecting others' opinions (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992). This qualitative documentary research was carried by searching different databases and repositories to collect meaningful, authentic, reliable, credible, and representative information from the Colombian context that comes from manuscripts and action research studies to examine what literature informs us about the impact that Critical thinking has on EFL learners' Argumentative writing within the last 10 years. The findings put forward that the impact that Critical thinking has on Argumentative writing is positive, useful and helpful for the EFL learners; also, the practices and the strategies that have been implemented in the EFL academic settings successfully.

Keywords: Academic writing, Argumentative writing, Critical thinking, Writing skill.

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Resumen

La Escritura argumentativa es una habilidad importante que ha estado presente en los entornos educativos; el desarrollo de esta habilidad ayuda a los estudiantes a tener una comprensión profunda de cualquier tema al analizar, inferir y respetar las opiniones de los demás (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992). Esta investigación documental cualitativa se llevó a cabo mediante la búsqueda en diferentes bases de datos y repositorios para recolectar información significativa, auténtica, confiable, acreditada y representativa del contexto colombiano que proviene de manuscritos y estudios investigación-acción para examinar qué nos informa la literatura sobre el impacto que el Pensamiento crítico tiene en la Escritura argumentativa de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera en los últimos 10 años. Los hallazgos exponen que el impacto que tiene el Pensamiento crítico en las prácticas de Escritura argumentativa es positivo y útil para los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera; también las prácticas y las estrategias que se han implementado en los entornos académicos exitosamente.

Palabras clave: Escritura académica, Escritura argumentativa, Habilidad de escritura, Pensamiento crítico.

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Chapter 1: Problem Statement

1.1 Introduction

The objective of this Documentary research study is to examine what literature informs us about the impact that critical thinking (CT) has on English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' argumentative writing (AW) based on the studies from the Colombian context that have been done within the last 10 years. Existing literature will be explored, reported, and analyzed, in order to understand the existing relation between CT and EFL AW. Nowadays, it is known that AW has been on the spot in the last decades as one of the current demands and requirements that national and international standards have established. Therefore, this Documentary research is aimed to determine what is the relation between CT and EFL AW, how CT skills contribute to EFL AW development and put forward the practices and strategies that have been implemented in the Colombian context effectively; for this reason, a period of 10 years was enough to access the most recent and pertinent literature.

This manuscript consists of five chapters that will be depicted respectively. First, Chapter 1 outlines an explanation of the problem statement and the rationale. Literature review and Theoretical framework, as the second chapter, explains the State of the art as the core of the study, then the three main constructs for the study and the legal documents that are related to the present proposal. In chapter 3, the methodological design develops the Methodology, Type of study, Stages of the Study and Data Collection Method in order to answer the research question. Chapter 4 puts forward the Data analysis and findings respectively. For chapter 5, the study

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conclusions, limitations and Pedagogical Implications are presented. Lastly, References, List of Tables and List of figures are shown.

1.2 Rationale

CT is a self-guided practice that aims to reason. According to Elder (2007), people who think critically will contribute to a more rational and civilized society. Nowadays, EFL learners usually face different problems when attempting to write texts that require their CT skills, which is the case of argumentative texts. Therefore, several questions and suggestions about how to foster critical thinking and argumentative writing skills in EFL have been raised. The purpose of this manuscript is to analyze what literature informs us about the impact that CT has on EFL AW and identify the strategies that have been implemented within the last 10 years in Colombia. This section will put forward the importance of this study, its benefits in the local, national Colombian context.

There are some studies related to the present documentary research main topic: The impact that CT has on EFL learners AW. To begin with, Chapetón and Chala (2012) worked on a study that shares the theoretical framework to document and analyze EFL argumentative essay writing lessons; they aim to address writing as a situated social practice within a genre-based approach. They explained that it is an alternative proposal to foster argumentative writing as critical, social, and situated activity that leads to a meaningful experience for learners, as they have options to communicate and negotiate their point of view and feelings through the written work. In the Peruvian context Nieto (2018) presented a study in which she attempted to examine what was the impact that CT skills had on students' written work; participants were EFL students from 18 to 24 years old. The author proposed promoting CT skills through contextualized videos

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that were followed by questions, as well as a pre-writing activity that helped them organize the ideas. Then, she determined that implementing CT skills through videos, mind maps and questions could certainly help EFL learners have a deep understanding, as well as self-assess their writing work. Also, Nieto findings show that education needs to introduce CT skills as it has been seen that it positively impacts the writing process for students, helping them evaluate and elaborate more what they are putting forward.

Basically, these related studies agree on the fact that CT skills are crucial to improve argumentative writing in EFL since it helps students become critical, reflective and creative thinkers that are able to express clear thoughts through argumentative writing in their daily lives. Therefore, the relevance of this study lies in the fact that existing and recent literature will be analyzed in order to present what has been found in the field of EFL learning. To do so, the latest and pertinent literature about CT in EFL argumentative writing practices will be explored, gathered, organized and analyzed. This study would be useful to create awareness about the importance of including strategies to foster CT in EFL classes as students and teachers will become argumentative writers that take and defend positions through solid arguments.

Moreover, teachers, students and researchers may reflect upon their current practices that promote the production of argumentative texts in EFL to verify and correct the strategies that have been implemented lately. All things considered; the academic community could focus on the paramount importance of having CT skills and EFL argumentative writing lessons closely integrated as it is useful for everyone to be able to understand one's context meaningfully.

This Documentary research will be useful for pre-service and in-service EFL teachers since they will be aware of the impact that CT has on argumentative writing. Secondly,

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Colombian EFL teachers will find it helpful because this study will present plans, strategies, and techniques that have certainly worked before, so that they can implement them successfully in their EFL argumentative writing classes accordingly. Thirdly, as information will be highly concise and pertinent, researchers will benefit from the findings that will be presented; those may help them have a wide understanding of the impact that CT has on AW in the EFL classes and may help them bring up new ideas and scenarios to develop research. Most importantly, EFL teaching practices will benefit from this project, as they will have options to promote learning and improve the teaching and learning practices. This study will be certainly essential to have a deep understanding on the strategies that have been implemented to boost EFL teaching since the information comes mainly from action research studies that implemented innovative proposals in which the effectiveness had been verified.

1.3 Research Problem

Identifying a problem in research is an essential step for researchers to have a clear goal. The importance of a research problem lies on the fact that it provides researchers with opportunities to set clear questions, objectives and processes in order to address and overcome the given concern (Yogesh Kumar 2007). In this documentary research, the problem and the literature to characterize it will be presented.

The problem that has been identified refers to the difficulties that EFL learners may face when writing argumentative texts in EFL settings, a situation that, according to Nejmaoui (2018), is connected to their CT skills. The author states that educational settings fail to be an ideal place to foster CT skills and teachers focus on the learners' EFL proficiency rather than having contextualized class contents to reflect upon (Nejmaoui, 2018). Certainly, that may contribute to

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the difficulties students have to argue, speak their mind, and reflect about their context. It has been seen that learners are not asked to reflect upon their own reality and life; therefore, it is difficult for them to take a stand and support it by using solid arguments.

Considering the above, the problem relies on the fact that educational settings have focused more on EFL linguistic aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, word choice and punctuation than on the processes of analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing that EFL learners should develop as well as their communicative skills. For instance, Veliz and Veliz (2018) assert, in one of their studies, that a group of Chilean students had not had the opportunity to develop CT skills in the EFL classes because they were rated according to their communicative and linguistic skills only. As a result of it, those students had difficulties when they wanted to put forward their stand, thoughts and opinions in L2, and mainly when writing in EFL.

Also, the problem was mainly identified by analyzing the following official documents; firstly, ICFES exam, known as Pruebas Saber 11. It is an important test that is meant to evaluate Colombian students' knowledge once they have finished high school (MEN-ICFES, 2020). That exam has five subjects: critical reading, English, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences and civics; scores are given based on four performance levels. For the English section, results are given according to five levels, and are classified in: A-, A1, A2, B1 y B+, being the last one the highest performance level that may be achieved (MEN-ICFES, 2020, p. 21). Regarding the results, it is evidenced that critical reading test results showed that 49% of students fell into the second category: minimum required. On the other hand, the English section results showed that 36% fell into the first category which is: insufficient (MEN-ICFES, 2020, p. 46). Those results clearly demonstrate that there is a long way to go regarding the development of the learners' EFL

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level and critical thinking skills in their mother tongue. Even though CT reading skill was assessed in students' mother tongue, it is stated that literacy skills are easily influenced by L1 and transferred across languages (Durgunoğlu, 2002, p.189).

The obstacles that EFL learners deal with when writing argumentative texts can also be associated with the low levels of English proficiency that have been identified in the Colombian education context. There are several programs and strategies that respond to an urgent need of improving EFL proficiency in this context. For example, there is another official document that presents the National Bilingual Programme that was established by the Colombian Ministry of Education (MEN, 2004). It was meant to help students become bilingual by 2019; it was mainly focused on improving EFL speaking and writing skills because results nationwide had not been satisfactory. Even though it was largely criticized in the country, it points out the necessity of improving the practices in the Teaching English as foreign language settings. Another project that is named: *Formadores nativos extranjeros* (MEN, 2017), has been fully implemented to respond to a problematic situation: teachers and students' English level in all the skills: speaking, listening, writing, and reading is low. That strategy was aimed at having native speaking teachers come and work with EFL teachers in Colombia so that learners could be exposed enough and use the foreign language meaningfully. The purpose of those two strategies was to have the learners placed in real life scenarios and EFL setting, so that they could enhance their EFL level in general.

All in all, the problem in this Documentary research refers to the difficulties that EFL learners face when they need to use their CT skills, and mainly when they must write argumentative texts. It has been known that students find it hard to take ownership of the

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knowledge they acquire and fail to set forth purposeful, clear and concise arguments in the EFL argumentative writing practices. Therefore, there is an urgent need to make the students aware of the world they are living in, face real life scenarios so that they can feel free to reflect upon it and put forward their stand through well-constructed argumentative texts. This problematic situation was identified mainly from information in the recent literature that shows that learners do not have the opportunity to experience EFL writing classes to reflect upon real situations or express their thoughts and ideas. Thus, it is seen how educational communities experience the same issue today and that is the reason why this has become an area of my interest.

1.4 Research Question

This is the general research question for this documentary research.

What does literature inform about the impact that critical thinking has on EFL learners' argumentative writing based on the studies that have been done in Colombia within the last 10 years?

1.5 Objectives

1.5.1 General objective

To examine what literature informs us about the impact that critical thinking has on EFL learners' AW based on the studies that have been done in Colombia within the last 10 years.

1.5.2 Specific objectives

1. To analyze the correlation between CT and EFL AW based on the studies that have been done in Colombia within the last 10 years.

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2. To identify and characterize strategies that have been implemented based on critical thinking skills in order to foster AW practices.
3. To describe the type of argumentation that learners have achieved while writing by means of CT processes.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This chapter puts forward the State of the art which is the core of the present study. Then the theoretical framework; there are three main constructs that guide this Documentary research; those are Critical Thinking, Argumentative Writing, and Writing Skills. And then, the legal framework is presented.

2.1 State of the Art

In this segment, the action-research studies that were finally gathered to answer the research question are being presented as follows. To begin with, the author searched for the studies specifically in Colombian university repositories following these criteria; first, *the topic*: “*Critical thinking and Argumentative Writing in EFL*”. There were several topics that were related to CT only or AW in EFL only; therefore, several were disregarded. It was important that the action research study had presented a proposal according to strategies or practices by means of CT to foster AW in EFL, this way, the impact that CT may have on AW EFL practices would be unveiled. Second, *the context*: “*In Colombia*”. This present Documentary research searches for action-research studies that had taken place in Colombia, aiming at answering a problematic situation in this context specifically. Third, *the timeframe*: “*the last 10 years*”. A period of 10 years was enough to access the most recent and pertinent literature that would help answer the Documentary research question. Finally, 21 studies were found, collected and classified into a Local (Bogotá D.C.) and National (Colombia) scale (see Table 1).

Table 1.

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Studies scale

<u>Study scale</u>	
Local (Bogotá D.C.)	17
National (Colombia)	4
Total	21

After reading the documents, those were organized carefully in order to put forward the most representative information that would lead to achieve the specific and main research objectives. Therefore, a list of the action-research studies is presented: *State of the art*, and it shows the document title, its scale following a chronological order according to the publication year, the type of study and participants. From the study number one to the 17th the local studies are shown, those took place in Bogotá D.C. Then, the national studies are displayed from the 18th to the 21st. Lastly, a summary of each document that was read and reviewed will be presented, setting forth the study context, population, problematic situation, objectives, proposal (strategies), results and most importantly, the present authors critical review about each document, and the action-research study's relevance to the topic: The impact that CT has on EFL AW in Colombia. It is displayed accordingly as follows in Table 2.

Table 2.

State of the Art table.

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Study	Title	Scale	Year	Type of study	Participants
1	EFL argumentative essay writing as a situated-social practice: A review of concepts.	Local	2012	Qualitative	University students

Chapetón, C. M., & Chala, P. A. (2012). *EFL argumentative essay writing as a situated-social practice: A review of concepts*. Folios No.36, 28-35.

There is a qualitative research project carried out by Chapetón & Chala (2012) in Colombia, they present theoretical trends in order to examine EFL argumentative essay writing as a situated social practice. The purpose was addressing writing as a situated social practice within a genre-based approach as an alternative to foster argumentative writing as critical, social, and situated activity that leads to a meaningful experience for students; helping them communicate and negotiate their point of view and feelings through the written text. Therefore, having verified the theory they put forward that the argumentative written work consists of; first, the introductory paragraph should present a clear topic, a background, and invite the audience to accept the thesis. Secondly, the body of the text which may have several paragraphs that are meant to develop and support the thesis statement, those start with a topic statement, supporting sentences that are constructed by means of facts, data, statistics, and if needed, a concluding sentence. Thirdly, there is a concluding paragraph that is aimed at reviewing and reinforcing all the aspects that were presented; as well as the writer's voice in which a thought, suggestion, idea or judgment is given. Additionally, students should consider the audience they are writing for. The findings show that implementing activities that foster argumentative essay writing practices will encourage EFL learners to write in order to express their feelings and opinions. They conclude that understanding argumentative essay writing as a dynamic process of creation and genre as a situated social action (Chapetón & Chala, 2012).

2	Working by Projects: A Way to Enrich Critical Thinking and the Writing Process in a Third Grade EFL Classroom.	Local	2012	Qualitative	Third grade students
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Ruiz, S. (2012). *Working by Projects: A Way to Enrich Critical Thinking and the Writing Process in a Third Grade EFL Classroom*. Colombia

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A qualitative action research was done by Ruiz (2012), developed with thirty-three students of third grade at a Bogota's public school. This study attempted to analyze the importance that project work has in the development of CT skills as well as to document the correlation it may have in EFL learners' writing skills. The instruments that were implemented were: field notes, artifacts, and audio recordings, used during eleven sessions; the researcher carried out the action research cycle twice: planning, acting, observing and reflecting and it helped her identify that students were interested in the recycling project and needed to enrich their language learning process. Therefore, Ruiz worked on a proposal that consisted of having students put forward topics of their interest and related to the school project: recycling. Firstly, participants were divided into groups and needed to pick out a topic about environmental care; later, they could do research about it. Then, participants could work on several drafts to create a mini-book, poster or frieze. Lastly, the groups had the opportunity to present their work. To do so, Ruiz provided students with pictures to learn vocabulary and sentence structure; fortunately, students were engaged in the class, asking for feedback and willing to express their feelings, likes, concerns, ideas, and needs. To sum up, results show that through project work EFL learners enhanced their CT skills as well as their writing process, they became reflective, organized, and aware about their context. Also, students improved their relationship with others, expressed that EFL can be useful for daily life and seemed to be more confident when writing. All in all, the author explains that developing CT skills through activities in which students are mainly in charge, foster participation and interest; since students can participate and interact with others freely and speak their minds.

3	Collaborative writing to enhance academic writing Development Through Project Work.	Local	2013	Qualitative	University students
<p>Robayo, A. & Hernández, L. (2013). Collaborative writing to enhance academic writing Development Through Project Work. <i>HOW</i>, 20, 130-148.</p> <p>Also, a study done by Robayo and Hernández (2013), is aimed at portraying the implementation of a pedagogical intervention meant to help 18 uppers intermediate EFL learners aged from 16 to 28 at a private university in Bogotá, Colombia. The main goal was</p>					

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enhancing academic writing by means of collaborative writing and project work. The problematic situation was that students presented a failure to use cohesion and they were focused on linguistic aspects, rather than content; therefore, they had issues supporting their arguments and organizing their ideas. That is the reason why the researchers proposed materials that were related to writing academic and collaborative writing through project work theories. Students were asked to write opinion essay, tourist brochure, a movie review, a solution-problem paper and a pro and cons essay with at least three paragraphs about contextualized topics in Colombia. Thus, they were given models of well-constructed papers, workshops to learn how to use linking words and connectors. Once they did the data analysis, two categories took place; firstly, Collaboration features, it refers to the relationships that students may establish while working together on the project. Then, the second one, it refers to students' ability to ask for help, convey meaning, develop CT and be aware of the academic writing features. To conclude, the outcomes show that collaborative writing through project work boosts students' academic writing by means of practice and contextualized topics, which is helpful at the same time to develop CT skills. The authors put forward that the methodology they developed can enhance aspects of EFL writing.

4	The role of genre-based activities in the writing of argumentative essays in efl.	Local	2013	Qualitative	University students
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Chala Bejarano, P. & Chapetón, C. (2013). *The role of genre-based activities in the writing of argumentative essays in efl.* Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Facultad de Ciencias Humanas.

Chala and Chapetón (2013) presented an action research project that was carried out with EFL pre-service teachers at a private university in Bogotá, Colombia. The data were collected by means of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, class recordings, and students' artifacts. As argumentative writing in EFL is not approached from a linguistic perspective mostly, it was paramount for them to work on EFL writing skill as a communicative and situated social practice. The research question was: What is the role of a set of genre-based activities in the creation of argumentative essays by high intermediate students of English in the BED in Modern Languages program when writing is understood as a

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situated social practice? Therefore, they wanted to provide students with opportunities to speak their minds in a meaningful way; to do so, a set of genre-based activities were implemented, aiming at achieving three essays as follows: Opinion, For and Against, and Problem Solutions. To achieve the goal, the first step was *exploring the genre*, which allowed the students to get familiar with analyzed sample essays. Secondly, *building knowledge of the field*, in which students picked out a topic to investigate about to share the information with everyone in the class. *Text construction or drafting* as the third step, the students were asked to start writing in class and outside the class. The fourth step was *revising and submitting a final draft*, they were asked to assess their own first draft, going beyond the linguistics aspects and features; then, teacher and peer feedback was considered to construct a final draft. The fifth step was *Assessment and evaluation*; it was aimed at providing qualitative feedback. The last one: *editing and publishing*, consisted of having students adjust their texts and post them on a Facebook blog. Finally, students wrote their opinions regarding the overall experience. Consequently, findings showed that participants felt supported, confident and had a positive attitude towards the writing practice, which shows the importance of providing scaffolding opportunities, understanding writing as a process, and of the use of samples and explicit instruction to facilitate writing in context.

5	Life stories: a way to develop critical thinking in EFL sixth grade learners.	Local	2015	Qualitative	High school students
<p>Acero, M. A. (2015). <i>Life stories: a way to develop critical thinking in EFL sixth grade learners</i>. Bogotá. Universidad Pedagógica Nacional.</p> <p>There is also a qualitative action research that was carried out by Acero (2015) in Bogotá. She worked with seventeen students of six grade, implementing instruments such as: field notes, artifacts, questionnaires, and an interview. The problematic situation was identified when the researcher noticed that the students had an opinion on a given text, but they could not state it, they ended up repeating somebody else's. Also, she noticed that for writing, EFL learners focused on linguistic features and forgot about their opinions, views and thoughts. Consequently, the researcher stated that the problem took place because critical thinking skills were left behind; thus, students had issues when approaching a text, when interpreting,</p>					

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analyzing, and evaluating point of views. The proposal put forward that critical thinking skills could be promoted in EFL students when developing writing through life stories; as it is a powerful tool for conveying meaning through writing in order to express and debate the world around. To do so, she carried out sixteen sessions in which students were given a girl's story and questions to identify learners' understanding on topics such as Poverty and Teenage pregnancy. Then, they were also given a song and the story behind it, so that they could give their opinion about it. Students were given a life story summary chart to fill in their point of view, as well as the possibility to draw what they wanted to represent and finally they were asked to write their own text.

6	Critical analysis of media towards the promotion of EFL students' learning autonomy.	Local	2016	Qualitative	University students
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Amórtegui Sacristán, I. (2016) *Critical analysis of media towards the promotion of EFL students' learning autonomy*. Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas School of Science and Education.

This is an interpretative qualitative case study presented by Amórtegui (2016) with six EFL students from Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. The problematic situation took place from the author's reflection upon the use of technologies and the fact that being too exposed to it will not let students carefully analyze the information around. The research question was: What aspects of learning autonomy are unveiled through critical analysis of media in an EFL class at Universidad Distrital? Therefore, the researcher wanted to provide the students with the chances to work on making decisions, reflecting, and working independently. The proposal consisted of motivating students to make use of technology as an interactive way to learn, going beyond the images and texts; most importantly, understanding the Media sources will help students foster their critical thinking skills. To achieve the goal, these activities were carried out. **ACTIVITY 1: Taking a Second Look**, students were to describe Media information (pictures), then reflect and analyze, and finally the teacher encouraged a discussion to write a second opinion. **ACTIVITY 2: Are you controlled by the media?** The students were given magazines and newspapers to analyze the advertisement goal and then write down their point of view. **ACTIVITY 3: Creating media**, it was meant to have

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students understand how Media is created by a discussion to finally construct a poster of one advertisement they liked, explain the main objective and target public. Then, the last activities were meant to foster problem-solving skills when analyzing their own context issues, stimulate social responsibility and look for reliable information; as well as motivate students to put forward their thinking.

7	Encouraging Critical Thinking Development in an efl Classroom through Urban Legends.	Local	2016	Qualitative	High school students
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Leal Hernández, M., & Gómez Rodríguez, L. F. (2016). Encouraging Critical Thinking Development in an efl Classroom through Urban Legends. *Folios No.43*, 137-152.

Furthermore, an important qualitative-action study was found, it was carried out by Leal Hernández & Gómez Rodríguez (2016). Participants were 32 EFL learners between 15 and 18 years old at a public high school located in Usme, Bogotá. Based on the collected data, they found that students faced three problematic situations in their EFL learning process; firstly, teaching practices were focused on traditional grammar-based curriculum, with an emphasis on grammar, spelling, and other linguistic aspects. Secondly, students' lack of CT skill implementation in their daily practices, since it was evidenced that students could not go beyond literal content. Participants' third issue was students' lack of motivation towards EFL classes and others; it was clearly related to social conflicts and low-income families they were coming from. Having identified the problem, they presented a proposal in which the objective was to foster students' CT skills through the discussion of social issues related to their context. To do so, students read American urban legends that were supported by worksheets, answered some questions about them, they were asked to make predictions, and were assigned tasks to learn vocabulary. Later the students shared with each other doubts and thoughts about the stories. Then, students had to discuss and answer open questions about the material. Finally, the participants presented their own written reflection critically as they were asked to modify those urban legends. Leal Hernández & Gómez Rodríguez (2016) conclude that unfortunately, social conflicts, dysfunctional families, violence, drug consumption and other problems are connected to school-academic life.

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8	The Co-construction of Knowledge and the Use of Critical Thinking in Academic Virtual Forums.	Local	2016	Qualitative	University students
<p>Pulido, O. (2016) <i>The Co-construction of Knowledge and the Use of Critical Thinking in Academic Virtual Forums</i>. Universidad Santo Tomás. Colombia.</p> <p>Pulido (2016) presented a qualitative descriptive study that was carried out with a course of Advanced English in the distance education undergraduate TEFL program at Universidad Santo Tomás in Colombia. He was motivated to carry out the project due to his experience as an EFL student since he found it difficult to reflect, formulate hypotheses, and put forward own ideas when elaborating essays. Thus, he was focused on determining patterns of co-construction of knowledge and describing the evidence of the implementation of CT in the virtual forums used in the EFL course. It was done by means of some instruments: an interaction analysis model and a survey that was meant to evaluate the intellectual standards of thinking and reasoning, as well as students' written posts. The instructional design he worked on put forward a book for the class, 'First Certificate Expert' by Jan Bell and Roger Gower; it consisted of twelve units, two sessions each, previously meant to work on reading, writing, listening, speaking, and language development in the methodology of distance education with a virtual platform. Pulido (2016) stated that the units were: 1. Lifestyles, 2. Earning a living, 3. The world around us, 4. Challenges, 5. Discovery, 6. Enjoying yourself, 7. Keeping up with the fashion, 8. The important things in life, 9. The consumer society, 10. Out and about, 11. Well-being, 12. Getting your message across. Two units were used to construct and apply the virtual forums: unit 9, 'consumer society' for which the proposed theme in virtual forum 1 was: What motivates you to give or deny money to people in need? and unit 10, 'Out and about' for which the proposed theme in virtual forum 2 was: What are your tips to improve your English skills? (p.37). The standards that were considered to analyze EFL learners' work were: clarity, accuracy or veracity, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, significance, and fairness. The proposal considered mainly CT skills in the virtual forum by means of real-life matters, helping students' question, gather and assess pertinent information, interpret ideas properly, draw conclusions, and think open-mindedly. Also, it is important to point out that</p>					

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during the sessions, vocabulary, informal expressions, conditionals and mixed conditionals, and conjunctions were taught. Lastly, findings show the importance of the standards to assess students CT, specifically, when writing in EFL since students are asked to elaborate their ideas, put forward what they can contribute, provide clear examples, among others.

9	Exploring students' EFL writing through the implementation of writing for learning approach.	Local	2017	Qualitative	High school students
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Sánchez, J. A. (2017). *Exploring students' EFL writing through the implementation of writing for learning approach. Bogotá, Colombia.*

One first research considered in this project puts forward a qualitative action research done by Sanchez in 2017 with a group of EFL 10th grade students in a public school of Bogotá. It was aimed at examining learners' EFL writing production through the implementation of writing for learning approach. In addition, the author wanted to provide students with the opportunity to practice writing in EFL by following a writing-for-learning approach; it allows learners to express their ideas regarding any topic. Firstly, the strategy consisted of having students select the topics for the writing lessons so that they could write meaningfully about them; then, students had a reinforcement writing in which they could ask and recap grammar and vocabulary topics. Secondly, preparation writing consisted of having students write several sentences, not very elaborated, this was meant to help students have a set of ideas they could organize later properly. Thirdly students were asked to write a poster, a paper, or a brochure. These study findings show fortunately that students were engaged during the writing workshops as they were asking questions about grammar and vocabulary; also, they asked for feedback constantly (Sanchez, 2017). Finally, the author recommends working on motivating students through contextualized proposals in which students' likes and interests can be included.

10	Portfolios focused on controversial issues to enhance argumentative writing skills.	Local	2017	Qualitative	High school students
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Abella Peña, O. F. (2017). *Portfolios focused on controversial issues to enhance argumentative writing skills*. Doctoral disertación, Bogotá: Universidad Externado de Colombia.

This is a qualitative action research study that took place in Bogotá D.C, done by Abella (2017). The participants were 15 students from 8th grade. The author found out that lack of motivation and contextualized materials led students to have a low English performance. Therefore, the researcher focused on the one hand, on exploring the role of portfolios based on controversial issues in students' argumentative writing skills. On the other hand, describing students' argumentative skills related to controversial issues through their argumentative written productions. The proposal consisted of improving 8th graders EFL argumentative skills in EFL by asking them to discuss issues and take a stand. The researcher designed a Portfolio that included two controversial issue workshops that were related to argumentation, vocabulary, and a self-assessment section. Mainly, the portfolios had topics that were related to students' daily lives and images to support the content, and to make it attractive. Finally, it was seen that the 8th graders were completely engaged in the activities, felt comfortable when putting forward their ideas in English. The students developed argumentative writing skills because of the rigorous process of writing in English and the input.

11	A contextualized booklet to develop critical thinking and argumentative writing.	Local	2018	Qualitative	Primary school students
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Díaz Granados Sánchez, J. (2018). *A contextualized booklet to develop critical thinking and argumentative writing*. Bogotá. Universidad Externado de Colombia.

The second study that was found, was done by Diaz in 2018, in Colombia, it puts forward a qualitative action research that was carried out with 24 5th graders of a private school, named: Colombo American school. (Diaz, 2018). This study presented six lessons contextualized booklet, in the development of CT skills when writing argumentative texts in EFL. Diaz selected instruments such as: students' artifacts, teacher's field notes, and a questionnaire that helped her design a scaffolded strategy-based that was successfully implemented. She brought for the class contextualized materials based on students' likes,

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interests and own culture; moreover, she brought questions to give students a lead in identifying and expressing arguments in EFL. Within the six lessons, she worked first on providing insights and background knowledge, introducing the purpose of the classes and presenting argument & fallacy definitions. So that students could develop the classes through a clear step by step. For instance, one of the lessons first section presented Homework as the topic, students were asked to brainstorming ideas about homework presenting advantages and disadvantages and then presented a draft and finally a self-assessment activity. Finally, she concludes, based on the findings, that students were receptive to the materials, showed motivation and confidence, as the topics were appropriate for them. Furthermore, participants learned how to think in a more structured way to construct arguments of authority, and cause-effect relationship sentences, according to their English proficiency and ages.

12	Fostering the Development of Written Argumentative Competence in ELT from a Critical Literacy Approach.	Local	2018	Qualitative	University students
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Sánchez-Peña, D., Chapetón, C. M. (2018). Fostering the Development of Written Argumentative Competence in ELT from a Critical Literacy Approach. *Revista Colombiana de Educación, (75), 159-183.*

In addition, there is a qualitative action research presented by Sánchez-Peña & Chapetón (2018) at the UPN. They focused on developing the written argumentative competence of seventeen UPN pre-service teachers between 15 and 20 years old, by means of a critical literacy approach and attempted to find what is the impact that the implementation of argumentative writing activities may have on the development of argumentative competence for pre-service teachers through a critical literacy approach. They had participants carry out an initial questionnaire and write an argumentative paragraph; and then as Sánchez-Peña & Chapetón (2018) stated: “This piece of writing showed that there was a lack of sound foundations to support claims in an argumentative way. Students found it difficult to express a clear position as writers” (p.165). Having identified the problem, they proposed a first cycle in which students were provided with insights about argumentative competence concepts; the second cycle lasted six sessions in which students learnt how to plan and organize their written

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works; it was aimed at helping students write a pros and cons essay. The third cycle was meant to encourage students to recognize the writing of an opinion and a problem solution essay; that one lasted eight sessions and made students take a stand about a controversial topic, put forward ways to solve it, and support their view by arguments.

13	Writing as an Opportunity for Critical Thinking: A study with TEFL majors.	Local	2018	Qualitative	University students
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Arias, D. & Ruda, C. (2018) *Writing as an Opportunity for Critical Thinking: A study with TEFL majors. Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas.*

This is a project that was carried out in Bogotá Colombia in 2018, Arias, D. & Ruda, C. (2018) worked on identifying the critical thinking skills that emerge when EFL students from third semester are involved in writing activities. When a diagnosis test was carried out, it was noticed that students struggled when writing texts in which they needed to put their opinions forward and express themselves. In addition, they had found fallacies in their critical thinking skills and argumentative writing texts. The question was: "What characterization does critical thinking take when college students of a language program write about socially contextualized issues?" Arias, D. & Ruda, C. (2018, p. 14). Therefore, they aimed at describing EFL students' critical thinking processes through writing activities. The proposal consisted of having students get to read more in order to help them improve their inferencing, guessing and predicting skills. Also, students were asked to focus more on activities such as brainstorming, group discussion, and re-writing in order to construct an argumentative text. During the writing practices students were expected to communicate their ideas clearly, to infer, to analyze, and explain. There were stages for the writing activities, students were asked to go through them respectively: Pre-writing, Planning, Drafting, Revising, and Editing. After the implementation of the activities, the study and analysis of the data, the research questions were answered. Firstly, when writing about contextualized issues, critical thinking categories emerge, those are established by Bloom's taxonomy: remembering, understanding, analyzing, applying, evaluating and creating.

14	Critical literacy development in an EFL classroom.	Local	2018	Qualitative	High school students
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Gil, L. (2018) *Critical literacy development in an EFL classroom*. Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. Bogotá.

Gil (2018) carried out qualitative research with 10 EFL learners aged between sixteen and seventeen years old at a private bilingual school in Chia, Colombia. She identified that students needed to develop higher-order thinking skills; also, the Academic Council suggested that the students could not work collaboratively. Therefore, the author proposed having the traditional practices left behind and developing a new or modern methodology in the class in order to make students develop CT skills and be assertive participants in the current society. To do so, the researcher was focused on making participants aware of the current social events and issues so that they could write an argumentative essay. The instruments she used were discussions and students' papers and it was noticed that they were interested in topics such as bullying, mistreatment, and discrimination. Gil designed the pedagogical intervention about Critical literacy approach in order to help students understand content meaningfully and question power relationships. Participants were asked to follow a path they could do dynamically while they worked on the written text: prewriting, drafting, self- review, re-writing, peer-tutoring revision, extra search, editing and proofreading, publishing, and following up. During the intervention, students were guided and taught that being critical has to do with reflecting and reading between the lines. The findings show that having read and having written was conceived as a tool to fight back a social issue and grow personally. Moreover, students realized that literacy was an act to analyze and rediscover themselves as well as make sense of their context. It was seen that students were empowered and willing to put forward their thoughts through the writing text since the topics were closely related to them.

15	Promoting efl writing skills and classroom interaction.	Local	2020	Qualitative	High school students
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Orozco, P. G. (2020). *PROMOTING EFL WRITING SKILLS AND CLASSROOM INTERACTION*. Bogotá.

A third qualitative study was done by Orozco at (UPN) in 2020, in a public school in Bogotá. This project's participants were 39 girls of 8th grade. The author found that those 39

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girls faced a problem: writing practice was the most difficult since students could not write complete simple sentences because they were more focused on structures; also, they were not motivated to attend classes since they found them boring. According to Orozco (2020) Research objectives aimed at describing the way in which EFL students' reflections on their local problems influence the classroom interaction when using a social inquiry project, and how those reflections shape their writing skills (p.2). Therefore, the strategy consisted of implementing principles of social inquiry-based learning in which the objective is understanding students as active learners who can negotiate their needs and contribute to their own learning processes; capable of inquiry and reflection about immediate context. As Orozco (2020) states in the research document: "These processes enable students to think critically and to propose alternatives and solutions throughout reflections on the reality that surrounds them, shaping at the same time their writing skills and influencing classroom interaction" (p.2). To do so, the researcher presented three cycles pedagogical intervention; firstly, selecting the topic and the learning focus, secondly, understanding and exploring concepts, as well as assessing values, and the third cycle was Creating and sharing in which the researcher asked students summarize previous sessions and outline an opinion paragraph. The findings show that students were able to reflect upon their local problematic situations.

16	Write creatively to think and think creatively to write.	Local	2020	Qualitative	Primary school students
<p>Benitez, C. R. (2020). <i>Write creatively to think and think creatively to write</i>. Bogotá.</p> <p>This local study was carried out by Benitez (2020) at the UPN presents a qualitative action research aiming at improving students' Creative Writing and helping them express their thoughts through Creative Thinking. The author identified a problematic situation for 14 students between 3rd to 5th grade, 14 in total; in which the students were not allowed to develop their creativity and writing skills among others. Collected evidence showed that students presented unclear texts and had difficulties expressing opinions and point of views. Having experienced that, he used the Visible Thinking Approach in which the objective is to encourage thinking skills among students; to do so, Benitez (2020) implemented three thinking routines: See, Think and Wonder; Color, Symbol and Image and Option Explosion (p.39).</p>					

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Participants were asked to watch videos and work on workshops that were guided by the teacher; for instance, See, Think and Wonder routine included these questions: “1. What do you see? 2. What does it make you say that? and 3. What does it make you wonder?” (p.39). Later, participants were asked to represent their ideas into color, symbol and image and then, students were asked to write a story using the color, symbol and image so that they could represent an idea. The author involved himself as a supportive and active teacher that answered questions and provided feedback constantly. The author’s findings explain that it is crucial to provide students with opportunities so that they can explore writing differently and tackle a culture of thinking that has not been considered before, since it is important for living in a globalized world nowadays. To conclude, students were finally able to speak their views and opinions in EFL. Although some issues in writing were found as spelling, vocabulary, and grammatical structures; fortunately, those did not affect students’ expression. Furthermore, it was noticed that due to students’ EFL proficiency level and age, the researcher decided to work on creative writing, rather than other skills.

17	Media literacy to promote critical thinking in the EFL Classroom. Local	2021	Qualitative	High school students
<p>Zárate León, Y. (2021) <i>Media literacy to promote critical thinking in the EFL Classroom.</i></p> <p>This is a qualitative study done by Zárate (2021) in Bogotá Colombia, aimed at characterizing the EFL learners' comprehension of media messages (TV advertisements). The researcher wanted to analyze the stand the students take in the analysis of media in connection to their own social environment. The study was done with ninth graders as it was identified that they were deeply influenced by the Media without questioning it. Mainly, the proposal consisted of presenting innovative practices in the EFL classroom to enable students to understand information, process it and reflect upon it. Zárate wanted to give the students the chance to relate their lives and the educational field. Therefore, the researcher used advertisements as a bridge to interact and encourage them to improve their critical thinking and EFL skills. For this reason, there was a primary stage of observation in order to find out how the setting, students' behavior, interaction was; secondly, artifacts that registered a compilation of their schoolwork. Thirdly, transcripts for video and audio recordings; and</p>				

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finally, field notes. The guidelines that were implemented consisted of distinguishing factual and fictional messages; they had to develop processes of inferring and understanding and then expressing their own opinions about it. The students were allowed to discuss, question and speak their minds. The results showed that media literacy education encouraged the students to question the information around, they needed guidance to explore and dig TV ads.

18	The Use of Problem-solving Tasks to promote Critical Thinking Skills in Intermediate English level students.	National	2016	Qualitative	High school students
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Negrete, J., Hanna, R., Garcia, M. (2016). The Use of Problem-solving Tasks to promote Critical Thinking Skills in Intermediate English level students. *Revista Palabra, vol 5, 48-55 Corporación Universitaria Cecar - Sincelejo, Colombia Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana. Montería, Colombia.*

There is a qualitative study carried out at a private language learning center by Negrete et al. (2016) in Colombia. This project focused on promoting CT skills in EFL learners and identifying problem solving tasks that worked best for students. Regarding the population, they worked with six EFL learners in the intermediate level, from 14 to 20 years. Data collection procedures were observation, videotaping and an interview. The researchers found a problematic situation students faced (Negrete, et al., 2016), it is stated as follows: “presented problems when analyzing, telling the difference from reliable and unreliable information and proposing solutions to oral interaction problems presented in class”. (p.50). Having identified the problem, they thought that through the application of problem-solving activities, students would possibly gain CT skills so that they could improve their English language learning as well. Therefore, the proposal consisted of having three main tasks to work on, those are respectively: Littering: Buzz Group, Smog and landfill sites: Discussion and Mototaxismo: Essay. First, the buzz group task students had to create a graphic to present a brainstorm to answer a question: “How could you prevent people from littering in the city of Sincelejo?” (p.51) Then they were asked to give two solutions, and its possible consequences. Second, EFL learners were requested to compare two environmental issues and answer the questions: “How common are these problems where you live? And which of them do you think is more

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serious? Justify your answer” (p 52). Third, as the final task, participants needed to construct an essay in which they had to argue whether Mototaxismo in the city was a problem or not. Once they implemented those three tasks, the authors assert that thinking critically should be one of the main goals of education today; as students showed willingness to approach topics that were closely related to the place, they lived in. Specifically, findings show that the second activity was the most useful for EFL learners because they could use their language skills, students could improve their CT skills by means of problem-solving Tasks and contextualized tasks.

19	From newstelling to news debating: a path to foster EFL argumentation skills.	National	2019	Qualitative	University students
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Herreño Y. A. (2019). *From newstelling to news debating: a path to foster EFL argumentation skills. Lenguas en contexto 10: 70-85*

The following action research project was carried out by Herreño (2019) with 20 EFL Law students enrolled in a Legal English course at USTA in Villavicencio, Colombia. The researcher found a problematic situation in which students were meant to be competent in EFL, gain knowledge about different branches, sharpen their problem-solving, critical thinking and argumentation skills. The research project intended to describe the impact of news debating founded on news telling as a pedagogical strategy to enhance argumentation and transcend the commonplace news report in EFL. The study was meant to enhance EFL argumentation skills through debates by news telling and guide students to become capable of setting their thinking, building up their own criteria, arguing and counter-arguing and making decisions regarding controversial issues. In this way, the proposal consisted of 5 stages as follows; first, *Reflective learning*: controversial topics such as: euthanasia, defamation, child labor and drug trafficking, were selected. Second, *Problematizing reading*, students were asked to answer specific questions and developed activities such as: fill in comparative charts, exemplify, provide extra details. Third, *Problematizing news telling*: students reported the facts in detail, and even hypothesized about what could have happened behind the facts. Then, *Reflective learning: Empowering LAS (Legal Argumentation Skills)*: students discussed

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questions regarding the role of law in the case, they put forward their opinions about controversial topics. Finally, *Debate* in which they were expected to express their opinion.

20	Problem-Based Learning to Foster Persuasive Writing: A Study with Pre-Service Teachers of English (Doctoral dissertation, Facultad de Artes y Humanidades).	National	2021	Qualitative	University students
<p>Alfonso, L. (2021). <i>Problem-Based Learning to Foster Persuasive Writing: A Study with Pre-Service Teachers of English</i> (Doctoral dissertation, Facultad de Artes y Humanidades).</p> <p>Action research was carried out by Alfonso (2021) in Caldas, Colombia with fourth-semester undergraduate EFL students, ages 19 to 23 years old. It was aimed at exploring the impact of Problem-Based Learning on pre-service teachers' persuasive writing skills. Data collected by the teacher's journal, external observation, and questionnaire evidenced that even being cooperative and responsible, their writing proficiency level was low in terms of use of arguments and achievement of the task. It was also identified that the students did well in summarizing and analyzing but had difficulties when taking a stand. The objectives consisted of describing and evaluating the usefulness of Problem-Based learning activities, as well as suggesting contextualized integration of Problem-Based Learning and Persuasive Writing in EFL. Therefore, six workshops based on issues related to the participants' context were implemented, for instance topics were drug abuse, poverty, social consequences of Covid 19. Problem-based learning was selected as the approach to enhance persuasive writing as it looks for analysis, integration, and adaptation of new knowledge; consequently, it was proposed a six-step procedure, the phases are explained as follows: the participants were explained the writing objective, and the writing strategies to be used. Then, a warm-up activity was done, they were allowed to work in groups. Later, in the production part, according to the knowledge they acquired, they started writing the final product which was evaluated. All in all, the writing stages were Brainstorming, Drafting, Clustering, Sentence strip paragraphs, Drafting, and Clustering in an infographic.</p>					

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21	Implementing Problem-Solving Activities to Enhance Critical Thinking Among EFL Young Learners. Colombia.	National	2021	Qualitative	High school students
<p>Serna Vélez, I. G. (2021). <i>Implementing Problem-Solving Activities to Enhance Critical Thinking Among EFL Young Learners. Colombia.</i></p> <p>Action research carried out by Serna (2021) in Antioquia, Colombia, it was done with 15 EFL young learners between 14 and 16 years old. That population was found motivated, willing to learn, and participative; yet, through rigorous observations, teacher journals, a student survey, and an interview, it was noticed that students did not have the opportunity to express themselves and relate their lives to the EFL class. The proposal, then, consisted of promoting critical thinking in young students through problem-solving activities. The purpose was having the teenagers involved in elements to question their own context, aimed at identifying to what extent the implementation of problem-solving activities enhances EFL young learners' critical thinking. The chosen topics were gender role issues and gender inequality; elder mistreatment and abandonment; and violence on Mother's Day. Firstly, the activities started by introducing the issue, its causes and consequences, then encouraging students to put forward suggestions and options to resolve. Finally, findings suggest that the implemented activities helped students become critical thinkers who were able to make sense, analyze, argue, contrast, make inferences instead of repeating patterns, grammar structures, and language skills (spoken and written EFL).</p>					

According to these action-research studies that were summarized, there were several elements that help achieve the research objectives. First the correlation between CT and EFL AW based on the studies that have been done in Colombia within the last 10 years, then to identify strategies that have been implemented based on critical thinking skills in order to foster AW practices. And finally to find out the type of argumentation that learners have achieved while writing by means of CT processes.

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Firstly, it is noticed here that CT skills go beyond the class. It helps everyone analyze the world around. Nowadays we are all exposed always to information from different resources. It is necessary to foster CT skills that would help us approach the content critically and find out its veracity. Secondly, I consider that there were several innovative strategies that the teachers executed and stands out that having the students involved enough to express their feelings and opinion would help them foster CT skills and understand AW as a situated social action, become reflective and active participants in the class. Grades were presented as secondary, to highlight the importance of the process and the practice.

Thirdly, Reflecting and proposing were crucial for the students since they could embrace a problematic situation they had in their own context. It is also important to point out that the students felt comfortable with the idea of asking and having feedback regardless of the grades. They could get to write a paragraph, a text, an essay; most importantly the students tried to write in EFL and understand the basics of AW. Lastly, a kind environment in which the questions and feedback is allowed, would allow a meaningful and rich process to achieve the task. In addition, collaborative writing through project work helps students share, be motivated, be interested, and use language confidently.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

These are the three main constructs for this investigation, Critical Thinking, Argumentative Writing, Writing Skill; and are presented as follows.

2.2.1 Critical Thinking

Elder (2007) asserts that CT is understood as a self-guided practice that leads to reflecting at the highest level. It is a way to tackle any situation, content or context, in which the learner

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aims to analyze, assess, and reconstruct. The author explains that it is a practice that entails effective communication among people and problem-solving skills. Besides, CT makes people improve their reasoning skills, and understand mistakes, human irrationality, and prejudices. Similarly, Paul & Elder (2020) argue that CT consists of eight elements: purpose, point of view, concept, question, information, assumption, inference, and implication; those elements are essential to human thinking. Moreover, when individuals develop CT skills, they should strive to be disciplined in terms of analyzing, assessing and drawing conclusions that are accurately supported by evidence (Paul & Elder, 2020).

Likewise, Lipman (1988) asserts that CT is a practice that facilitates judgments. The author explains that it is necessary to get enrolled in “self-correction of thought, the accurate use of criteria, and appropriate sensitivity of context” (p.39). Firstly, criteria must be reliable, relevant, coherent and consistent; secondly, CT must promote inquiry, and thirdly, the subject must be aware of the uniqueness of his actions. Basically, this scholar claims that the purpose of CT is helping people make judgments, draw and impart meaning.

On the other hand, CT is defined as reflective thinking, active, determined and careful consideration of an assertion in accordance with accurate arguments, and the additional conclusions to it (Dewey, 1961, as cited in Fisher, 2001, p.4). Fisher explains that in other words, Dewey’s most important aspect is: ‘grounds which support’, which means that it is necessary to verify the reasons, arguments, support and implication that an assertion may have. Also, the author puts forward that a belief is set upon a solid reason, and it may be accepted or rejected depending on how solid it may be. This entails a process of reflection in which one constantly doubts, reflects, does not accept an affirmation easily and is willing to overcome questions.

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Having explained what CT is, it is important to mention that for the present Documentary research author, nowadays, education has devoted much attention to CT skills because of the nature of its benefits. For instance, it provides learners with tools to get engaged and integrate the content, which are the foundations for deep and meaningful learning among others. Hence, developing CT skills should be considered, the society needs citizens who aim for progress, who are able to analyze, assess and expose their thoughts. Another benefit is that learners are potentiated to achieve goals and demands of the 21st century related to technological, social and economic matters (Uribe-Enciso, Enciso & Daza. 2017). In other words, CT has become crucial since it represents cultivation of wisdom, and it fosters features such as: discipline, integrity, citizenship, creativity, among others.

According to this study author, it can be stated that CT skills' pertinence in EFL AW is evident because EFL classes are the ideal setting; the students can discuss about other cultures and different topics of the real use of language. Also, as Nejmaoui (2018) explains that fortunately, students that integrate CT and AW in EFL considerably improved the ability to use credible data, state alternative arguments, support conclusions, and keep the flow of ideas in their essays.

2.2.2 Writing Skill

Based on Vygotsky (1978), writing is understood as a higher mental process in which the learners vividly interact with the context they are immersed in, thereby writing skills can be socially constructed as well as speaking. The author explains that writing is a practice that focuses on social interaction, and it must be guided, he points out an example such as piano

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playing: the learner needs a teacher who shows and explains abstract symbolic signs. Likewise, when writing it is necessary to be guided so that a text can take place and convey meaning.

Similarly, Hyland (2013) argues that writing skills entail cognitive, expressive and situated processes that a writer applies to construct a text. From a socio-cultural approach, the author presents writing skills as a guided and regulated practice that may take place individually, socially and culturally. This practice is meant to convey meaning, it discloses inner thoughts, and it is closely related to one's culture. As Hyland says (2013), "how writing takes on the discursive and epistemological features of a particular culture: how writers project an insider ethos and signal their right to be heard as competent members of a group" (p.71).

In words of Ivanič (1998), writing is an act in which the subject identifies, reproduces, and challenges himself. The author argues that writing relates to representing oneself and conveying meaning, interests, ideas, beliefs and values; it is a practice in which people try to fit socio-cultural context. This scholar presents writing as an act of identifying; thus, both concepts are related since identity is constructed within the interaction that takes place between a person and others in a determined context. Basically, the identity may be constructed through the act of writing.

Now it is crucial to introduce the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and its vision of writing. Writing skill is conceived as a task, as a final product that a one must achieve; for instance, an intermediate advanced (C1 level) writer is expected to write clear, well-structured texts, include complex contents, be able to extend the topics, provide reasons and appropriate examples and draw a clear conclusion (Council of Europe, 2001).

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Up to this point, in this study author's words, it is necessary to put forward the benefits of developing this skill in education. Firstly, it is well known that nowadays there is a globalized world that demands competent writers who can communicate successfully and convey knowledge. Furthermore, developing writing skills will be useful to achieve national and international standards, also to gain prizes or scholarships, among others. Another benefit of developing this skill is that students will be citizens that contribute to society since they will be able to organize ideas and speak their mind effectively through writing. All in all, as writing plays a meaningful role in conveying knowledge, mastering this skill will make students organized and thoughtful.

It has been highlighted the fact that the writing skills can be fostered and potentiated not only from a linguistic perspective but also conceived as a permanent process that entails deep thinking and reflection. Also, writing skill must be fostered without fear of being wrong, it must be conceived as a guided practice.

2.2.3 Argumentative Writing

It is essential to explain what argumentation entails and argumentative writing definitions according to some authors. To begin with, argument generally takes place in a discussion and is meant to convince, debate, persuade and resolve conflicts, it is a set of reasons that supports a standpoint (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992). According to these authors, argumentation is a pragmatic and social activity of reason meant to resolve differences of opinion by means of exchanging information and reasons between a protagonist and an antagonist; the purpose of this practice is having a mutual acceptance and understanding of a standpoint. It is also a practice that needs to be supported and guided by standards (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992).

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Considering the above, it is important to introduce and explain Schemes and critical questions concepts. Walton (1996) as one of the most quoted authors, has worked on an argumentation schemes approach that consists of gathering affirmations, analyzing and evaluating them according to the standard: argumentation scheme and critical questions. It works as a template that suggests specific questions that need to be made so that any type of argument can be validated, those questions ask for clarifications, justifications, missing premises, and further information. For instance, samples of Critical Questions could be: Is that a reliable source? Is that assertion based on evidence? Therefore, presenting an argument that has been already validated through the schemes and accordingly through critical questions will be convincing and accepted (Walton, 1996). Until now, argumentation as a practice has been explained in L1; however, L2 argumentative writing skill is considerably influenced by L1 since it is well known that literacy skills are easily transferred across languages.

In addition, Toulmin (2003) asserts that the concept of argument has been understood as the formal validity of people's reasoning and elaborates more on an argumentative text model. The author explains that producing an argumentative text entails processes of problem solving, and the main purpose is to convince readers about a standpoint and defend the writer's claim. An argumentative text is organized systematically as it must have two structures: the statement of a point of view and a statement of reasons that support that opinion, ideas should be well organized, and the writer must be informed about the topic he is presenting. According to the author there are six elements to an argument:

Table 3

The six elements to an argument.

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Claims	General statement of opinion that demands approval.
Grounds/Data	Facts on which the claim relies.
Warrant	Bridge that helps link grounds with the claim. Justification, it shows a transition from data to affirmation.
Backing	Any additional support that the conclusion may need.
Qualifier	generalizations are not accepted; an accurate qualifier may be for instance: “Some” or “Many”
Rebuttal	It demonstrates how solid a text is, it is a tool that helps consider any opposing view.

Note. Adapted from “The uses of argument,” by S. Toulmin, 2003, *Cambridge, U.K. Cambridge University Press.*

Therefore, it can be concluded that AW has taken greater importance in every education subject; developing argumentative writing, in EFL specifically, helps students improve understanding of a topic. It is a practice that could cultivate curiosity for new and controversial topics, it could foster students to learn new vocabulary, get to know more about a specific theme, learn from mistakes, improve analysis and inference skills, and accept and respect others' objections. Therefore, implementing AW in EFL may have students and teachers work together and master the skills that are very useful to face social issues today.

2.3 Legal Framework

This section presents important legal documents which have been identified as essential for the present project.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR, 2001), published by the Council of Europe in 2001, is aimed to provide a reference, an evaluation scheme (Trim, 2011). Its purpose is to describe language learners' skills

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in reading, listening, speaking and writing; based on six levels (proficiency scales) from beginner (A1) to very advanced (C2), this is presented as follows.

Table 4.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Proficiency scales.

Breakthrough	Waystage	Threshold	Vantage	Effective Operational Proficiency	Mastery
A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Basic user		Independent user		Proficient user	

Proficiency scales. Adapted from:” Using the CEFR: Principles of Good Practice,” by J. Trim, 2011, *Cambridge, UK. Cambridge ESOL.*

To better illustrate this, learners at level C, as Proficient users in writing specifically, are expected to “reconstruct arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation” and “produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing a controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices” (Trim, 2011, p.6.). For the reading section, they are expected to recognize implicit meaning, in which critical thinking is certainly involved. This means that they must be able to present a rich and well-structured text as well as be able to approach the given text meaningfully. Therefore, its impact in AW in EFL relies on the fact that it has been largely implemented and recognized worldwide; as it is used for elaborating and evaluating language exams, international certifications, syllabuses, materials assessment. Consequently, the CEFR must be considered since mastering English at a high level and proving it internationally tends to be a goal many people have.

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Similarly, there is a document that was released by the Colombian Ministry of Education (MEN 2006); it is closely related to the National Bilingual Programme in Colombia and is named: *Formar en lenguas extranjeras: Inglés ¡el reto!* It proposes a public standard that sets clear objectives in order to achieve basic quality levels of education in EFL; this document establishes what EFL learners should know in order to effectively communicate, share their experiences and extend their prospects. The institution explains that nowadays EFL has become crucial to access to a globalized world; consequently, its purpose is giving educational community guidelines to help teachers impart classes in which students can participate, learn and understand EFL meaningfully. Also, the document argues that the project is aimed to have students obtain at least: B1 Level, as an independent user (MEN 2006); therefore, students who can achieve that level are expected to: produce simple texts on familiar and personal interest topics, describe events, and explain opinions.

On the other hand, there is a law decree: 1874 set in 2017 that modified partially the Law 115 of 1994 in Colombia. This law decree states that the objective is developing critical thinking skills throughout historical and social sciences subjects in a local context mainly (MEN 2017). Also, students are expected to embrace Colombian history critically so that they can transform the present and the future. This shows the positive impact that CT may have in the classroom, not only in an educational setting but also in daily life. Thus, it can be concluded that education is looking forward to implementing different strategies that help make learning meaningful and useful for students as they are expected to be active and critical participants; citizens of the world that are able to contribute in several aspects to the society.

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Chapter 3: Methodological Design

3.1 Methodology

In the present State of the art study, a Documentary research was chosen to organize and analyze the 21 studies that were collected based on the main objective: To examine what literature informs us about the impact that critical thinking has on EFL learners' AW based on the studies that have been done in Colombia within the last 10 years. Then, as Constructivism, the philosophical worldview, the goal is understanding and interpreting that meaning that others had built. Lastly, a personal interpretation of the studies will be given as the qualitative approach asserts.

This chapter puts forward the implemented methodology, it includes the type of study. A qualitative documentary research takes place in the present study; this section is meant to define its aspects and characteristics.

3.2 Research design

Documentary research has to do with consolidating knowledge and having a deep understanding on the complexities in any discipline. It focuses on meaningful, raw material that works as evidence; once it has been fully reviewed, sense and meaning will be made upon it. Likewise, carrying out documentary research goes beyond recording facts only; it entails reflecting and analyzing data that is pertinent for the research question. In addition, that data analysis searches for clarification and deep understanding in order to find advanced theories and concepts (Ahmed, 2010). This is completely related to the present Documentary research since

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the author is aimed at collecting action-research studies that follow a specific criterion (view Chapter 2), handling data carefully, verifying its authenticity, credibility, and representativeness. This is followed by a descriptive research task that is willing to ‘describe’, identify and analyze the relevant data and finally report the results and its contribution to the research question. In that sense, documentary research, as rigorous and accurate design that helps achieve the research objectives (Ahmed, 2010).

3.3 Philosophical Worldview

Having mentioned previously that Documentary research is; it is important to mention what the philosophical worldview points out. Following Creswell (2014), constructivism as a philosophical worldview becomes the perspective for the present study. To begin with, constructivism asserts that individuals look for understanding regarding the world they live in, as well as developing and providing that world with meanings. Considering that everyone has different thoughts about reality, those meanings become complex and difficult to narrow. Consequently, the researcher’s objective is making sense and interpreting that meaning that others construct. Likewise, by means of an inductive process, this study attempts to go through the existing and pertinent literature about CT in EFL AW to finally contribute to the existing theory.

3.4 Research approach

Qualitative research seeks to understand and interpret context, culture, and setting; it is largely inductive as the inquirer constructs meaning from data that has been collected. In words of Creswell (2014): “*Qualitative research* is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p.32). The Qualitative

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research purpose is having a deep understanding of a particular phenomenon. In addition, Creswell argues that qualitative inquirers use theory as a broad explanation for behaviors, attitudes, and phenomena and it may be complemented by variables, and constructs (Creswell, 2014). As mentioned by Creswell (2014), “Purposeful sampling, collection of open-ended data, analysis of text, representation of information in figures and tables, and personal interpretation of the findings all inform qualitative methods” (p.23). This last quote explains the overall procedure and methods to follow while carrying out qualitative research. What the author explains becomes pertinent for the present research since the main objective is studying and assessing several documents from recent literature to provide the educational context with the strategies that have worked successfully. The present study is presenting and developing qualitative research that attempts to report the reflection and interpretation of the problem and a meaningful contribution to the EFL argumentative writing practices. All in all, this research investigation is aimed to explore, analyze and systematize what literature informs us about the impact that Critical Thinking has in English as a foreign language Argumentative Writing.

3.5 Stages of the study

This Documentary research follows an organized and coherent sequence as well as the phases that will determine the organization and analysis of the Literature review that had been collected. The stages are: *Preparatory, Data sources search, Analytic and presentation, Constant Analysis phases and Summary*. Following Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2010, p.220), the phases in the present documentary research are meant to help manage data, reduce its size, scope and report the most meaningful findings. Therefore, the phases that help reflect, design, gather documents, analyze and report will be put forward respectively.

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3.5.1 Preparatory

The first stage deals mainly with organizing and preparing the project. Thus, the Statement of the Problem, the research question and objectives were presented. This stage also included the rationale which put forward the relevance of the project. It put forward the three main constructs that were identified: CT, WS, and AW, to consolidate theory that works as the basis for the research. Then the legal framework was presented as well to support the study. As follows, there is a timetable that presents in detail the study's phases and its estimated timeframe in which the task was fully completed.

Table 5.

Timeline of activities. General timeline of the project. This table lays out the activities that were carried out along with the date.

Stages	Activities Month	02/03 2021	04/05 2021	09/10 2021	11/12 2021	02/03 2022	04/05 2022	08/09 2022	10/11 2022
<i>Preparatory</i>	Selection of the topic and analysis of the problematic situation.								
<i>Data sources search phase</i>	Literature review and Theoretical framework design								
<i>Analytic and presentation phase</i>	Instruments design and validation								
<i>Constant analysis phase</i>	Data collection, reduction								

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	and analysis								
<i>Summary</i>	Identificati on of findings								
	Final submit								

3.5.2 Data sources search phase

It followed with data collection, 21 studies were selected from authentic and reliable online university repositories in Colombia; it entailed a review of the literature that relates specifically to topic. This research examines action-research studies that had taken place in Colombia only, aiming at answering a problematic situation that was set forth in this context specifically. Those documents were fully reviewed, reduced and summarized in order to make sure that worked as meaningful evidence and source of information; and most importantly, represented the topic: The impact that CT has on EFL learners’ AW in Colombia (See State of the art). Furthermore, those documents were organized following these criteria; first, *the topic*: “*Critical thinking and Argumentative Writing in EFL*”. Second, *the context*: “*In Colombia*”. Third, *the timeframe*: “*the last 10 years*”. The timeframe was chosen to get to access to enough action-research studies and yet to make sure those studies were very recent. Finally, 21 studies were found, collected and classified into a Local (Bogotá D.C.) and National (Colombia) scale. Lastly, the State of the art documents summary followed these criteria: its relevance to the main topic, context, objectives, proposal and results.

3.5.3 Analytic and presentation phase

Then, this phase consists of rigorous process in which the gathered data is managed to put forward the most meaningful, intriguing, useful and representative items that help answer the

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research questions. The reading and analysis of the studies was guided by means of the specific objectives, in order to detect the most meaningful data that would help answer the research question. The categories of analysis that were set by means of the specific research objectives were: *Correlation between CT and AW, CT Strategies to foster AW and AW features*. The categories were determined and help take steps towards drawing conclusions.

Therefore, a data display in a graphic format was exclusively designed for the present Documentary research: network visual display chart. According to Scagnoli and Verdinelli (2013), these charts are useful in the qualitative data analysis phase in order to show concise, organized, summarized and simplified information and boost the data analysis procedure, so that the researcher can easily get to the inferences and conclusions. The following is the network visual display chart that was created.

Figure 1

Network visual display chart

TITLE/YEAR	<i>Correlation between CT and AW</i>	<i>CT Strategies to foster AW</i>	<i>AW features</i>	STUDY RESULTS
Interpretation of the findings				

Note. It presents the 28 documents, its title, year of publication, the categories, the study results and critical interpretation of the studies. Adapted from “Data Display in Qualitative Research,” by N. I. Scagnoli & S. Verdinelli, 2013, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*.

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3.5.4 Constant Analysis phase

This phase entails the analytical procedure that is aimed at having the categories reviewed, compared and analyzed with one another in order to identify the similarities and differences in data and finally reduce those categories to a smaller number of properties. Then, the most relevant are identified and reported respectively.

3.5.5 Summary

In this stage the researcher compiles and presents the findings and conclusions that answer the research questions. This phase provided relevant information that was related to the implications this documentary research study may have for further research, and in the educational field. All in all, these were the phases that shaped the present project.

3.6 Data collection Method

This section is meant to explain the type of analysis, the data collection method and the categories.

3.6.1 Type of Analysis

The present State of the art is analyzed according to the qualitative research approach; it allows analysis of the categories so that conclusions can be drawn. Since the present study is aimed at examining the impact that CT has on EFL learners' AW based on the studies that have been done in Colombia within the last 10 years; three important categories of analysis were established following the specific objectives. Those are: Correlation between CT and AW, CT strategies to foster AW, and AW features. In addition, it is important to point out that triangulation will not be implemented as there is only one data resource. These categories of analysis are presented as follows.

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Figure 2

Categories of analysis

Correlation between CT and AW	CT strategies to foster AW	AW features.
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Note. The Categories of analysis.

3.7 Research Methods and Tools

The research method on issue was Bibliographic systemization as it helped gather first the action-research studies and have them examined. The main research tool is the State of the art (View Table 2) that was aimed at examining research studies about CT and AW that have been carried out within the last 10 years in the Colombian context. Those documents were selected and gathered according to their relevance to the topic and date of publication. Each document was summarized in order to present the studies' context, population, problematic situation, objectives, proposal and results. As well as how it can be related and meaningful to this documentary research. On the other hand, the second research tool is the network visual display chart that was mentioned previously as it helped organize the State of the art thoroughly and put forward the findings that responded to the three emerging categories (Table 6).

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Chapter 4: Data Analysis

After collecting and reviewing the 21 documents there were three categories that helped guide the reading and narrowing of the data. This segment presents the data analysis and findings. The findings show precisely the most representative and meaningful properties that arose. And the data analysis explains and lay out the specific research objectives as follows.

4.1 Findings

The findings are presented by means of the visual display chart in order to help the researcher and readers understand and get to the information easily. The study title that is highlighted on light blue color presents the first scale: Local studies. Then, on light yellow color the second scale is presented: National studies. Moreover, each document includes a personal interpretation of the findings. It is displayed as follows.

Table 6.

Findings table shows: the study title and year, the three categories, the results and personal interpretation accordingly.

TITLE/YEAR	CORRELATION BETWEEN CT AND AW	CT STRATEGIES TO FOSTER AW	AW FEATURES <i>(Elements to an argument)</i>	STUDY RESULTS
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<p>1.EFL argumentative essay writing as a situated-social practice: A review of concepts. 2012</p>	<p>Yes. The written text stated clearly the students' opinions. The participants became reflective.</p>	<p>1.To explore the students' interest, and design material that the students consider important or relevant. 2.Developing a structured plan in which the students supported their arguments and point of view rigorously.</p>	<p>Argumentative essay. °Claims °Grounds °Qualifier °Rebuttal</p>	<p>1. A dynamic process of creation. 2.Well written argumentative text. 3.Reflective and critical students.</p>
<p>Personal interpretation of the findings</p>	<p>It was noticed that implementing activities and explain to them a structured plan would guide them to achieve a well written argumentative text that states their opinion, thesis statement (Claim), supporting ideas (Grounds) in order to express their opinions. It can be affirmed that there is a correlation since the students by means of AW activities could as well become critical and reflecting. Most importantly, it was interesting the fact that writing was conceived as a dynamic process of creation, as a situated social action. A benefit of developing AW and CT is that students will be critical citizens that contribute to society as they organize ideas and speak their mind effectively through writing.</p>			
<p>2.Working by Projects: A Way to Enrich Critical Thinking and the Writing Process in a Third Grade EFL Classroom. Colombia. 2012.</p>	<p>Yes. The correlation between CT and AW is clear since students needed to think ahead and verify the content that were including in the final written work.</p>	<p>1.To work on: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. 2.Field note artifacts. 3.Audio recording. 4.To enrich participants' language learning process with pictures and grammar structures. 5.Interesting topic chosen by the students.</p>	<p>Recycling project (mini-book, poster or frieze.) °Claims °Grounds °Backing °Rebuttal</p>	<p>1.Successful experience since the students could participate and interact with others freely and speak their minds. 2. Writing process enhanced their critical thinking skills. 3.The writing process showed the participants' reflection about their own context.</p>

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				3.Developing interpersonal skills.
Personal interpretation of the findings	When developing CT skills as well as language learning activities in which students are mainly in charge it was seen that the students were willing to participate and interested in interacting with others to speak their minds. As long as the teachers work on enhancing CT skills, it will be evidenced in their written work.			
3.Collaborative writing to enhance academic writing Development Through Project Work. 2013.	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>The students were asked to work simultaneously on CT skills and academic writing features. The outcomes show that both skills were enhanced and students could achieve the goal.</p>	<p>1.To determine the students' difficulties and elaborate a writing project plan to solve it.</p> <p>2.Provide them with accurate materials for improving their argumentative writing skill.</p> <p>3.Devolping the project writing in groups.</p> <p>4.Give them examples of well-constructed papers.</p> <p>5.Workshops to learn how to use linking words and connectors.</p> <p>6.Contextualized topics for the project: touristic brochure, movie review, solution problem papers and pro and cons essay with three paragraphs.</p>	<p>1.Collaborative writing project.</p> <p>2.Academic text.</p> <p>°Claims</p> <p>°Grounds</p> <p>°Warrant</p> <p>°Backing</p> <p>°Qualifier</p>	<p>1.Because of the project, the participants were highly motivated to express their ideas in English.</p> <p>2.The students were interested in learning more about how to write and use the language in order to put forward their thinking.</p>

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Personal interpretation of the findings	Collaborative writing helped them feel comfortable and share their work with others. Most interesting is the fact that students developed the ability to ask for help when needed, could convey meaning and did not feel afraid of telling others what they were thinking of.			
4 The role of genre-based activities in the writing of argumentative essays in efl. Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Facultad de Ciencias Humanas. 2013.	Yes Writing was understood as a process that entails CT skills. Both skills were fostered at the same time.	1. To give a structure plan for producing an argumentative text (exploring the genre, building knowledge of the field, drafting, revising and submitting a final draft and Assessment and evaluation) 2. To show them clear examples of an argumentative writing text.	1.The students' opinions regarding the overall experience. °Claims °Grounds °Warrant °Qualifier °Rebuttal	1.The participants showed more confidence to speak and write in English. 2. This project helped them to feel supported, confident and had a positive attitude when they wrote in EFL.
Personal interpretation of the findings	After implementing these strategies, it was clear that the teacher could foster in them a deep reflection on the socio-cultural context, students could approach the class content from a critical perspective and propose options to solve problems.			
5 Life stories: a way to develop critical thinking in EFL sixth grade learners. Bogotá. Universidad Pedagógica Nacional. 2015.	Yes Students were given a life story summary chart to fill in their point of view. The teacher asked the students to work on writing activities as well as on CT	1. To identify the student's writing process and difficulties: field notes artifacts, questionnaires, interviews. 2.To examine the students focus on linguistic aspects rather than critical thinking skills. 3.To highly motivate the students by means of their own life and context.	1.Summary chart. 2.Paper. 3.Debate session about life's stories. °Claims °Grounds °Qualifier	1.Student could understand, analyze and explain the main topic. 2.Students felt comfortable writing about a contextualized topic.

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	skills: interp retation, analysis and explanation of their opinion.	4.A life story summary chart to fill in with their point of view and draw if wanted.		
Personal interpretation of the findings	Critical thinking skills: interpretation, analysis and explanation were considered to have students write about a topic they could easily relate to. Again then students' context was crucial to develop a meaningful class.			
6.Critical analysis of media towards the promotion of EFL students' learning autonomy. Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas School of Science and Education. 2016.	Yes The participants were asked to reflect upon Media information, then reflect and analyze where the information was coming from, what was behind it and explain what they found about it.	1.To identify the participants' difficulties. 2. To help and motivate the students put forward their ideas. 3. To motivate the students to use technology as an interactive way to learn. 4. To provide images and text chunks to understand the media sources. 5. Three activities: To reflect and analyze the contextualized topic, then analyze newspapers and magazines advertisement goals and write their point of view.	A poster. °Claim °Grounds /Data. °Qualifier	1.Student became aware of their English language learning process. 2. Students analyzed and reflected about the media as a source of information. 3. Students improved their Critical thinking skills.
Personal interpretation of the findings	Being too exposed to Media information may have people accept it without verifying where is the info coming from. It was noticed that the participants took responsibility and look for reliable information and were willing to put forward their thinking.			

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<p>7. Encouraging Critical Thinking Development in an efl Classroom through Urban Legends. Folios No.43, 137-152. 2016.</p>	<p>Yes. The students could enhance their CT skills as they could critique, and create, at the same time they could develop a written text.</p>	<p>1 To identify the students' difficulties towards EFL writing. 2.Lecture: American Urban legends worksheet. 3.To debate addressed to answer open questions about the story.</p>	<p>1.Own written reflection. °Claim °Grounds /Data. °Qualifier</p>	<p>1.Enhanced their critical thinking skills. 2.Could create well-constructed text. 3.Improved their EFL skills.</p>
<p>Personal interpretation of the findings</p>		<p>The practices were focused on traditional grammar-based content; the students could not go beyond literal information. But having the students involved in the class content by means of Urban legends of their likes, helped them try to approach the class. Even, with the difficulties the participants faced, they managed to write in EFL by means of contextualized materials.</p>		
<p>8.The Co-construction of Knowledge and the Use of Critical Thinking in Academic Virtual Forums. Universidad Santo Tomás. Colombia. 2016.</p>	<p>Yes. The virtual forum by means of real life matters, helped students question, gather and assess pertinent information, interpret ideas properly, draw conclusions, and think</p>	<p>1.To examine the difficulties the participants had to reflect, formulate hypotheses and express their ideas when elaborating an essay. 2.Remote education methodology through a virtual platform. 3. To put forward the patterns of co-construction of knowledge and describing the evidence of the implementation of CT.</p>	<p>1.A post. 2. EFL interaction through the virtual forum. 3.A debate. °Claim °Grounds °Backing °Qualifier</p>	<p>1.Could debate expressing their ideas. 2.Could write a well written text. 3.Developed CT skills. 4. Evaluated their context. 5.Could interact with each other in English freely.</p>

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	open-mindedly.	4. Reading, writing, listening, speaking, and language development. 5. To provide clear examples. 6. Friendly environment for speaking and writing in EFL.		
Personal interpretation of the findings	As long as the participants are involved in contextualized classes, they will be willing to try to approach the class and set forth their thinking; following EFL AW criteria.			
9. Exploring students' EFL writing through the implementation of writing for learning approach. Bogotá, Colombia. 2017.	Yes Because of the participants EFL level, they achieved a short written paragraph that set forth their opinion. By means of CT skills, students could approach the content and organize their opinions towards it.	1. To provide students with the opportunity to write in EFL. 2. To learn to express their ideas regarding any topic. 3. To give the opportunity to select the topics for the writing lesson according to their likes. 4. To design a Workshop for improving linguistic aspects.	A poster, a paper or a brochure according to the students' preferences. °Claim °Warrant	1. Felt comfortable when expressing their ideas in English. 2. Improved their CT skills as they were motivated by contextualized topics.

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Personal interpretation of the findings	The researcher made the students feel comfortable to ask questions and at the same time write in EFL as an attempt. The EFL level did not allow them to elaborate a complex written text. Yet, they tried and achieved a short paragraph text that stated their thinking.			
10. Portfolios focused on controversial issues to enhance argumentative writing skills. Doctoral disertación, Bogotá: Universidad Externado de Colombia. 2017.	Yes. The participants could approach, analyze and put forward their ideas through a written text.	1. A low English performance was identified. 2. To motivate students with contextualized materials. 3. To provide a portfolio with two controversial topics. 4. To make an interesting folio for the participants.	A cause-and-effect argumentative essay. °Claim °Grounds °Warrant °Backing °Qualifier °Rebuttal	1. Understood what argumentation is. 2. They were motivated to construct a cause-and-effect argumentative essay, as well as a pros and cons one. 3. Developed argumentative writing skills.
Personal interpretation of the findings	The participants could understand and apply argumentation basics to write an elaborated essay. A contextualized topic would make students easily engage and achieve the goal: writing an argumentative text in EFL.			
11. A contextualized booklet to develop critical thinking and argumentative writing. Bogotá. Universidad Externado de Colombia. 2018.	Yes. The students were receptive to the materials, they approached the content critically and that was showed in the final paper as it evidenced	1. To carry out a diagnosis. 2. Presenting and implementing contextualized materials. 3. Proving insights and background knowledge. 4. To present clear examples.	Self-assessment paper. °Claim °Grounds °Backing °Qualifier °Rebuttal	1. They felt motivated and confident. 2. Learned how to construct arguments of authority. 3. Understood cause and effect argumentative essay construction according to their ages and English level.

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	AW elements.			
Personal interpretation of the findings	In this case, once again contextualized materials based on students' likes, interests and own culture brought an excellent outcome as the participants could write a paper and self-assess their work using EFL.			
12. Fostering the Development of Written Argumentative Competence in ELT from a Critical Literacy Approach. 2018.	Yes Since it was noticed that students improved their writing, they were able to take a position and support their ideas.	1.To examine and identify the participants' difficulty to express a clear position. 2. Three Critical literacy cycles that entailed organized argumentative writing activities. 3.Organized plan for helping them write different kinds of essays. An opinion argumentative paper was included.	An opinion argumentative essay. °Claim °Grounds °Backing °Qualifier °Rebuttal	1. Students could take a position and support their ideas. 2.Got familiar with the different types of argumentative essays by means of the Critical literacy approach.
Personal interpretation of the findings	Tackling a critical literacy approach helped learners develop their argumentative writing competence. The participants learned about argumentative competence concepts, how to organize their ideas, paragraph organization and express their position as writers. A meaningful class for the students fosters a rigorous written work.			
13. Writing as an Opportunity for Critical Thinking: A study with TEFL majors. Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. 2018.	Yes. CT categories: Remembering, understanding, analyzing, applying, and creating was	1.A diagnostic phase to identify their argumentative writing level. 2.Writing activities in order to improve their critical and argumentative skills 3.Stages for the writing activities. As prewriting, planning,	A paper. °Claims °Grounds °Warrant °Backing °Qualifier °Rebuttal	1.Could support their ideas with arguments. 2.Could picture themselves in hypothetical situations, as well as classify, organize, interpret, define, describe and state main ideas.

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	evidenced in the final written work.	drafting, revising and editing. 4.The participants were asked to read, brainstorming, work in groups, discuss and construct an argumentative writing paper.		3.Could make inferences and support them with arguments.
Personal interpretation of the findings	The students made inferences and support them with arguments by means of clear examples, and CT skills activities. It is important to point out that providing students with clear examples of what they are expected to do, will guide them to achieve the goal easily.			
14. Critical literacy development in an EFL classroom. Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. Bogotá. 2018.	Yes. Writing was conceived as a tool to fight back a social issue and grow personally.	1.To Identify the participants' difficulties. 2.To provide them with the opportunity to choose the topics to work on. 3.Organized plan based on the critical literacy approach.	1.A debate. 2.An argumentative essay. °Claim °Grounds °Warrant °Backing °Qualifier	1.Could read between lines. 2.Realized that literacy was an act for analyzing and re-discovering oneself.
Personal interpretation of the findings	As long as learners become aware of the current social events and themselves, they can write an argumentative essay that puts forward options. It is clear that the Critical literacy approach help students be responsible citizens that set forth options and answers for current society issues.			
15. Promoting efl writing skills and classroom interaction. bogotá. 2020.	Yes. After reflecting upon a local problematic situation they were interested in writing.	1.Firstly, a diagnostic phase was carried out. 2.To implement principles of social inquiry -based learning 3.Three cycles with different activities that were meant to	An Opinion paragraph. °Claim °Grounds °Qualifier	1.They were able to reflect upon their local problematic situations. 2.Discovered a new tool (CT) for organizing their thoughts about their context.

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		improve critical thinking and argumentative writing skills.		
Personal interpretation of the findings	It was clear that writing as a process in the classroom helped students put forward their reflections as they had tools to organize their thoughts in relation to their context.			
16. Write creatively to think and think creatively to write. Bogotá. 2020.	Yes The kids were guided to consider and question a claim, express their ideas by means of colors, images or symbols.	1.Diagnostic phase was done. 2.Contextualized material. 3. The three-step instruction consisted of: seeing, thinking and wondering by means of videos and workshops. 4.To question the participants in order to motivate their critical thinking processes. 5.To provide them with feedback constantly.	A presentation they elaborated by means of colors, symbols, and images in order to put forward their ideas. °Claim °Qualifiers	They were able to present their point of view and opinion in EFL.
Personal interpretation of the findings	Because of the participants EFL level and age, they could achieve basic writing goals. Yet, put the learners on the spot to try to think and write differently put forward that the learners certainly have exceptional skills to be fostered. Writing help everyone construct their reality.			
17. Media literacy to promote critical thinking in the EFL Classroom. 2021.	Yes Advertisements as a bridge to encourage them to improve their critical thinking and	1.Diagnostic phase was done. 2.Guidelines were implemented. 3.To set forward what was the link between the tv advertisement and their own lives and context.	A paper. °Claim °Grounds °Qualifier	1.Distinguishing factual and fictional messages. 2.Expressed their own opinion. 3.Could build a critical attitude and foster argumentative skills.

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	AW EFL skills.	4.Activities such as: discussions, questions, and speaking their minds.		
Personal interpretation of the findings	Fortunately, they moved from superficial examination of meaning to a deeper interpretation of media messages and state it clearly in their writing. There is a relation between the CT skills that were fostered since it was shown in their writing.			
18. The Use of Problem-solving Tasks to promote Critical Thinking Skills in Intermediate English level students. Montería, Colombia. 2016.	Yes Requesting students to solve a problem and put forward in writing options to fix it entails CT and AW skills.	1.Diagnostic phase was carried out. 2.Brainstorming. 3. Helping them improve their Critical Thinking by contextualized tasks. 4.Discussions.	Essay in regards of: Mototaxismo topic. °Claim °Grounds °Warrant °Qualifier	1.Could compare and justify their answers. 2. Improved their CT skills by contextualizing topics.
Personal interpretation of the findings	The strategies that were implemented helped the learners approach a local issue and put forward options. A critical writer is a responsible citizen that contributes to society.			
19. From newstelling to news debating: a path to foster EFL argumentation skills. 2019.	Yes Reflecting learning that entails to tackle real life scenarios motivates the learners to write what their thinking is.	1.To identify the problems the students had in writing in EFL. 2.A five stages proposal <i>Reflective learning</i> : controversial topics. <i>Problematizing reading</i> : were asked to answer specific questions. <i>Problematizing news telling</i> reported the facts and hypothesized about what could have happened. <i>Reflective</i>	A Discussion and final paper. °Claim °Grounds °Warrant °Qualifier	1. Since they were immersed in real learning scenarios, they improved their Critical and argumentative skills in EFL.

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		<p><i>learning:</i> Empowering LAS (Legal Argumentation Skills) as discussed questions regarding the role of law in the case, they put forward their opinions about controversial topics.</p> <p><i>Debate:</i> expressed their opinion.</p>		
Personal interpretation of the findings	It was meant to enhance EFL argumentation skills through debates by news-telling and guide students to become capable of setting their thinking in writing and speaking. Here the hard work entailed writing activities. It was conceived again as a process.			
20. Problem-Based Learning to Foster Persuasive Writing: A Study with Pre-Service Teachers of English (Doctoral dissertation, Facultad de Artes y Humanidades). 2021.	Yes. CT skills had the students related to the topics, examine issues deeper, and put forward alternatives in writing.	<p>1. Diagnostic phase was done.</p> <p>2. To propose six steps to improve the critical thinking and writing process.</p> <p>3. To do contextualized activities.</p>	<p>1. To do a workshop based on issues related to the participants.</p> <p>2. To do Brainstorming, drafting, clustering.</p> <p>3. To do a strip paragraph. °Claim °Grounds</p>	They showed better performance in EFL argumentative writing
Personal interpretation of the findings	The use of Problem-Based Learning, and participants' positive perceptions towards writing show the importance of having the students aware of a topic of their interest and making them do a proposal.			
21. Implementing Problem-Solving Activities to	Yes Problem-solving activities entailed CT	1. To promote critical thinking through problem-solving activities to question their context.	1. To do problem-solving activities	1. Made inferences, instead of repeating patterns, grammar, structures and language skills

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Enhance Critical Thinking Among EFL Young Learners. Colombia. 2021	skills that were finally reflected in the essays they wrote.	2.The topic and issue were introduced, then its causes and consequences. Finally, the students were asked to put forward suggestions and options to resolve them.	2. Cause and effect Paper. °Claim °Grounds °Warrant °Qualifier	2. Improved critical and argumentative skills.
Personal interpretation of the findings	It is important to point out that the researcher also left grammar structures aside and focused on helping the participants become critical thinkers who were able to make sense, analyze, argue, contrast, make inferences. Even if the focus is not on the linguistic aspects, the EFL level is also enhanced.			

4.2. Data analysis.

Next on this segment, it is presented in detail the analysis that is guided by the specific objectives, categories and personal interpretation of the findings.

Firstly, the “*correlation between CT and EFL AW*” was clear since the 21 studies evidenced it (see Table 6). Different strategies, proposals and lessons regardless of the participants age or academic level, that entailed CT skills and deep thinking definitively impacted the AW in EFL process and results positively. For instance, there is one of the collected documents that explains writing as dynamic and collaborative process in which students are working and following a lesson in which the core is the argumentative writing skill and, in the end, the participants show themselves as confident, reflective and analytical. Also, another action-research study that shows a workshop for improving linguistic aspects and the results confirmed that the participants improved their CT skills and were willing to express their ideas in EFL as well. By means of contextualized materials and activities that entail CT skills were finally reflected in the essays they wrote because the written work showed the writer thesis,

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facts to support that claim and their conclusion; on top of that, the written works included deep reflecting, and analysis of the content the learners needed to approach. In fact, there is an existing correlation between CT and EFL AW, when the teacher fosters any of those skills, regardless which one would be fostered, both certainly improve.

The second objective of this study was “*to identify and characterize strategies that have been implemented based on critical thinking skills in order to foster AW practices*”. The studies showed different strategies and techniques that helped the researchers foster AW in the EFL classroom. The most common strategy that stood out was getting *to explore the participants’ likes and writing process difficulties* they faced towards the EFL class. By means of different methods the researchers were interested in getting to know more about the participants’ level, difficulties, context, and likes, it was noticed that it was useful for them to have a starting point in the projects. The second one is closely related to the first strategy; it was *to develop contextualized materials and workshops* in order to help students get easily familiar and interested on the class content the created.

For the next strategy that arose, several studies agreed on it. *Argumentative writing practices* in order to make the students follow specific steps: prewriting (brainstorming and mind maps), planning, drafting, revising and editing. The latter goes along with this strategy: *Active and Reflective learning* that consists of analyzing, evaluating and creating, questioning and put forward their opinion. Then, it was noticed that: *working in groups-collaboratively* was a successful strategy to make the participants feel comfortable and assess themselves. By working in groups students could develop the activities and participate freely.

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Now there is a strategy that helped EFL learners get to understand and be familiarized with an example, a scheme to follow: *Provide examples of an argumentative texts and its features, insights and feedback*. Furthermore, *Friendly environment for speaking and writing in EFL* was another crucial strategy that shows the importance of making the students feel safe and comfortable. There are some students that may be afraid of making mistakes in public and make sure that they can be on the spot and try without being judged or left behind is worthy. The last one is *to debate by means of controversial topics*, it was evidenced that having the participants involved in a controversial topic and make them provide options to resolve it and put forward the ideas, incentivized them to participate.

To sum up, the strategies that worked effectively were: *to explore the participants' likes and writing process difficulties, to develop contextualized materials, Argumentative writing practices (prewriting (brainstorming and mind maps), planning, drafting, revising and editing), Active and Reflective learning, working in groups-collaboratively, Provide examples of an argumentative texts and its features, insights and feedback, Friendly environment for speaking and writing in EFL, to debate by means of controversial topics*.

Thirdly, *“to describe the type of argumentation that learners have achieved while writing by means of CT processes”*. In order to describe the type of argumentation that EFL learner achieved, the Theoretical framework was considered. As Toulmin set forth (2003), an argumentative writing text must include six elements: Claims, Grounds, Warrant, Backing, Qualifier and Rebuttal. The final papers and written works were verified in terms of that author. In general, the participants, regardless of the academic level, enhanced their AW skills along with CT skills; they were able to construct texts, express their opinion, support it with evidence,

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and most importantly, write in EFL. In regards of the type of argumentation, it depended on the academic level of the students, some could construct a formal elaborated paper, others a poster, while others could carry out a debate, all of the written works included: Claims, Grounds and Qualifier; therefore, it can be concluded that all the participants that were involved could put forward a claim and support it with facts and data.

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Chapter: 5 Conclusions

This chapter consists of drawing conclusions of all the information that has been presented along with the chapters and highlight the general objective of this study. Secondly, it is intended to present the limitations and then pedagogical considerations for further research.

5.1 Conclusions

In the Colombian EFL context being considered, there were studies that took place in order to respond to a globalized world that demands for proficient EFL speakers and presents AW in EFL as a key skill to communicate. These studies are related to the present research because the problematic situation is closely related: CT skills are understood as worthy and highly needed in Education nowadays; yet, barely developed because education focuses mostly on linguistic aspects only. Moreover, the students, regardless of the academic level, are not provided with ideal learning environments to foster and develop their argumentative writing skill in EFL. It is a fact that the educational community needs to be aware of the importance of having students provided with learning opportunities for examining, assessing, and judging information critically.

In this study, the researcher intended to examine what literature informs us about the impact that critical thinking has on EFL learners' AW based on the studies that have been done in Colombia within the last 10 years. Based on this project results, it is evidenced that there is a positive, useful and helpful impact that CT has on EFL learners AW. According to the studies and the analysis that was carried out, fortunately the strategies that have been implemented by

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means of CT skills helped the students achieve the task and improve not only their language and AW writing skill, but also their confidence, they became highly motivated to approach the class topic and do the activities. Most importantly, there were studies that showed the importance of making a safe and kind environment when learning a foreign language since students did not feel judged or afraid of mistakes but were interested in trying and experience the process. In the Colombian context, learning and teaching English as a foreign language has been a challenge, the learners, beginners mostly, are able to carry out quizzes; however, they can barely maintain a conversation or construct a paper putting forward their thinking, and support it with evidence.

Consequently, several teachers have decided to implement innovative classes to help students reach deep thinking and well-constructed written works. It was evidenced that the researchers first investigated what were the difficulties the learners had, their likes and interests to have contextualized materials developed. Also, they aimed at leaving grammar and language 'form' behind and focused on the development of CT skills instead. The students carried out activities that made them question, ask themselves about the content. For instance: is the author or speaker specific, does the author say when, who, what, where, when, how, how many or how often? Does he present all the available evidence? The students were asked to approach the content in order to question, analyze, and evaluate it. Then, they were asked to write focusing on the content (ideas, supporting ideas, evidence and source) and then correcting the paper's grammatical mistakes. It was established that as learners and writers, people may change their mind and it is still valid, if it can be well supported by evidence and arguments, it should be accepted.

All the relevant information that came out being considered, it is important to set forth that the role of the teacher is crucial, as it is the teacher the one that can make the students feel confident

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enough to be in charge of their own learning process. The teacher can be supportive, answer questions, provide feedback constantly, give the learners real life scenarios and so on. Yet, it is the student that one that will be working and developing their own argumentative writing and critical thinking practices. Furthermore, since this is a globalized world currently, there are plenty of ways to have the students approach EFL AW differently and tackle content critically. As critical thinkers, there is always something to say, something to fix, something to construct, something to re-construct. Therefore, a critical writer is a responsible citizen that contributes to society in which people and learning practices are always changing.

Moreover, it is paramount to highlight the idea of scores that the action researchers presented. The participants that took place in the present State of the art focused more on CT skills and AW features than on scores, those became secondary. By means of a well-planned lesson, the students could get engaged more on the class content without the fear of approving or achieving a final product. Which is truly important was the learning process, not the results. Even, when that was not the focus, EFL level improved.

This documentary research puts forward the importance of stating that changing the mind is not wrong, but instead, it calls for progress; being open minded puts forward that it is not necessary to know all of the answers but all of the questions. When the EFL class becomes a kind environment for learning in which judging is not allowed, questions are welcome, grades are secondary. The students can do peer tutoring and self-assessment, and learners are encouraged to experience language through real context, they simultaneously acquire the language as well as AW skills improve.

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5.2 Limitations

This project took two years to be completed, it was a long process that entailed difficulties that were considered as obstacles for the data collection stage and the task achievement. However, in the end, it was overcome. Firstly, during the second semester of 2021 the researcher had personal issues that delayed the project heavily and it required one semester more to be fully completed. On the other hand, the researcher found difficult to have full data access and get to meaningful studies because the project aimed at having data collected in the Colombian context that represented the research topic only. Even though, several documents were finally discarded, 21 studies were enough to answer the research question. All in all, it is considered that this study was successful since the general objective was achieved in the end.

5.3 Pedagogical considerations

In this section it is intended to provide personal reflection and general suggestions and advice that may help future research.

Certainly, it can be concluded that more studies are needed so that EFL learners, pre-service and in-service teachers can improve their learning and teaching abilities, focusing on reflection and argumentative production for the development of CT skills. This Documentary research has put forward all of the strategies and practices that have been successfully implemented; therefore, it can be affirmed that this study can be turned into a proposal in which new relevant information may arise.

It was evidenced that more studies are needed to highlight the importance of CT and AW in EFL nowadays not only to foster and improve the writing skill but also to understand that it is valid not to focus on linguistic aspects only. There are plenty of options regarding materials and

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didactics when the students are asked directly about their own lives and interests. Making contextualized classes boosts the student's participation and understanding of the content. It is paramount to make the classes a safe place for participations, encourage them to experience the language through real life scenarios.

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