**DEVELOPING A VISUAL THINKING PACKAGE FOR TEACHING ENGLISH AND ENHANCING TWENTY FIRST CENTURY LEARNING SKILLS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**INTRODUCTION**

Aesthetic creativity is relevant for academic and non-academic work and is transferable across media modes. The Twenty First Century has brought about an era of rapid technological advancement and globalization, which has led to a growing need for individuals with critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity skills. In response to this need, educators are exploring new ways to enhance student’s learning experiences and equip them with the necessary skills for the future. One such approach is Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS), which uses images as a medium to encourage critical thinking and communication skills. This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of VTS in English classrooms for enhancing Twenty First Century Learning Skills among Secondary School Students. The study will explore the impact of VTS on students' cognitive, social and emotional development, including their ability to analyse, evaluate and interpret visual images, and communicate their ideas effectively and also “The term Twenty First Century Learning Skills refer to a broad set of knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits that are believed— by educators, school reformers, college professors, employers, and others—to be critically important to success in today’s world.” In simple terms, Twenty First Century Learning Skills refer to the skills that are required to enable an individual to face the challenges of the Twenty First Century world that is globally-active, digitally transforming, collaboratively moving forward, creatively progressing, seeking competent human-resource and quick in adopting changes. The findings of this research will provide valuable insights into the potential of VTS as a pedagogical tool for enhancing students' learning outcomes and preparing them for the demands of the Twenty First Century workforce.

**Role of Twenty First Century Learning Skills**

The term Twenty First Century Learning Skills refers to the set of competencies and abilities that students need to develop in order to thrive in today's fast-paced, technologically-driven world. These skills go beyond the traditional academic subjects, such as reading, writing, and math, and encompass a broader range of abilities that are necessary for success in the modern workplace and society. Some of the key Twenty First Century Learning Skills include critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, collaboration, communication, digital literacy, and global awareness. These skills are considered essential for success in a range of fields, from science and technology to business and the arts. Twenty First Century learning emphasizes the need for students to be active, engaged learners who take responsibility for their own learning and develop the ability to adapt to new and rapidly changing situations. The key components of Twenty First Century Learning Skills are critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication. This requires a shift away from traditional teaching methods and towards more student-cantered, project-based approaches that foster collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking.

Overall, the goal of Twenty First Century learning is to prepare students for success in a world that is increasingly complex and interconnected, and to equip them with the skills and competencies they need to thrive in a rapidly changing and unpredictable future.

**Role of Visual Thinking Strategy**

As a vehicle for creative thinking, VTS can be used “to reinforce the situational and iterative nature of composition” and to encourage students to revise their work, thereby improving the “quality, innovation, and/or rhetorical effectiveness” (Lee & Carpenter, 2000). Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS) is an inquiry-based teaching method that strives to increase students’ proficiency in describing, analysing, and interpreting images and information based on visual observation and discussion. It supports the development of critical thinking skills and encourages participation in collaborative discussions, especially among students who struggle with traditional text-based or lecture-based learning environments.

**NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE**

In today's world, students need to acquire a diverse set of skills to be successful in the Twenty First Century workforce. These skills include critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and communication, among others. However, traditional teaching methods often fail to equip students with these skills. Therefore, educators are constantly exploring new approaches to enhance students' learning experiences and prepare them for the future.

Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS) is a teaching approach that has gained popularity in recent years. VTS uses visual images to encourage critical thinking and communication skills among students. This approach has been shown to be effective in enhancing students' cognitive and social-emotional development.

English is a crucial subject in secondary schools as it lays the foundation for communication skills and critical thinking. Therefore, this research on the effectiveness of VTS in English classrooms is significant as it provides insights into a new pedagogical tool that could enhance students' learning outcomes in this crucial subject. The study will help educators understand how VTS can be used to develop Twenty First Century Learning Skills among students and prepare them for the demands of the future workforce. Additionally, the findings of this research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on VTS and its potential impact on student learning. Daejeon and Daedeok (2016) conducted a study on Visual Thinking Strategies and creativity in English education. The study attempts to define what creativity and Visual Thinking mean in English education and to suggest how teachers can enhance children’s creativity through Visual Thinking strategy in English instructions. The method employed in this study is an analytic literature review. The key finding of this study is meaningful in that it raises the issues of Visual Thinking strategy which can be effectively incorporated to language instruction, and it highlights the role of language teachers as a facilitator and provider of optimal learning environments for both creativity and Visual Thinking strategy. Hess et al. (2020) conducted a study on Visual Thinking Strategy in the composition classroom. This study aims at how Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS) methodology can improve students’ success in the transition to college by providing a bridge from K-12 English Language Arts Instruction. The sample used were Professors and secondary school teachers across the country. As an initial exploration into the potential for a museum-inspired pedagogy to help students transition from a language arts approach to writing to a more rhetorically-driven strategy of analysis and composition, the course provided strong initial outcomes. The way that VTS inspires student engagement, Twenty First Century skills, and the learning of cognitive strategies can be further understood through the framework of creativity studies.

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Technology advancements over the past two decades have increased visual communication, and instead of relying solely on verbal communications, we now use a variety of visual resources via media**.** But up until now, the majority of teachers and students have only been exposed to spoken language in language classes. We are therefore capable of verbal thinking rather than Visual Thinking. Verbal thinking is typically associated with intellectual, logical, and analytical thinking.In contrast, Visual Thinking has been considered intuitive, non-rational, and unsystematic. Individual has both verbal thinking and Visual Thinking modes, and the distinct cognitive modes are interrelated and comparable. In cognitive imagery theory, it assumes that there are two cognitive systems, one is verbal and the other is nonverbal (imagery).It explains how we think with a Dual-Coding Theory (DCT). According to DCT, we store information and/or experience in both imagine and verbal codes simultaneously and assumes that visual and verbal processes have equal roles. The DCT emphasizes the early development of the nonverbal system because it is foundation of cognitive skills associated with language. Images are the primary elements of thinking and therefore, Visual Thinking is our primary mode of thought. Thus, it is clear that images function as symbols for general ideas by associated with language. According to ‘thinking’ remains as ‘perception’ without inner speech. In other words, perception is the precondition for thinking. As mentioned, “In our speech, there is always the hidden thought, the subtext”. Supported this idea by explaining, “…most of the words we use in our inner speech, before speaking or writing a sentence, exist as auditory or visual images in our consciousness”. The concept of ‘Visual Thinking’ can be defined as **“an active problem-solving process”**. Specifically, Visual Thinking is an analytical process of perceiving, interpreting and producing visual messages, an interaction between seeing, imaging, and drawing. In addition, it can help solving visual communication problems. ‘Visual Thinking strategy’, meanwhile, is originally developed to build students’ thinking skills used to enhance understanding of art work. Visual Thinking strategy, however, can be transferred to other subjects of learning by helping learners to think creatively and critically.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Teaching and learning English is challenging because the subject encompasses many areas and even have many rules to follow. Sometimes Activity -oriented method many seem difficult for both teacher and learner. Keeping this in mind and on the basis of studies, this Visual Thinking strategy model will enhance student participation and improve the Twenty First Century Learning Skills and also help teachers to teach English more effectively. So, the present study is entitled as **DEVELOPING A VISUAL THINKING PACKAGE FOR TEACHING ENGLISH AND ENHANCING TWENTY FIRST CENTURY LEARNING SKILLS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

**Developing:** [Growing](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/growing) or [becoming](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/becoming) [stronger](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/strong) or more [advanced](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/advanced). (Cambridge dictionary, 2023). In the present study developing means to develop a learning package based on Visual Thinking Strategy.

**Visual thinking package:** In the present study Visual Thinking Package will be developed based on Visual Thinking Strategy.

Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS):Visual Thinking strategy is an inquiry-based teaching method that improves a student's ability to describe, analyse, and interpret imagery and information through observing and discussing visual art. (Housen. A, 2023).

**English**-The [language](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/language) that is [spoken](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/spoken) in the UK, the US, and in many other [countries](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/country). (Cambridge dictionary, 2023).

**Teaching English:** In the study, Teaching English concepts from English Text Book for Std VIII of Kerala State Syllabus will be used.

**Enhancing**: Enhancing is to improve the quality (Cambridge dictionary, 2023). In the present study enhancing means to improve or increase the present level of Twenty First Century Learning Skills and Achievement in English among Secondary School Students.

**Twenty First Century Learning Skills:** The term "Twenty First Century Learning Skills" refers to the set of competencies and abilities that students need to develop in order to thrive in today's fast-paced, technologically-driven world. (21stCenturyskillHandbookCBSE, 2020).

In the present study Twenty First Century Learning Skills are the 4 C’s, that is critical thinking, creativity & innovation, collaboration and communication.

**Secondary School Students**- A school for students who have completed their primary educa tion. (Law insider, 2019). In the present study Secondary School Students refers to those students studying in standard VIII following the Kerala State syllabus in Ernakulam District.

**HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

Hypothesis 1:

Visual Thinking Package for teaching English will be effective for enhancing Twenty First Century Learning Skills among Secondary School Students.

Hypothesis 2:

Visual Thinking Package for teaching English will be effective for enhancing Twenty First Century Learning Skills over Activity-Oriented method among Secondary School Students.

Hypothesis 3:

Visual Thinking Package will be effective for enhancing Achievement in English among Secondary School Students.

Hypothesis 4:

Visual Thinking Package will be effective for enhancing Achievement in English over Activity-Oriented method among Secondary School Students.

**OBJECTIVES O F THE STUDY**

1. To prepare a Visual Thinking Package for teaching English among Secondary School Students.

2. To prepare lesson transcripts based on Activity-Oriented method for teaching English among Secondary School Students.

3.To analyse the level of Twenty First Century Learning Skills among Secondary School Students.

4. To analyse the level of achievement in English among Secondary School Students.

5. To find out the effectiveness of Visual Thinking Package for teaching English for enhancing Twenty First Century Learning Skills among Secondary School Students based on total sample and subsample gender.

6. To compare the effectiveness of Visual Thinking Package for teaching English for enhancing Twenty First Century Learning Skills over Activity Oriented Method based on total sample and subsample gender.

7. To find out the effectiveness of Visual Thinking Package for enhancing achievement in English among Secondary School Students based on total sample and subsample gender.

8. To compare the effectiveness of Visual Thinking Package for enhancing Achievement in English over Activity Oriented Method based on total sample and subsample gender.

**METHODOLOGY**

In the present study Experimental method will be adopted by the investigator to compare the effectiveness of Visual Thinking Package for teaching English for enhancing Twenty First Century Learning Skills and Achievement in English with the Activity Oriented method.

**DESIGN**

Pre-test Post-test non-equivalent group design will be used.

**VARIABLES**

The variables of the study will be;

Independent Variable-

1.Visual Thinking Package

2. Activity Oriented Method

Dependent Variable-

1.Twenty First Century Learning Skills

2. Achievement in English

**POPULATION AND SAMPLE OF THE STUDY**

The population of the study will be Secondary School Students. The sample selected for the study will be 120 students of standard 8 from different schools in Ernakulam district following Kerala State Syllabus. Due consideration will be given to gender.

**TOOLS TO BE USED FOR THE STUDY**

Tools

1. Achievement Test in English for 8th standard students prepared and validated by the investigator.

2.Scale on Twenty First Century Learning Skills for students of standard VIII prepared by the investigator.

Material

1. Visual Thinking Package for teaching English for students of standard VIII.

2. Lesson transcripts in English based on activity-oriented method for students of standard VIII.

**PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION**

The sample will be split into 2 groups: control and experimental. An English achievement test and scale on Twenty First Century Learning Skills will be given to both the experimental and control group as pre-test. The experimental group will receive classes based on Visual Thinking Strategy and control group will receive classes based on Activity Oriented Method. Following the exposure, the same pre-test will be implemented again as the post test for both groups.

**STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES**

The following statistical techniques will be used to realize the objectives of the study:

1. t-test

2. ANCOVA

**DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

1. The study is conducted only in Ernakulam district.

2. Only VIIIth standard students were considered as Secondary School Students.

3. From the Twenty First Century Skills (Life skills, Learning Skills and Literacy Skills) only the Learning Skills (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication) will be considered for the study.

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

Visual Thinking approach can help students develop their critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, and communication abilities by encouraging them to use visual aids and graphical representations to understand and share information.

Students can improve their ability to understand and interpret material, connect concepts, and effectively communicate their thoughts and ideas by using the Visual Thinking technique in English classes. Better academic performance and greater involvement in the learning process may result from this.

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