

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN
GROUP DISCUSSION USING THE
PEER SOCRATIC QUESTIONING
(PSQ) TECHNIQUE**

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the results of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this qualitative study was to investigate the experiences of a group of TESL degree students using a questioning technique called Peer Socratic Questioning (PSQ) in their group discussion activities. Specifically, this study sought to examine the types of Socratic questions they asked in their group discussions and how the questions influenced their critical thinking levels. This study also investigated the participants' perception of the PSQ technique in improving their group discussion and the challenges the participants faced in using the PSQ technique. The study involved 20 participants from an Institute of Teacher Education located in Terengganu. The participants were Semester 2 Year 2 TESL students taking the ELT Methodology course. The participants were divided into five groups and were involved in six group discussions employing the PSQ technique. The study employed a qualitative research design where data was collected via reflective journal entries, video recordings of group discussions and the video recording of focus group interview. The data collection took 11 weeks to complete and the data was analysed by using the ATLAS.ti software. The findings of the study revealed that two main types of Socratic questions (conceptual clarification questions and questions probing viewpoints and perspectives) dominated the group discussions. These two types of questions not only helped the participants gain a better understanding of the topics of discussion but also more importantly showed that the PSQ technique enhanced participants' critical thinking levels. This was evident in their ability to analyse and evaluate their own levels of thinking and they perceived that the PSQ technique increased their self-efficacy, confidence, engagement and personal development. The challenges that they faced while using the PSQ technique were not due to the technique itself but rather their lack of preparation and resources, language proficiency, unfamiliarity of the technique, the quality of questions asked and the topic of discussion. Overall, the participants perceived that the PSQ technique had improved their group discussion and would like to continue using it in subsequent discussions. With proper guidance, the PSQ technique would be a very helpful technique not only to promote and enhance critical thinking but also to improve learning in general.

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