An Assessment of the Status of Teaching of 21st Century Skills to Students of English as a Second Language in Selected Teacher Training Institutions in Zambia

Gift Kaira [1], Kapesha C. Ngulube [1], Elliot Machinyise [2]

[1]Mulungushi University, School of Education, Kabwe, Zambia

[2]David Livingstone College of Education, Livingstone, Zambia

Abstract. Over the years, globalisation, technologisation and other factors have resulted in the need for teachers generally to acquire and apply 21st century skills in their teaching, most notable of which are critical thinking, innovation, collaboration and use of technologies. Teachers of English have not been exonerated from this wind of change. The need to train teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL), who are ready for the 21st century is not just necessary for effective delivery of English Language lessons but is also an important strategic step in the preparation of teachers who are equipped with knowledge that is fit for their pupils in the 21st century. However, the effect that this wave of change has had on the ESL trainer and teacher-trainee in Zambia has not been documented. This paper therefore presents an in-depth examination of the status of ESL teaching in selected teacher training institutions where English is offered as a teaching subject. The study sought to establish how teacher-training institutions were preparing their ESL teachers for the 21st century challenge. Among the 21st century skills, the study took a closer look at critical thinking, innovation, collaboration and use of technologies. A total of 120 participants, among them trainers and trainees, from 3 training institutions where English is taught as a teaching subject took part in answering a questionnaire on the current status of teaching 21st century skills in ESL. Preliminary findings show that only 29% of student respondents were able to list three 21st century skills as required by the study while others listed either less than three skills or did not exhibit any knowledge of the skills. On the part of the lecturers, several positive practices were noted given that 90% of lecturer respondents indicated that they used constructive arguments to promote reasoning and 82% affirmed that they assessed their students using high order thinking skills. However, these positive indicators diminished as only 48% of lecturer respondents acknowledged allowing their students to use technological gadgets for teaching and learning purposes. A further decline is noted in the area of collaboration where only 9% of the trainers of ESL teachers are shown to embrace the skill of collaboration in their teaching.

Key words: 21st century skills, Teaching, Status, Methodologies, ESL

Introduction

The need to train teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) who are ready for the 21st century is not just necessary for effective delivery of English language lessons but is also an important strategic step in the preparation of teachers who are equipped with knowledge that is fit for their pupils in the 21st century.

Although the 21st century is already here, many teacher educators still cling to methods that were used to teach them. Sadly, these same methodologies are passed on to their trainee teachers who in turn use them to teach their pupils in schools. Needless to mention that the world has changed a great deal and is still changing, with the current needs being quite different from those of the past decades. As such, the role of the teacher as well as that of the teacher trainer, alongside the methodologies they use to teach, cannot remain static but must change in accordance with changes in time in order to help students develop skills that will enable them to overcome present and future challenges and survive in the 21st century and beyond.

Although many education systems worldwide are shifting their emphasis from the traditional model of teaching through lectures and textbooks, a great many countries are still

clinging to this arrangement because it is convenient to the education providers who may not be ready for change. Many countries have made great strides in the teaching of the 21st century skills and this has brought with it new roles of teacher trainers.

Definition of 21st Century Skills

The world has changed massively over the past few years and is now almost a totally different place from the way it was several decades ago. With the advent of the 21st century, everything has been globalised and it has become difficult to go about business the usual traditional way. This unprecedented transformation deserves to be confronted with a major shift in the way of doing things that was not previously applicable, to enable humans to manage the demands of the 21st century world as they go about business in all spheres of life. In other words, for one to cope with demands of the new era, one needs to possess 21st century skills, which are defined by Rich (2010) as core competences that proponents consider should be taught to help students succeed in today's world. These are skills such as collaboration, digital literacy and critical thinking. For Liego (2022) 21st century skills refer to a concept used to describe a shift from traditional to modern methods of teaching in order to prepare learners for the future. This is done by imparting in them skills that they require to succeed in a global economy. The skills include critical thinking, creativity and collaboration which prepare students for the real world. In other words, these are new skills that are fundamental for students to circumnavigate in a complex and evolving future.

There are several of such skills but this study concentrated on innovation, collaboration, critical thinking and use of technology in the ESL classroom.

Innovation as a Tool in ESL

As the world gets more and more digital, teaching of language becomes less and less traditional, hence the need to make even teaching with modern innovations in education. Before we look at several aspects of innovation, it is worthwhile to examine how the concept is perceived by various scholars in the world of second language teaching.

Carless (2012) defines innovation as bringing about improvements in education, arising from something which is considered as new by implementers. It is worth mentioning, however, that something becomes an innovation when implemented successfully. This is a crucial development in a learning environment because it keeps schools abreast with current trends in society. In language teaching and learning, innovation helps to create learners who are motivated and independent because they are engaged in the learning process and are capable of using digital platforms, digital game-based learning as some of the important innovations where these facilities are available in the language classroom.

In a study by McGraw (2019), various features of innovation in the classroom are listed, among them, giving support and comfort to learners so that they are less stressed by making modifications to seating arrangements. This also benefits the learners in that they become more efficient and creative in their tasks; secondly, allowing for creativity and student-led activities where teachers take the role of facilitators and students take this opportunity to teach each other.

Innovation becomes more effective out of the classroom if the traditional classroom does not support it. This is the idea coined by Marentette (2017) who advocates for the transformation of the traditional classroom into a learning space that can support innovative learning to promote collaboration and creativity. Marentette's idea can be adapted in several contexts where facilities only favour traditional learning. In such instances, the ESL teacher can turn to other facilities within the school premises such as the library into a learning resource and other open spaces such as playfields or farmlands to initiate project work whose completion can be done when the class returns to designated classroom.

Collaboration in the ESL Classroom

Laal et al. (2012) define collaboration in teaching as a practice that involves students working together with a view to solving a problem, accomplishing a task or coming up with an invention or a product. Collaboration entails that skills of working together in groups or in pairs are inculcated in learners in order for them to attain a common goal. Unlike in previous eras where learners worked individually and competitively, the 21st century advocates for learners of ESL to engage actively in conversations with peers in exchange of ideas and beliefs. Scrivinvas (2011) in Laal et al. (2012) posits that when learners work together, they are challenged and, therefore, they begin to generate their own ideas and concepts in addition to questioning other concepts. In this way, learning becomes more interesting and meaningful as there is less dependency on the teacher because the principal role of the latter is one of facilitator.

In the teaching of ESL, collaboration works at two levels. It is at the level of teachers and at that of the learners (Ibrahim et al., 2015). At the level of the learners, learners depend on one another as they strive to gain knowledge and this is achievable because learning in groups makes the learners feel part of a larger community where the weak and the strong will support one another to achieve the required goals. This is motivating to the learners who, at the same time, feel intellectually empowered during the learning process. In addition to promoting interest and enthusiasm, working in groups enhances communication skills of the learners as a result of conversations taking place in class and furthermore encourages them to take responsibility of their own learning (Artini & Padmadewi, 2018). On the other hand, at the level of the teacher, collaboration necessitates that teachers work with their colleagues to ensure that learning is at its peak for the learners. This is confirmed in a study by Vintan and Gallagher (2015) where the researchers found that during collaboration, teachers bring on board their knowledge and experiences which they put together in order to enhance efficiency in planning and teaching. As teachers do this, there is a rich knowledge base arising from the contributions of knowledge into a pool which goes to service learners' demands. However, for collaboration to succeed, collaborating teachers need to invest a lot of time in the activity.

Critical Thinking

Another important aspect worth consideration in ESL is the concept of critical thinking which is defined by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Committee on Critical Thinking in Carter (2020) as "a process which stresses an attitude of suspended judgment, incorporates logical inquiry and problem solving and leads to an evaluative decision or action." In other words, critical thinking is the skill that enables students not to accept facts and concepts as they come by but to question them and strive to find solutions, apply the acquired knowledge. This is what will solve problems for ourselves or for the community. Critical thinking further encourages learners to put up constructive debates and make use of these skills in their lives. It is important to note that teaching for critical thinking leads to best practice as it challenges learners not only to memorise facts but also to question concepts, make interpretations and apply their knowledge in their day-to-day living. In other words, critical thinking is the process that enables a learner to interrogate concepts in order to establish truth in an assertion. As scholars, we must appreciate the fact that critical thinking is not enhanced in a day but that it is a gradual process that requires time and can be developed with the help of approaches which are interactive in nature. In this process, the role of the teacher cannot be underestimated.

For Saleh (2019), the concept of critical thinking applies to all sorts of knowledge and denotes active engagement of learners in knowledge construction as they reflect and think intensely, leading to curiosity and questioning as necessary characteristics to find answers for the questions raised. For this to take place, Lipman (2003) affirms that it is the responsibility of teachers to enhance critical thinking in the learners while they are learning the language.

The history of critical thinking, which occupies an acute place in education today, dates back to the days of early philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Paul et al. (1997) postulate that as early as 2500 years ago, Socrates believed that people who claimed to have knowledge were unable to justify it. He thus insisted on using probing questions to get justification for what they believed. Using a questioning method known as 'Socratic Questioning', he would ask deep questions to provoke thinking, search for proof and do a thorough enquiry into reasoning and assumptions. This effective questioning falls in the higher order thinking skills of the Bloom's Taxonomy and leads the learner to the acquisition of Critical Thinking skills as alluded to by Carter (2020).

In the modern day ESL classroom, apart from formulation of hypothesis, critical thinking embraces several abilities, among them, thoughtful exploration of issues (Changwong et al., 2018), justification of personal arguments (Rani, 2016), decision-making and problem-solving (Turan et al., 2019), and self-assessment (Nadri & Azhar, 2017). Furthermore, students with critical thinking skills learn to separate facts from opinions and are more likely to consider all options in a given situation before making a decision. This includes understanding views and experiences of others and taking them into consideration. It is believed that when all these abilities are in place, there is academic achievement on the part of the learner, leading to success in life after school.

Based on evidence by Carter (2020), the ESL student requires skills and strategies that are crucial for survival in an academic and professional environment but these skills are sometimes overlooked during the teaching and learning process. This omission is costly, for it does not prepare the learners to face intricate situations with which they will be confronted in their future undertakings that will call for reflection and rational thought.

Empirical evidence by Shirkhani and Fahim (2011) unveils factors that affect critical thinking skills of the learner. Their study found, among the various factors, the assessment methods that are used and suggest that teachers of language are key in inculcating critical thinking skills in their learners the types of assessment.

Technology in the ESL Classroom

The last tool under consideration as we endeavour to meet the demands of the 21st century in the ESL classroom is the use of technology. Most of the innovations that have taken place are predominantly technological. Consequently, it is evident that all the corners of the earth and nearly every sphere of life have been reached by technology; the ESL classroom has not been left out and, because of this, it makes sense to integrate technology in education and use it to effectively teach language. This is well-articulated by Amin (2019) who postulates that the use of technology is now a central feature in the learning process and that for teachers of language, it is now almost inescapable.

Creatively used, technology invigorates curiosity and enthusiasm of learners. In the context of ESL, learners have a lot to gain when they use gadgets like phones and ipads with access to the internet and other platforms. In this regard, the inclusion of technology will stir the mood of the learners and enhance learning. Furthermore, used correctly, technology in the ESL classroom has advantages which outweigh its pitfalls. Apart from enhancing interactivity and collaboration during learning, one of the core benefits, as explained by Hazarika (2017), is that it enhances interest and motivation. Apart from increasing student engagement, technology improves the quality of teaching (Gavifekr & Rosdy, 2015), promotes linguistic skills and learning attitudes (Solano et al., 2017) and provides a great variety of content and resource (Alsied, 2019).

Status of ESL in Zambia

The status regarding the teaching of 21st century skills in ESL in Zambia is not known. This paper is therefore an in-depth examination of the status of ESL teaching in selected teacher training institutions in Zambia where English is offered as a teaching subject. Among the skills, the study takes a closer look at critical thinking, innovation, collaboration and use of technologies.

Problem Statement

The world is changing at a fast pace in many areas of life mainly because of the continually evolving technology. One of the tools man can use to catch up with this development is education. Teacher educators are key in the preparation of students for this challenge. Many countries have made great strides in the teaching of the 21st century skills and this has brought with it new roles of teacher trainers.

However, the effect that this wave of change has had on the ESL trainer and teacher-trainee in Zambia is not documented. This paper, therefore, opts to look at how teacher-training institutions are preparing their ESL teachers for the 21st century challenge.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to develop an in-depth examination of the status of ESL vis-à-vis preparation of students for 21st century skills in selected teacher training institutions and use the findings to evaluate the relevance of current ESL training practices to the 21st century.

Objectives

  (i) To find out how teaching of 21st century skills in ESL is implemented in selected teacher training institutions.
  (ii) To investigate how assessment activities are conducted in ESL in view of the 21st century challenge.
  (iii) To ascertain the extent to which ESL training is relevant to the 21st century.

Research Questions

  (i) How is teaching of 21st century skills in ESL implemented in selected teacher training institutions?
  (ii) What kind of assessment activities are used to evaluate teaching/learning in ESL in view of the 21st century challenge?
  (iii) To what extent is ESL training relevant to the 21st century?

Significance of this Paper

The paper will provide an understanding of current teaching practices in selected ESL teacher training institutions in Zambia and the extent to which they meet the needs of the ever changing 21st century language and communicative needs. In light of the findings, it will be used to strengthen interventions so that implementation of teaching of these skills can be fully realised.

Review of Related Literature

Several studies have been conducted in many countries on the readiness of teachers of English as a Second Language to teach 21st century skills. Only studies that are relevant to the current study have been reviewed and presented here. However, before this is done a brief history of ESL is necessary.

Brief History of ESL Teaching

The teaching of English as a Second Language dates back to the 15th century when the British started expanding their empire to other parts of the world as a result of their booming trade. English was instrumental in their day-to-day life, for, apart from trade, it was used for administrative purposes when it came to running their newly acquired overseas territories. In most parts of the world, local populations did not want to give up their language and culture, so the British had no choice but to adopt a dual language system where the local language was used alongside the new language. In this way, English became the second language in the newly acquired territories, hence the concept of English as a Second Language. On the other hand, the immigrants who regrouped in America lived amidst diverse cultures and languages and, in an effort to create a national identity, the United States government in the 19th century proclaimed English as the national language.

As more and more migrants went to settle in the United States, there was more demand for education, especially for the teaching of English. This entailed increased demand for teaching materials for English as a Second Language and this is what led to the creation of Teaching English as a Second Language (Ann, 2013). In the initial stages of the 19th century, teachers of English Language were mainly equipped with methods that were traditional in nature and principally teacher-centred. Some of these were the grammar-translation method, the audio-lingual method and the direct method before the introduction of newer methods like the Communicative Language Teaching.

With the arrival of the 21st century, the story around the teaching of English as a Second Language saw drastic change owing to the nature of demands that the new era was ushering in. It obviously meant that some of the methodologies and approaches of earlier times would not hold, so the ESL teacher needed to embrace teaching of skills that would be relevant for the learner to survive in the 21st century. In this vein, teachers of English would do well adjust their teaching methodologies to incorporate ideas like critical thinking, collaboration, innovation and the use of technologies.

Selected Studies on Teaching of 21st Century Skills in ESL around the World

Tom-lawyer (2014) did an evaluation of the English Language curriculum at a college of education in Nigeria. His motive was to investigate the effectiveness of the Nigerian Certificate in Education, arising from continued failure of students in English examinations at that level, as a result of which access to higher education by these graduates was hampered. The researcher evaluated the curriculum in order to ascertain the effectiveness of the training programme for teachers of English. A sample size of 30 participants, which included 10 lecturers and 20 students, responded to questionnaires and interviews, with content analysis as method of analysis.

One of the findings was that the institution in question was technologically lacking and, coupled with other factors, the implementation of the curriculum was hindered. Although this study was not designed to assess 21st century skills, by inference the inadequacy of technological resources would suggest lack of preparedness for use of technology as a 21st century skill.

Another study worth considering was done by Dobransky (2015) who sought to find out the use and integration of technology by Ohio's Community College instructors of English as a Second Language. The main objective of the study was to understand the kind of educational technology being employed in the institution during the teaching and learning process of ESL lectures and how this technology was being applied. A cross-sectional survey design was used and only campuses with programmes in English were chosen for the survey. The sample consisted of 86 instructors. Findings from this survey were that community college ESL instructors normally used technology and that both staff and students were using new

technology tools and discarding older or non-technology tools. However, the study also concluded that majority of technology in Ohio's community college was not being fully utilised. Although this study does not allude to 21st century skills, the college was on course with the use of technology which forms part of current trends in education.

In a survey conducted to ascertain teachers' readiness in implementing 21st century learning, Rusdin (2018) focused on creativity, communication, collaboration and critical thinking, which are commonly known as the 4 Cs. Data was collected by means of a questionnaire from 107 teachers who were randomly selected from different states in Malaysia. After analysing the data using descriptive analysis, the research found that teachers were ready to implement 21st century learning. In line with other findings, however, the study recommended that teachers be accorded opportunities to develop their profession even further.

A year later, Ibrahim et al. (2019) carried out a study on Trainee Teachers' Readiness Towards 21st century Teaching Practices. This study aimed to investigate the level of trainee teachers' readiness and the challenges encountered during teaching practice in Malaysia. The researchers used a sample of 160 student teachers who had graduated from their teaching practice and administered questionnaires to them to assess, among others, their readiness for the 21st century teaching skills. Results showed that most of the respondents were comfortable with 21st century skills such as use of technologies, collaboration and communication

Another study was done on Readiness of Teachers in inserting the 21st century skills for Teaching of English at Primary School by Rahmanyanti, Padmadewi and Artini (2020) who investigated teachers' readiness in inserting 21st century skills in their teaching/learning processes. Dada collection was done through a 17 item questionnaire which was administered to 11 primary school teachers from both public and private institutions in Danpasar. Participants were selected by random purposive sampling and the embedded mixed method was used. According to the findings of the study, teachers perceived themselves as being ready with the integration of 21st century skills in their teaching.

Recently, Ghazali (2020) set out to assess "Student Teachers' Readiness towards the Digitalisation of the 21st century English Language Classroom Education 4.0". The study, which focussed on the Malaysian education system, consisted of 39 English Language trainee teachers who were assessed through a questionnaire for the incorporation of technology in their teaching processes. Following analysis of data, it was revealed that teachers were well acquainted with the use of technology in teaching and that gender was not a factor in the levels of preparedness between male and female teachers.

From the reviewed literature, there are indications that many teachers and trainee teachers of language are equal to their task regarding the teaching of 21st century skills.

Methodology

This study was carried out to investigate the status of teaching 21st century skills to students of English as a second Language in selected teacher training institutions in Zambia. Over 20 public teacher training institutions exist in Zambia where ESL is offered to trainee teachers for the secondary school sector. The target population comprised trainee teachers and teacher trainers of ESL in public institutions training secondary school teachers that sent students for Teaching Practice between January and April 2021. The sample for the study was selected from the 3 institutions. A total of 120 participants were randomly selected as follows: 17 lecturers and 103 students of ESL with ages ranging between 41 and above 61 and between 20 and 40 years respectively. The sampled lecturers had experience as teacher trainers ranging from 1 to 5 and 21 and above.

As a way of collecting data for the study, questionnaires were designed and distributed to participants after their teaching practice period. The data to be collected was about

knowledge and teaching of 21st century skills. The questionnaires were collected soon after the respondents had filled in their answers.

The questionnaire for trainee teachers was divided into three parts 1, 2 and 3. The first part aimed at gathering biographical data of the participants while the second part was designed to find out if the trainee teachers had an idea about 21st century skills. The last part consisted of items that would help gather information about trainee teachers' readiness for the 21st century skills.

Quantitative data was analysed using charts and tables generated using Microsoft Excel while qualitative data was analysed thematically. The quantitative data was coded and then filtered using MS Excel.

Findings

Data of the study was collected by administering a questionnaire to students and another to lecturers of ESL in institutions of teacher training. A total of 107 questionnaires were distributed in three institutions and, of these, 103 were returned. Therefore, the data that were analysed were based on 103 questionnaires from students and 13 from lecturers.

For each type of questionnaire, data collected was categorised into biographic characteristics and readiness for 21st century skills. Table 1 represents responses collected on students' biography.

Table 1: Biographical information of the respondents

Biographical information		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	35	33.98
	Female	67	65.05
	Gender not indicated	1	0.97
	TOTAL	**103**	**100**
Age Range	15-20	3	2.91
	21-25	79	76.70
	26-30	19	18.45
	31-35	1	0.97
	36-40	1	0.97
	41 and above	0	0
	TOTAL	**103**	**100**
Highest Education Qualification	School Certificate	81	78.64
	Diploma	7	6.80
	Other	4	3.88
	Not indicated	11	10.68
	TOTAL	**103**	**100**
Status	Pre-service	103	100
	In-service	0	0
	TOTAL	**103**	**100**

Table 1 above shows that there were 103 respondents of whom 35 (33.98%) were male and 67 (65.05%) were female. It is worth mentioning that 1 (0.97%) of the respondents did not specify their gender. The participants were of varying age from 15-20 and 41 and above. The majority of these, constituting 76.70%, were aged between 21 and 26 years of age while 18.45% were aged from 26-30 years. Only 5 participants (4.85%) fell outside these two age groups.

In terms of academic qualifications of the respondents, results display a landslide 81 (78.64%) possession of school certificate qualifications, with only 7 (6.80%) being in

possession of diploma in teaching. Another 4, represented by 3.88%, indicated that they had other qualifications. All the four specified the degree qualification. A total of 11 participants, translating into 10.68% did not show their qualifications.

Results further show that all the student respondents (100%) were pre-service teachers. This is explained by the fact that at the time the study was conducted, only full time classes were in session in all teacher training institutions and these classes were dominated by pre-service students, given the departure of in-service students who were now back at work in their schools.

As a preliminary step in the quest to analyse data relating to the 21st century, the researchers looked at the first question which was designed to get a general idea if respondents had knowledge about 21st century skills. Therefore, respondents were asked to write down any three 21st century skills that they knew as trainee teachers. Results are summarised in the table below.

Table 2: 21st century skills known to respondents

No. of skills listed by respondent	Frequency	%
3	30	29.12
2	11	10.68
1	3	2.92
0	8	7.76
Unrelated response	51	49.52
TOTAL	**103**	**100**

Findings in Table 2 above indicate that, out of the 103 respondents, only 30 (29.12%) were able to list three 21st century skills while 11 (10.68%) participants indicated that they knew two skills. 3 participants, representing 2.29% only managed to mention one skill and 8 (7.76%) did not indicate any 21st century skills. The table shows another category of 51 participants (49.52%) whose responses were totally unrelated to the subject, giving a clue that they were in the same category as the ones who did not list any skill.

Respondents who provided three skills proved their knowledge by citing skills such as critical thinking (B10, B19, B59, B66, B78, B89, 100 and B103 among others), collaboration (B13, B59, B66, B78, B86, B92 and B96 among others) and creativity (which includes B12, B37, B68, B84 and B91). As regards problem-solving, the study found that only 9 respondents of those who listed three skills were aware that this was a 21st century skill. Among these were B19, B61, B71, B84 and B86. Some skills such as analysis and innovation were modestly subscribed with only 1 respondent going for the former (B95) and another 1 f or the latter (B61). In a similar vein, entrepreneurship was known as a 21st century skill only to B61 and B62. Results, as indicated in Table 3 further reveal that some respondents such as B19, B59, B63, B67, B85 and B95 provided skills that the researcher lumped into 'Others'. These skills include Interrogative questioning, responsibility, research and organisation.

Table 3: Respondents who listed three skills

Participant/ Skill	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B10	X						X	X		
B12	X						X	X		
B13	X			X				X		
B19	X								X	X
B37	X						X	X		
B59	X			X						X

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B61					X	X			X	
B62						X			X	X
B63	X			X						X
B64	X			X						X
B65	X			X						X
B66	X			X						X
B67	X			X						X
B68	X			X				X		
B68	X			X				X		
B71	X							X	X	
B77						X			X	X
B78	X			X						X
B79	X			X						X
B82				X		X	X			
B83	X					X	X			
B84	X						X	X		
B85		X				X				X
B86	X			X			X			
B87	X					X		X		
B89	X					X	X			
B91	X						X			X
B92	X			X			X			
B93	X			X						X
B95	X		X							X
B96	X			X			X			
B100	X					X	X			
B101	X						X	X		
B102	X					X	X			
B103	X						X	X		

Key:

1. Critical Thinking   6. Analysis
2. Use of Technology   7. Communication
3. Innovation   8. Creativity
4. Collaboration   9. Problem-solving
5. Entrepreneurship   10. Other

It is worth noting that some respondents only managed to list two skills as 21st century skills. Leading among these skills was the use of technology, which was chosen by 4 respondents, followed by critical thinking, collaboration and research with 3 respondents each while communication was known to only one participant as a 21st century skill.

Table 4: Respondents who listed two skills

Participant/ Skill	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B59	X			X						
B60		X								X
B70		X								X
B73		X								X
B78	X			X						
B79	X			X						

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B88		X					X			
B90		X					X			

Key:
1. Critical Thinking   6. Analysis
2. Use of Technology   7. Communication
3. Innovation   8. Creativity
4. Collaboration   9. Problem-solving
5. Entrepreneurship   10. Research

The study also revealed that, despite much talk about 21st century skills, four respondents only knew critical thinking as the only skill relevant to these skills and one respondent selected leadership as seen in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Respondents who listed one skill

Participant/ Skill	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B19	X									
B35	X									
B81							X			
B94	X									
B97	X									

Key:
1. Critical Thinking   6. Analysis
2. Use of Technology   7. Leadership
3. Innovation   8. Creativity
4. Collaboration   9. Problem-solving
5. Entrepreneurship   10. Research

The study also noted that several respondents gave answers contrary to the expectation of the researcher by mentioning concepts and activities that were not related to 21st century skills. A total of 15 respondents were caught up in this dilemma, with 8 giving three concepts and activities and 7 giving only one each. As can be seen from the table, some of the concepts/activities included listening, reading and writing (B15, B18), listening, reading and speaking (B29), Respectful, approachable and caring (B98) and caring, passionate and respectful (99), among those who had three options. The study further took cognizance of respondents with only one unrelated response such as Teaching Practice (B25), Content-based Teaching (B39), Communicative Language Approach (B43), Audio-lingual (B44, B52) and situational approach and direct approach (B48 and B57). This information is available in the table below.

Table 6: Respondents who listed concept/activities not related to 21st century skills

Participant/ Skill	Response 1	Response 2	Response 3
B3	Asking learners if they have understood	Giving more examples	Exercise
B15	Listening	Reading	Writing
B18	Listening	Writing	Reading
B22	Knowledgeable	Only teach when they are qualified	Only enrol students with 5 O' levels
B25	Teaching Practice		
B29	Writing	Reading	Speaking

B39	Content-based language teaching	-	-
B43	Communicative language approach	-	-
B44	Audio-lingual	-	-
B48	Situation approach	-	-
B52	Audio-lingual	-	-
B57	Direct approach	-	-
B60	Teaching	-	-
B98	Respectful	Approachable	Caring
B99	Caring	Passionate	Respectful

The findings are drawn from the data analysis show that 2% of respondents were never exposed to thought proving questions, 36% were often exposed and 16% were always exposed to thought provoking questions, as summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

	Number	%
No response	6	6
Never	2	2
Rarely	7	7
Sometimes	35	34
Often	37	36
Always	16	16

Table 4.2. Use of constructive arguments to promote reasoning

	Number	%
No response	5	4.9
Never	1	1.0
Rarely	4	3.9
Sometimes	25	24.3
Often	33	32.0
Always	35	34.0

Table 4.3. Use of constructive arguments to promote reasoning

	Number	%
No response	5	4.9
Never	1	1.0
Rarely	4	3.9
Sometimes	25	24.3
Often	33	32.0
Always	35	34.0

Respondents in excess of 90% indicated that they used constructive arguments to promote reasoning while less than 5% indicated that they rarely or never used constructive arguments to promote reasoning as shown in Table 4.3.

On the question whether the respondents taught as the only source of knowledge, 31% indicated that they taught as the only source of knowledge during their teaching practice while 66% said they rarely or never taught as the only source of knowledge as reflected on Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

	No	%
No response	5	5
Never	55	53
Rarely	12	12
Sometimes	12	12
Often	7	7
Always	12	12

On the question of whether the respondents assessed learners the same way they were assessed by their teachers, 44% said they did and 52% said they did not.

Table 4.5

	No	%
No response	5	5
Never	39	38
Rarely	14	14
Sometimes	19	18
Often	12	12
Always	14	14

9% of the respondents indicated that they had had some guest lecturers or speakers with 88% indicating that they rarely or never had guest lecturers. 3% did not respond. Respondents were also asked about whether they had had any out of class activities with their learners. 82% said they never had such activities and 3% said they rarely did. 6% said sometimes, 4% said often and only 1% said they always had such activities.

As regards encouraging teamwork among their learners, 5% indicated that they always did while 10% said often and 49% said they sometimes did. 21% never encouraged team work among their learners.

Finds relating to the use of technological gadgets revealed that 48% always allowed learners, 25% often allowed learners and 17% sometimes allowed learners. 5% rarely allowed their learners, 1 % never allowed learners. 5% were non-responsive on this item, as shown on Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

	No	%
No response	5	5
Never	1	1
Rarely	5	5
Sometimes	17	17
Often	26	25
Always	49	48

Lecturers in selected colleges of Education filled in a self-administered questionnaire. The lecturer respondents were balanced with 50% of both gender while their age ranges were 41-50 and 61 and above. In terms of experience as a teacher trainer, 60% were in the 6-10-year range, 10% 16-20 year range and 30% were in the 21years and above range. In terms of educational qualifications, 20% had a Bachelor's degree, 60% with Masters, 10% with a Doctor of Philosophy and 10% with a postgraduate Certificate.

On whether lecturer respondents asked students thought provoking questions whose answers were not so obvious, 10% said that they *always* did that, 40% said *often* while 50% said they *sometimes* did that. On whether the respondents encouraged students to read widely, 50% indicated that they always did while the other 50% said they often did. As to whether they assessed their students using the high order thinking skills (HOTS) 80% said they often did while 20% said they sometimes employed the HOTS in assessment. 50% said they allowed discussion and constructive arguments to promote reasoning during lectures, 30% said they often did that while 20% indicated that they sometimes did.

On teaching the entire lecture session, 20% each said they either *rarely* or *never* teach the entire session while 60% said that they sometimes did that. As to whether the lecturers taught like their erstwhile lecturers, 30% said never, 40% said rarely, 20% said sometime and 10% said often. As for flexibility in the sitting arrangement 20% said that they always allowed it, another 20% said they often allowed, 40% said sometimes while 10% each said rarely and never.

Discussion of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several conclusions can be made. The findings revealed that more than half of the student respondents lacked knowledge about 21st century skills. However, it was clear that lecturers appreciated the significance of the 21st century learning skills and they believed the implementation of these skills into the classroom is crucial. While students and lecturers find these skills necessary, the question still remains: Are student teachers explicitly trained to go out in schools to teach these skills in their classrooms?

Much as lecturers use 21st century skills in language teaching, there is little effort made in transmitting the same pedagogical skills to their students so as equip their them with the same skills. The fact that more than half of student respondents could not list more than two 21st century skills shows that these trainee teachers graduate without practical knowledge of these skills. The study revealed that the most commonly used skill is the use of technology or digital devices. This aspect can be attributed to the use of online or virtual pedagogical interaction due to Covid 19 pandemic which affected all institutions of learning countrywide. This mode of instruction seemed to be so effective that even after the easing of Covid 19 restrictions, colleges and universities continued using this mode.

On whether teachers were assessing learners the same way they were assessed by their teachers, respondents gave balanced responses. 50 per cent said they still assess their learners in the same way they were assessed by their teachers while another half said they have changed the approach of assessing learners. From the responses one can conclude that there is little emphasis and stressing on modern way of assessment by lecturers.

However, on the part of lecturers, it was reported that they use thought provoking questions to stimulate critical thinking. According to their responses, the type of questioning is based on the Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) or Bloom's Taxonomy. This means that lecturers use the Higher Order Thinking Skills to teach their students while there is little or no transmission of these skills to the student teachers.

The study has revealed that colleges of education have made milestones as far as the implementation of other essential 21st century skills such as the use of digital technology and critical thinking. Teaching critical thinking to solve problems effectively and the use of digital devices in the classroom are vital for students. Learning critical thinking, as revealed, lead students to develop other skills, such as a higher level of concentration, deeper analytical abilities, and improved modes of processing and researching. These skills when well incorporated in language teaching can be a relevant and useful 2021 approach to second language teaching.

Conclusion Recommendations

The study has clearly revealed that lecturers and students in colleges of education are aware about the 21st century skills. However, there is a challenge when it comes to implementation. Generally, of the four essential skills, Critical thinking and the use of technologies seem to be the most commonly used 21st century skills. Unfortunately, the other skills, innovation and collaboration are not commonly used in classrooms by lecturers.

There is great need for further research using this preliminary data to further investigate the professional development needs of lecturers and student teachers in developing necessary competence to teach and incorporate these vital 21st century skills in their classrooms. Despite lecturers being Knowledgeable and competent in teaching English as a second language, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is needed to further strengthen their ability to teach 21st -century skills. These CPDs programs should focus on ICT, cooperative teaching approach, and critical thinking so as to equip lecturers with modern approaches of second language teaching. Furthermore, pre-service programs must address the ESL course content in order to include 21st century skills.

This study reiterates the need for teacher education programs to provide more hands-on experience with technology and to achieve this, digital tools such computers and effective internet should be provided by institutions.

References

Alsied, S. M. (2019). The role of mobile phones as effective tools for language learning by Libyan EFL learners. *Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies, 6*(2), 135-164.

Amin, M. (2019). The role of educational technology in the ESL classroom. *Global Journal of Archaeology & Anthropology*, *11*(1).

Ann, T. (2013). Teaching English as a Foreign Language. From Theory to Practice and All the Way Back. https://fkg.usu.ac.id/images/Teaching-English-As-A-Second-Or-Foreign-Language-4th-Edition-by-Marianne-Celce-Murcia-Donna-M-Bri.pdf

Artini, L., & Padmadewi, N. N. (2018, February). Collaboration in EFL classes: Listening to teachers' and students' voices. In *1st International Conference on Education Innovation (ICEI 2017)* (pp. 184-187). Atlantis Press.

Carless, D. (2012). Innovation in language teaching and learning. In C. A. Chapelle (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0540

Carter, A. (2020). Developing critical thinking skills in the ESL classroom. *TESL Ontario. CONTACT Magazine, 11*, 43-52.

Changwong, K. et al. (2018). Critical Thinking Skill Development: Analysis of a New Learning Management Model for Thai High Schools. *Journal of International Studies*, *11*(2), 37-48. doi:10.14254/2071-8330.2018/11-2/3

Dobransky, K.A. (2015). *Technology Use and Integration by Ohio's Community College ESL Instructors* [Doctoral dissertation]. Ohio, Ashland University. Retrieved 22 November 2022 from https://etd.ohiolink.edu/apexprod/rws_etd/send_file/send?accession=ashland1436573872&disposition=inline

Fahim, M., & Sa'eepour, M. (2011). The Impact of Teaching Critical Thinking Skills on Reading Comprehension of Iranian EFL Learners. *Journal of Language Teaching & Research*, *2*(4), 867-874.

Ghavifekr, S., & Rosdy, W. A. W. (2015). Teaching and learning with technology: Effectiveness of ICT integration in schools. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science*, *1*(2), 175-191.

Ghazali, M. (2020). Student Teachers' Readiness towards the Digitalization of the 21st Century English Language Classroom in Education 4.0 *ICTE'20: International Conference Teacher Education – Vol II.*

Hazarika, Z. (2017). Exploring the impact of technology in teaching English: Tesol in the context. *European Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, *5*(10), 19-28.

Ibrahim, N., Adzra'ai, A., Sueb, R., & Dalim, S. F. (2019). Trainee teachers' readiness towards 21st century teaching practices. *Asian Journal of University Education*, *15*(1), 1-12.

Ibrahim, N., Shak, M. S. Y., Mohd, T., Zaidi, A., & Yasin, S. M. A. (2015). The importance of implementing collaborative learning in the English as a second language (ESL) classroom in Malaysia. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, *31*, 346-353.

Laal, M., Khattami-Kermanshahi, Z., & Laal, M. (2014). Teaching and education; collaborative style. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 116,* 4057-4061.

Liego, M.A. (2022). *21st Century Skills: What It Is and Why It Is Important*. Retrieved 9 December 2022 from teacherph.com/21st-century-learning/

Lipman, M. (2003). What are the Importance and Benefits of "Critical Thinking Skills"?

Marentette, L. (2017). *Characteristics of innovative learning spaces that you should know*. Retrieved on 15 October 2022 from https://www.nuiteq.com/company/blog/characteristics-of-innovative-learning-spaces-that-you-should-know

Mcgraw (2019). Innovations, Technologies and Research in Education. Latvia: *University of Latvia Press.*

Morentette, L. (2012). Exploring Post-WIMP Interaction and Interfaces in Technology-Supported Learning Environments. *CHI '10 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems.*

Nadri, Y. (2016). Self-Assessment of Critical Thinking Skills in EFL Writing Courses at the University Level: Reconsideration of the Critical Thinking Construct. *Arab World English Journal, December 2016 ASELS Annual Conference Proceedings.*

Pansky, Z. A. (2021). Holistic Digital Game-Based Learning Approach to Out-of-School Primary Programming Education. *Informatics in Education*, *20*(2), 255–276.

Paul, R., Elder, L., & Bartell, T. (Eds.). (1997). California Teacher Preparation for Instruction in Critical Thinking: Research Findings and Policy Recommendations: State of California, California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, Sacramento, CA, March 1997. https://www.criticalthinking.org/store/products/california-teacher-preparation-for-instruction-in-critical-thinking/147

Rahmayanti, P., Padmadewi, N. N., & Artini, L. P. (2020). Teachers' readiness in inserting the 21st century skills for teaching English at primary schools. *International Journal of Language and Literature, 4*(2), 95-105.

Rani, V.K.R. (2016). Promoting Students' Critical Thinking through Reading Strategy Instruction in a Reading Class. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching*, *11*(2), 133-151.

Rich, E. (2010). *How do You Define 21st Century Learning?* Retrieved 7 December 2022 from edweek.org/teaching-learning/how-do-you-define-21st-century-learning/2010/10

Rusdin, M.M. (2018). Teachers' Readiness in Implementing 21st Century Learning. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *8*(4), 1293-1306.

Saleh, S.E. (2019). Critical Thinking as a 21st Century Skill: Conceptions, Implementation and Challenges in the EFL Classroom. *European Journal of Foreign Language Teaching, 4*(1).

Shirkhani, S. & Fahim, M. (2011). Enhancing critical thinking in foreign language learners. International Conference on Education and Educational Psychology (ICEEPSY 2011), *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 29*(2011), 111-115.

Solano, L. et al. (2017). Exploring the Use of Educational Technology in EFL Teaching: A Case Study of Primary Education in the Southern Region of Ecuador. *Teaching English with Technology, 17*(2), 77-86.

Tom-lawyer, O.O. (2014). An Evaluation of English Language Curriculum of the Nigerian Certificate in Education: A Case Study of a College of Education. *Open Journal of Social Sciences, 2*(7), 69-79.

Turan, U., Fidan, Y., & Yıldıran, C. (2019). Critical thinking as a qualified decision making tool. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, *8*(4), 1-18. http://dx.doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v8i4.2316

Vintan, A., & Gallagher, T. L. (2019). Collaboration to support ESL education: Complexities of the integrated model. *TESL Canada Journal/Revue TESL Du Canada*, *36*(2), 68-90.