

**Developing Instructional Strategies to Enhance Higher Order Thinking Skills
(HOTS) Among University Students: A Case Study of Universiti Malaysia
Sarawak**

Collin Jerome¹

Faculty of Language Studies and Communication Studies
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak
jcollin@unimas.my

Julia Lee Ai Cheng²

Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak
aclee@unimas.my

Ting Su Hie³

Faculty of Language Studies and Communication Studies
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak
shting@unimas.my

ABSTRACT

The recent reform of Malaysia's education system has witnessed the incorporation of higher order thinking skills into the curriculum at all educational levels. However, the implementation has been surrounded by various issues, particularly the pervasive lack of higher order thinking skills (HOTS) required by the industry among a majority of undergraduates. This is an area that requires further investigation, given that there are many challenges in the teaching of HOTS at university level. The present paper discusses findings from a study that investigated HOTS among undergraduates at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) and developed instructional strategies to enhance those skills. Self-reported survey and interviews were used to gather the views of **120** undergraduates and **20** lecturers on HOTS and the teaching of HOTS in tertiary context. The views were then used to develop instructional strategies that could enhance HOTS among undergraduates. The findings show most undergraduates reported that HOTS include critical, logical, reflective, metacognitive, and creative thinking skills. Both undergraduates and lecturers reported the use of lectures, discussions, problem-based learning, case-based scenarios, demonstrations and other instructional strategies to enhancing HOTS. The findings also show factors that may influence the use of these strategies such as the subject taught, the learning tasks, the approach(es) taken by lecturers themselves as well as the link between lecturers' intention and the strategies

used during instruction. Issues concerning the development of instructional strategies that can be used to enhance these skills are also discussed.

Keywords: employability, higher order thinking skill, instructional strategy, tertiary education,