



People's Democratic Republic of Algeria



Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Chadli Ben Djedid University – El Tarf

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of English

Exploring Teachers' Perceptions towards Integrating Critical Thinking Activities in EFL Curriculum Design

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English as a Partial Fulfillment for The requirement for the Master's degree in Didactics of English

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Academic Year: 2024/2025

Dedication:

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

All the Praise is due to Allah Alone, the Sustainer of the entire world

I dedicate this work to:

My dear Mother **Aisha**...I love you so much

My beloved father **Hecene**...

My only little brother: **Mohammed**

My sisters: **Assia** thank you for all the time being with me and encouraged me during this work,
Dounia & Amina thanks for your supports

My binomial "**Hamida**"

All my cousins: **Chaima, Malek, Madiha, Lina, Ibtissem, Hana, Imene, Zahra, Ritaj, Rawnak, Fouzia, Maryam, Mouaad, Adem, joud, Fatima el Zahra, Abrar, Assil**

My grandmother: **Yamina**, thanks for your prayers

My aunts: **Tawess, Houria, Rouhbana, Khadija, Khadra** thanks a billion for your support & encouragements...

My uncles...

All who knows me & loves me

Ouahida

Dedication:

This work is dedicated to my nearest and dearest family; My husband, my elder son **Nazim, Iheb, Wissal, Rahma and Amna** Who have been a constant source of inspiration and support.

I should be thankful and grateful to a number of teachers who encourage me to never give up my aim to accomplish my higher education.

I dedicate this work to the most precious people in my life who have been the greatest support along with me.

Hamida

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to our supervisor **Mrs. Djafri Zineb**.

We are also thankful to the board of the examiners **Mrs. Nouri Imen & Dr. Nasri Fatima Zohra** for their time and efforts to read and evaluate this work.

We would like to thank all the teachers at the department of English especially **Dr.Laadaci Naima, Mr. Mdjabra Mouhamed Amin, Ms. Berzane Assia, and Dr. Ouis Hanane** for their help and precious advice. In addition to the teachers who kindly accepted to answer the questionnaire.

A special thank goes to our family and our friends for their uncreasing support and encouragement.

Abstract:

The current study attempts at shading light on exploring university teachers' perceptions of integrating critical thinking practices in EFL curriculum design. The purpose of this study is all about exploring teachers' views and attitudes on promoting critical thinking activities into their teaching practices. A mixed-method approach; a qualitative and quantitative research was designed, involving a teachers' questionnaire. Including educators from Chadli ben Djedid University. A total of fifteen teachers participated in the questionnaire. The results revealed that the majority of teachers are integrating critical thinking frequently through the use of daily practices that may facilitate the learning process. Therefore, it is recommended that educators should be updated and motivated to adopt various strategies and techniques in order to meet students' need.

Keywords: Teachers' Perceptions, Critical Thinking, EFL Curriculum, Teaching Practices, University Teachers.

Cette étude vise à éclairer l'analyse des perceptions des enseignants universitaires quant à l'intégration des pratiques de pensée critique dans la conception des programmes d'anglais langue étrangère. L'objectif de cette étude est d'explorer les points de vue et les attitudes des enseignants quant à la promotion des activités de pensée critique dans leurs pratiques pédagogiques. Une approche mixte ; une recherche qualitative et quantitative, a été conçue incluant un questionnaire destiné aux enseignants. Quinze enseignants ont participé au questionnaire, incluant des enseignants de l'université Chadli Ben Djedid. Les résultats ont révélé que la majorité des enseignants intègre fréquemment la pensée critique par le biais de pratiques quotidiennes susceptibles de faciliter le processus d'apprentissage. Par conséquent, il est recommandé que les enseignants soient informés et motivés à adopter stratégies et techniques afin de répondre aux besoins des élèves.

Mots clés: perceptions des enseignants, pensée critique, programme d'anglais langue étrangère, pratiques d'enseignement, enseignants universitaires.

List of Abbreviations:

CT: Critical Thinking

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

PBL: Problem-Based Learning

IBL: Inquiry. Based Learning

CL: Collaborative Learning

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Chapter One : Introductory Chapter

Introduction:

1. Background of the Study:

As an education systems continuously evolve to meet the demands of the 21st century, there is an increasing recognition of the necessity of incorporating critical thinking into various disciplines. This is particularly true in English as a foreign language EFL classrooms.

Many countries have paid more and more attention to technological innovation and have placed a greater emphasis on cultivating talents with critical thinking and creating spirit in their education systems. Consequently, EFL directors, scholars and editors are impelling teachers to foster critical thinking in their lessons to prepare the 21st century generations to survive with the changing era.

In other words. Language acquisition that lacks critical thinking skills prevents students from handling complex language and grow their language skills over time. From a cognitive perspective, learning English as a second language is intimately related to critical thinking (Zhao, 2021). In the context of English as a foreign language EFL, promoting critical thinking goes beyond simply acquiring language academically. It rather encourages students to analyze, evaluate and apply language in innovative ways, reflecting learners' capacity of navigating complex real world scenarios as Gonner-greene and Greene (2002,p. 324) assert critical thinking is not an academic fact, it is an essential skill for living in the information age. However, the integration of critical thinking with EFL curriculum design is not without challenges. Yet, the role of the teacher is control to this process by identifying both the opportunities and obstacles they face in adapting their teaching methods and curriculum structures.

Consequently, this study seeks to explore the perception of EFL teachers towards integrating critical thinking in their curriculum.

Statement of the Problem:

Cultivating critical thinking ability from the perspective of teachers' academic achievement has been as a primary goal in higher education since the 21st century. The teaching of critical thinking is vital as discussed by Paul and Walsh (1986) "CT should be thoroughly integrated into all aspects of the teachers' preparation program...and teacher education faculty should model effective thinking strategies in their own instruction" (p.56). The current research primarily focuses on students' critical thinking through the adaptation achieving higher order

of thinking. However to provide insights on how to foster CT abilities in students, teachers of English as a foreign language do not really focus on implementing the appropriate technique and strategies that might help students to be good critical thinkers.

Aims of the study:

The main purpose of this study is to explore Algerian university teachers' perceptions towards integrating critical thinking activities in EFL curriculum design. In order to achieve the main purpose the researcher set the following objectives:

- a) Explore Algerian university teachers' perceptions of integrating CT activities within EFL curriculum design
- b) Identify the effective strategies that promote critical thinking among students
- c) Identify the obstacles and challenges that teachers face in integrating critical thinking activities in their teaching practices

Research Questions:

To fulfill the main purpose of this study, and to achieve the above objectives, the following research questions are addressed:

1. How do EFL teachers at Chadli Ben Djedid perceive the integration of critical thinking activities in the curriculum design?
2. What are the effective strategies that EFL teachers follow to promote critical thinking among students?
3. What obstacles and challenges do EFL teachers encounter in integrating critical thinking activities in their teaching practices?

Hypothesis:

H1: EFL teachers at Chadli Ben Djedid University sometimes integrate CT in curriculum design.

H2: EFL teachers at Chadli Ben Djedid University acknowledge the effectiveness of some strategies like Socratic questioning, collaborative learning and inquiry-based learning.

H3: EFL teachers at Chadli Ben Djedid encounter some challenges and barriers (limited resources, lack of interest in students besides institutional barriers like curriculum constraints).

Significance of the Study:

The world of education has witnessed a sea of change since the world keeps facing new challenges. And the necessity of thinking critically is growing as a vital stage in every field of learning. Thus, enhancing student CT skills and the sense of curiosity leads to students' self-disciplined, corrective thinking and helps them to figure out how to make sense to the world. Thinking critically will boost creativity and enhance the way you use and manage your time (Hader, 2005). Being a life skill by itself CT encourages confidence, independence and controls time conceptions, thereby shaping successfully.

Structure of the Research:

This research is divided into five main chapters. The first chapter is the introduction which involves of the statement of the problem, research questions and hypothesis, significance of the study and the structure of the study.

The second chapter is devoted to the literature review. It includes two parts: the first part deals with the theoretical framework of the concept authors' views on CT definition, skills and components, importance. The second part talks about curriculum design definition, strategies and the role of teachers with its challenges towards the integration of CT into curriculum.

Chapter three includes the methodology and discussions of the results. First, the research design of the study along with participants, instruments, and data analysis procedures. Second, it offers an interpretation of all the obtained results.

Fourth chapter, discuss the main findings, the limitation of the study are highlighted. Lastly, the chapter ends with suggestions and recommendations for further research. The last chapter, ends with general conclusion

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction:

This chapter highlights both the perception and the integration of CT resources and skills. It includes two main parts: the First part presents the definition of both thinking and critical thinking as well as the importance of critical thinking skills in higher education. The second part is concerned with the curriculum design dealing with types and elements. In addition to the role of the teacher in curriculum development and how the EFL teachers integrate critical thinking into the classroom. At last, it gives insights about challenges in implementing critical thinking in the curriculum design.

Part One: Critical Thinking

1. Definition of Thinking:

According to Ronald Tyrone (2024) “thinking is a conscious, cognitive process that involves analyzing, synthesizing, problem- solving, decision - making and critical evaluating; allowing individuals to manipulate mental representation”.

Raj (2002) defines thinking as being a process through which students create but also apply idea in order to have better understanding of how they might improve their thinking.

2. Critical Thinking and its Components:

2.1. Conceptualization of Critical Thinking :

The Oxford Dictionary defines critical thinking as “the objectives, systematic, and rational analysis and evaluation of factual evidence in order to Form a judgment on a subject issue...etc. In the term critical thinking the word critical derives from the Greek word **kritikos** which identifies the intellectual capacity and the means of judging. CT, mostly associated with the work of John Dewey, the American philosopher of education, in his book ,How we think, “CT is an active, persistent, and careful consideration of belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which intends”(Dewey,1910,p.6).

As clarified by Ennis (1991) “CT is a reasonable, reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do” (p.6). Edward Glaser (1941) added additional dimensions to the concept of CT “the attitude of being disposed to consider in a thoughtful way the problems and the subject that come within the range of one’s experience”. Facione (1990) agreed upon the definition of CT as follows:

We understand critical thinking to be purposeful, self-regulatory, judgment which results in interpretation analysis, evaluation, and

inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological or contextual consideration upon which that judgment is based. CT is essential as a tool of inquiry. As such, CT is liberating force in education and powerful resources one's personal and civic life. While synonymous with good thinking, CT is a pervasive and self-rectifying human phenomenon [...] thus, educating good critical thinkers means working toward the ideal. It combines developing critical thinking skills with nurturing those dispositions which consistently yield useful insights and which are the basis of rational and democratic society. (Facione, 1990, p.2)

2.2. Components of Critical Thinking:

Ct is the backbone of informed decision-making and problem solving. At its core, it involves a set of essential components that guide us through analyzing information, questioning assumptions and arriving at reasoned conclusions. These core components that form the foundation of effective critical thinking are:

Analysis:

Analysis is a key component of CT. It involves breaking down complex problems or arguments into parts, making it more manageable and comprehensible. By breaking down arguments or information and understand how different parts contribute to the whole. This step is essential for forming a clear and accurate understanding of complex issues

Evaluation:

Evaluation is essential because it users that the information and arguments you use credible and relevant without this step, you risk basing decisions on faulty or biased conclusions. Evaluating the quality and reliability of sources helps maintain the integrating of your reasoning and supports will formed decision- making.

Inference:

Inference is the key component because it enables you to draw logical conclusions based on the evidence you have analyzed and evaluated. This process is crucial for making reasoned judgments. Accurate inferences rely on a thorough understanding of the evidence and help ensure that your conclusions are well supported and valid.

Explanation:

Explanation is fundamental because it allows you to clearly articulate your reasoning to others. Effective communication of your thought process is important for persuading in a clear and organized manner.

Self-regulation:

Self-regulation is crucial because it involves monitoring and reflecting on your own thought processes which enhances your objectivity. This component helps you correct personal biases that could distort your reasoning.

Perception:

Perception is a vital component because it involves recognizing how context and personal biases influence your judgment. Being aware of these influences helps you adjust your perception and make more accurate decisions. By understanding how various factors affect your thinking, you can then improve your overall judgment.

Fallacy recognition:

Fallacy recognition involves spotting logical errors that weaken arguments and lead to faulty conclusions. Identifying these fallacies ensures arguments are based on sound logic, this component strengthens, maintains and makes rational decisions. By correcting the errors you enhance your arguments effectively.

3. Importance of CT in Higher Education:

It is viewed that critical thinking helps to prepare students for their futures, as it aids students reflect and understand their outcomes and points of views. Thus critical thinking and problem-solving are the most essential skills that any students can develop.

According to Halpern (2001) “successful programs teach the skills of critical thinking, develop thinking processes in consciousness”. Most teachers develop their students’ critical thinking skills by integrating them into each subject (Martin et al, 2020), whether as a separate subject or through across-curriculum approach (Martin et al, 2020). Furthermore, mastering critical thinking is a better predictor of successful life decision than other factors (Butler et al, 2017).

Ranbirr (2024) said that CT plays a crucial role in education for several reasons :(p.155)

Empowering Learners: CT empowers students to become active , engaged ,learners who can take ownership of their education .By questioning assumptions ,evaluating evidence , and thinking critically about information, students develop the skills and confidence to explore new ideas , challenge conventional wisdom, and seek deeper understanding .

Enhancing problem –solving skills: CT equips students with the ability to analyze complex problems, identify underlying issues, and develop innovative solutions.

Fostering analytical thinking: in an era of information overload, the ability to analyze and evaluate information critically is more important than ever. CT helps students shift through vast amounts of information, distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources and discern fact from opinions.

Promoting lifelong learning: CT is a lifelong skill that extends beyond the classroom and into all aspects of life. By fostering a habit of CT inquiry and reflection, education prepares students to navigate the complexities of the modern world, adapt to a new challenges, and continue learning throughout their lives. CT enables individuals to approach problems with curiosity, creativity, and open-mindedness, fostering a lifelong love of learning.

Preparing for the future: in rapidly changing global economy the ability to think critically is essential for success in the 21st century workforce. Employers increasingly value employees who can think analytically solve problems creatively, and communicate effectively. By emphasizing critical thinking in education, schools prepare students for demands of the future job market, equipping then with the skills and mindset needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

Akdere argued on the importance of critical thinking the modern world, active longitudinal learning, problem solving and empowerment are recognized as the necessary skills to survive. In others words developing the ability to think critically is a vital component of real, meaningful teaching and learning. Critical thinking helps us solve problem make decision and reach our goals. Thinking is not a passive but an active process. It can be said that critical thinking can be considered in two respects achieve a goal and to make decision (Tosuncuoglo, 2018).

Part Two: Curriculum Design

1.1. Definition of Curriculum Design:

Various definitions have been suggested for the concept of curriculum design. Curriculum design is a process in which instructors organize the instructional units for their courses. In other words, it is the way for teachers to plan and organize instruction, to deliver lessons and course materials. According to Taba defines the concept of curriculum design as follows:

Curriculum design is a statement in which identifies the elements of curriculum, states what their relationships are to teach other, and indicates the principles of organization and the requirement of that organization for the administrative conditions under which it is to operate.(Taba, 1962,p. 421)

To achieve educational goals, educators mainly focus on the elements of the curriculum design which includes planning activities, consideration of aim, intended learning outcomes, learning and teaching methods, and assessments.

The curriculum design contain what will be taught, who will be taught, and how will be taught. As Ahmed (2024) clarifies “curriculum design is the systematic planning and structuring of educational experiences. It involves selecting content, organizing learning experiences, and creating assessments to meet specific learning objectives, a curriculum outlines what is taught, why it matters, and how it is deliver”.

1.2. Curriculum Design: Types and Elements

The ultimate goal of designing a curriculum is to improve students learning.

1.2.1. Types of Curriculum Design:

Curriculum is a broad plan that is made by teachers design each curriculum with specific educational purpose. Exploring deeper into the type of curriculum. There are four basic types of curriculum and their pivotal role in successful educational outcomes. It includes subject-centered curriculum, learner centered curriculum, teacher-centered curriculum and problem-centered curriculum.

1.2.1.1. Subject-Centered Curriculum:

Subject-centered curriculum is one of the most traditional approach. It is the most common type used in curriculum. As the name implies subject-centered approach focuses mainly on the subject matter rather than the individual such as math, science and delivering knowledge that is linked to distinct subjects or fields. The subjects are sometimes subdivided into divisions for instance English divided into grammar, spelling, writing, essays, and comprehension.

1.2.1.2. Learner-Centered Curriculum:

Also called child-centered curriculum design. In contrast of subject-centered; the primary focus is student. While learner-centered curriculum is mainly focused on the needs, interests, and experiences of students rather than the content. The major focus behind this approach is to help learners be active in participation and discovery learning processes. Instructional plans in learner-centered curriculum allow students to choose assignments, learning experiences, or activities that motivate students and help them engaging in the material. Borrow(1976,p.59) observed that by concentrating on children's actual wants or interests, it is possible for the teacher to help them find aspects of value in those wants and interests.

The drawback to this form of curriculum design is that it is labor intensive. It can be challenging for teachers to manage a diverse range of activities and assessments also it may be difficult to recover all required content in a standardized way which could lead to gaps in knowledge.

1.2.1.3. Problem-Centered Curriculum:

Problem-centered curriculum design also called problem based learning (PBL). It is the same as learner-centered curriculum design. It is also a form of student-centered design. This approach is mainly focus on teaching students a complex students may work collaboratively to develop solution. The limitation of this approach is may require more time and resources than traditional teaching methods.

1.2.1.4. Teacher-Centered Curriculum:

In this approach, teacher plays a crucial role in the development of students. They put all of their focus on the teacher. In other words, teacher is the center of interest in this type of curriculum. Teacher talks and students exclusively listen. He delivers all the information through lectures, presentations and direct instruction whereas the students absorb or grasp the knowledge.

1.3. Elements of Curriculum Design:

To design a curriculum, we must consider how its parts interrelate (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). As curriculum planners, we need to consider that these elements are addressed within our context and overall strategy. Curriculum design is concerned with the arrangement of four elements: objectives, content, learning experiences and evaluation.

1.3.1. Curriculum Objectives i.e. goals and aims:

The aim is clearly defined and what learners need in curriculum. At the beginning of each curriculum needs to set a specific purpose of any course that is, objectives are things we aim to achieve at the end of the course.

1.3.2. Subject Matter:

Subject matter is the next step after setting the main purpose. To decide what content should be taught. It includes selecting different topic, specific concepts and skills to be covered in curriculum that are important for learners to learn.

Subject matter should be relevant to the outcomes of the curriculum. It must be progressive that lead students building on previous lesson. Furthermore, subject matter refers the body of knowledge that needs to be taught and skills to be acquired in school system.

1.3.3. Learning Experience:

Implementing learning experience is the next components in curriculum design. It is refers to the method, strategies and activities used to facilitate learning. This components based on planned objectives, the subject matters to be taken.

1.3.4. Curriculum Evaluation:

The term curriculum evaluation refers to the process in which placing value on curriculum. It focuses on a curriculum's design. Involving context and process. It is a broader term to make judgment about the curriculum either by observing something or by measuring it and giving it a quantitative and qualitative value. In education, evaluation helps to know the efficacy of different educational programs.

2. The Role of Teacher for Promoting CT in Curriculum:

In today's world, teacher plays a crucial role in their classrooms. It is important to empower students with the skills to analyze, evaluate, and engage the information critically. This is where CT becomes vital skill for the development of student's ability. Teacher encourage their students to share ideas and to think, it has been an effective way to foster critical thinking by bringing into lessons examples, encouraging inquiry and questioning, teaching problem-solving.

Teacher plays a pivotal role in shaping their students. They are a facilitators, a mentors or instructors. This relies on the careful negotiation between different important stakeholders, including policy makers teacher educators and teachers who work concertedly to interweave CT within the subject curriculum and teaching through a logical, coherent, and progressive chain of discourses and practices (Rui& Wei, 2023).

In this context, teachers serve as the guiding force, imparting not only subject-specific expertise but also the cognitive tools requisite for independent thought. As a result of teachers being always in touch with the curriculum classes (Saracalogui et al., 2010, p.2428). Troudi and Alwan (2010, p. 108) argued with that "the more teachers are involved, the more effective the curriculum". In other words, teacher is the most important person in the curriculum with their experience, knowledge and competencies. So the teacher should be involved in curriculum development. They have responsibilities to bring the learning objectives included in the curriculum. Wassem et al (2025) pointed that "this requires a teacher to carry out multiple responsibilities at one time: planning lesson, teaching the lesson instruction, assessing students' progress and managing students' behavior". In this context, teachers' role as a planner, implementer, critical thinkers and evaluator by focusing on the contribution of these responsibilities to students' need of learning.

3. Integration of CT into Curriculum: (effective strategies)

Critical thinking is a process that helps students analyze and understand the idea they see, hear, or read. It is successful skills for the development of students' ability in classroom. It is generally agreed that higher education should enable students to improve their CT that is regarded as one of the most important real life competencies of 21st century. It is essential for students' preparation to think critically (Leach, 2011) in order to be more successful in their work life and to tackle real word issues.

3.1. Key Strategies:

Key strategies include using Socratic questioning, collaborative learning, inquiry-based learning and problem-based learning that help students to foster analytical skills which are essential in both academic and professional environments.

3.1.1. Socratic Questioning:

Socratic questioning is the oldest work of the Greek philosopher Socrates who is famous for using this method. It is a technique used for integrating CT. Socratic questioning intends to focus on asking questions without offering answers. The questions are designed to look at the quality of answer that is given. Paul & Elder (2007) stated that “Socratic question technique is a disciplinary question that can be used to pursue thought in many directions and for many purposes”. Socratic questioning in CT helps individuals to examine and to evaluate their own thinking and others thinking. Nourillah et al (2022) pointed that “it allows students and teachers to have a question and answer (Q&A) session on the topic that is being taught and makes the learning environment more proactive and existing by allowing two way communication between students and educators.”

The Socratic Method is a dialogue between teacher and students. The teacher leads by posing questions and students actively engage by asking questions of their own. Elder and Paul (2003) point out that “turning students into active questioners is an important part of CT education.”

3.1.2. Collaborative Learning:

It is a powerful tool used to incorporate CT which students are often worked together in small groups or pair work to achieve shared goals. However, teachers have been a collaborative learning approaches act more as a facilitators or coaches. They design and guide students through their application of materials. Lai (2011) clarifies “Teacher provide many opportunities for students to practice collaborative skills by using tasks which are similar to group-based assessment.”

This method is used to help students learn better by working together. Similarly, when students working together and share ideas, they can understand the materials and explain the concepts of the activities to each other. Learners work collaboratively on projects. However, Lev Vygotsky puts an emphasis on the important factor in the process of creating meaning and

knowledge. He proposed that speech plays a major role in the development of thought, with conventions. Also, he suggested that children acquire their cultural values and beliefs through interacting and collaborating with more knowledgeable people in their community.

3.1.3. Inquiry-Based Learning:

Inquiry-based learning is a learning process that focuses on encouraging students to ask questions in order to involve them actively in their own learning. This technique (IBL) is used as an umbrella term covering a range of pedagogical approaches that are united by the central place they give to students' investigative work addressing questions and solving problems (Aditomo et al, 2003). It is a student-centered teaching which allows students to connect what they learn in their classroom.

This type of learning has been shown to improve CT skills, problem-solving skills and creativity for example classroom debates are a great way to encourage this type of learning. When students make a debate about a particular topic, they are forced to think in a critical way for both sides of argument. Whereas, in this process the teacher acts as a facilitator to encourage student's curiosity and to support them in developing their own question.

3.1.4. Problem-Based Learning:

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a pedagogical method which encouraging students actively working in groups to solve problem. In other words, problem-based learning (PBL) is a students-centered approach that teachers use to promote students' CT or analytical skills to solve real life or open-ended problems in a group discussion (Ali, 2019).

University teachers are often used their techniques and methods differently to help their students learn effectively and successfully. It can be applied various situation in classroom. This approach provides students with learning outcomes through CT to find a solution. Its benefit are helpful for teachers and students. Problem-based learning has been used successfully in science and medical education and is well suited to assisting students in gaining the CT abilities that lead to information literacy (Carder et al, 2001). Teacher is mentor, facilitators, with students work in pair collaboratively they should design the problem to suit the course and the students take up the role to solve the present problem.

4. Challenges to Implement CT in Curriculum:

Curriculum development is a crucial part of the education system, as it determines the quality of learning and the skills imparted to students. However, it is a complex process riddled with various challenges that hinder its effective design and implementation. Below, we highlight the most significant struggles faced during curriculum development

Aligning curriculum with evolving educational needs

The world is changing rapidly, and education must keep up with these changes. One of the major struggles in the curriculum development is:

Outdated content that fails to meet modern educational and workforce requirements. Balancing traditional knowledge with modern educational trends.

Balancing standardization and flexibility

While standardized curricula ensure consistency across educational institutions, they often lack flexibility to care to diverse needs and here are common struggles:

Ignoring regional, cultural and socioeconomic differences

Limited room for teachers to adjust content to suit individual classrooms.

Lack of collaboration leading to disconnected outcomes (limited teacher involvement, despite their frontline role in implementation).

Conflict of interests among policymakers resulting in unclear goals.

Time constraints

Developing an effective curriculum requires time, but tight deadlines often result in:

Rushed implementation that affects teacher preparation

Superficial content with gaps in learning objectives

Balancing Theoretical and Practical Learning:

A major struggle in curriculum development is finding the right balance between theory and practice. Common issues are:

Insufficient opportunities for hands-on experiences like projects or fieldwork

Inability to integrate real-world scenarios into the curriculum.

Political and administrative interference:

Curriculum development is often influenced by political agendas and administrative decisions which creates challenges such as:

Pressure to include content that aligns with political ideologies

Limited focus on evidence –based improvements

Conclusion:

As a conclusion to this chapter, as it presents a general overview on critical thinking, it provides the definition of thinking and critical thinking, its components. As well as its importance in higher education. In addition to the second part “curriculum design” you can understand its definition, its types and elements. Furthermore, we dealt with the role of the teacher for promoting CT in curriculum along with the key strategies that are useful. Finally, this chapter considers the challenges to implement CT in curriculum.

Chapter Three: Methodology/ Data Analysis

Introduction:

This chapter is going to be a practical part, it aims at exploring whether university teachers implement critical thinking practices in the curriculum. It contains the methodology followed to achieve the objectives of the study. It introduces the participants and presents the instrument as well as the analysis of the questionnaire in our investigation with teachers to answer the

research questions and confirm the hypothesis. It finishes with the discussions of the results, the suggestions and the recommendations in addition to the limitations of the work.

3.1. Research Design:

In order to achieve the main goal and to answer the questions that have been raised, a mixed method approach; qualitative, quantitative approach are used. This study follows a descriptive research design to collect data about teachers' views of integrating critical thinking practices in curriculum. So, we have chosen descriptive method because it is the useful method that can determine the facts of current situation; needed results of real situation of teachers to clarify the status.

3.2. Research Instruments:

In this research, data were collected through a questionnaire to address university teachers of English. The questionnaire is consist of 16 questions with two sections along with teachers' background information. The data collection method chosen allows for understanding the teachers' views of critical thinking practices in EFL curriculum.

3.3. The participants:

The samples who participated in this research are 15 teachers at Chadli Ben Djedid University during the academic year 2024-2025. Their teaching experience ranges from one to fifteen years, one teacher is almost eighteen years, six teachers hold a doctorate degree and one existence de soutenance doctorate while four of them hold a magister degree and four teachers hold master degree. The teachers were chosen randomly because they are expected to have a clear idea about the topic which may provide useful information.

3.4. Data analysis:

The following section contains a detailed analysis for the results of the teachers' questionnaire.

3.4.1. Analysis of the teachers' questionnaire:

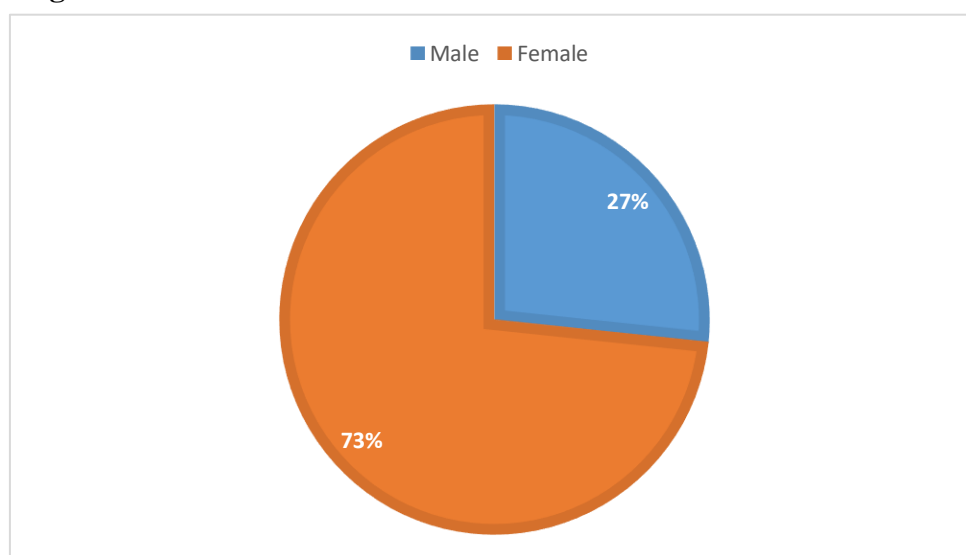
Background information:

Gender: Male /Female

Table 3.1. Teachers' Gender

Options	Numbers	Percentage%
Male	4	26,66%
Female	11	73,33%
Total	15	100%

Figure3.1. Teachers' Gender



The results shows that more than 73% are female that is only 27% are male. In all Algerian school, the number of females are more than the numbers of males because females prefer teaching as a career more than males.

Age:

A. 25-34

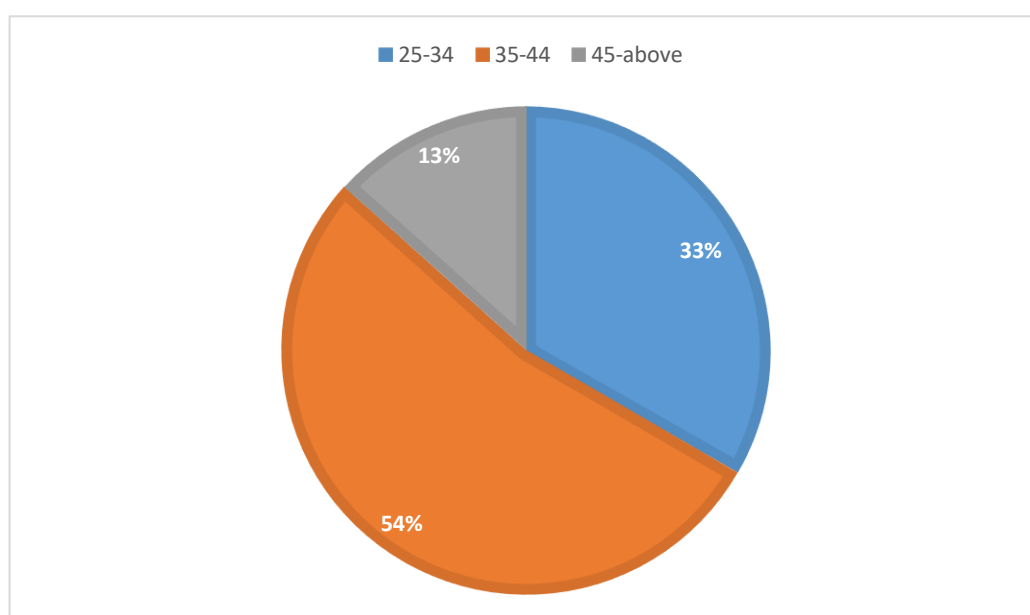
B. 35-44

C. 45 Above

Table3.2. Teachers' age

Options	Numbers	Percentage%
A.	5	33,33%
B.	8	53,33%
C.	2	13,33%
Total	15	100%

Figure3.2. Teachers' age



The most frequent age is between 35-44 years (8 teachers) whereas 5 teachers are aged between 25-34 years. And only 2 teachers are above 45 years.

Teaching Experience:

A. 1-5 years

- B. 6-10 years
- C. 11-15 years
- D. Almost 18 years

Figure 3.3. Teachers' Experience

Options	Numbers	Percentage%
A.	5	33.33%
B.	4	26.66%
C.	5	33.33%
D.	1	6.66%
Total	15	100%

The table reveals that 33.33% teachers have been experienced between 1-5 years, 26.66% have an experience between 6-10 years while 33.33% are more experienced between 11-15 years and only 6.66% have almost 18 years of experience. This implies that most of the teacher are experienced and some are less experienced which benefits the reliability of the study.

Degree:

- A. Master

B. Doctorate

C. Others (please specify)

Table 3.4. Teachers' Degree

Options	Numbers	Percentage%
Master	4	26.66%
Doctorate	6	40%
Magister	4	26.66%
Existance de soutnance doctorate	1	6.66%
Total	15	100%

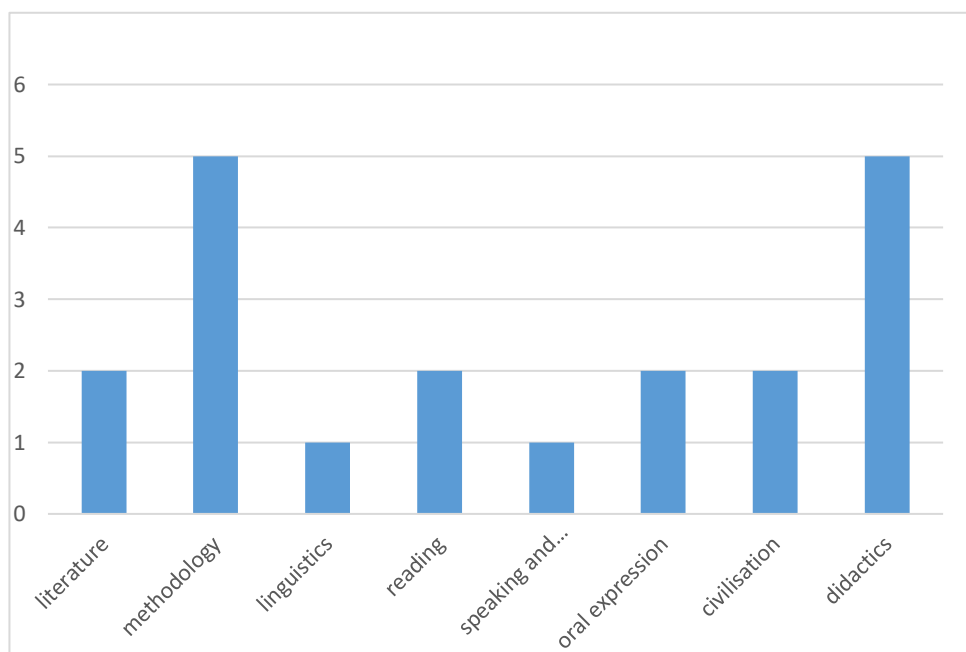
According to teachers' answer, The table shows that the majority of teachers have doctorate degree (40%), while another have master (26.66) and magister (26.66). in addition to only one still having the existance de soutnance doctorate. These results show the reason that may help us to collect data from various high degree.

Course taught:

A. Didactics

- B. Literature
- C. Methodology
- D. others (please specify)

Figure 3. 3. Teachers' course taught



As shown in the figure above, The majority of teachers teach methodology and didactics. While, some of teacher teach literature, reading, oral expression and civilisation. In addition to a few teacher teach linguistics, speaking and writing.

Section One: Perception of Critical Thinking

Q6: do you apply CTin your daily teaching practices?

A. Yes

B. No

Table 3.5. Application of CT in daily teaching practices

Options	Numbers	Percentage%
A.	11	73.33%
B.	4	26.66%

This question aims at discovering if teachers apply CT in daily teaching practices. According to teachers' answer, we can notice that the majority of teachers (73.33%) implement CT in daily teaching practices because CT motivates learners to learn and improves their ways of thinking. So, they are active teachers. Whereas (26.66%) responded negatively and said No they don't implement CT in daily teaching practices. For sure they are passively teachers.

Q7. How do you define critical thinking in the context of EFL teaching and learning?

In this question teachers were asked to provide a brief definition of critical thinking. According to teachers' view, CT is defined as students' reflection of understanding the real meaning of texts from various angles. It refers to the ability of learners actively and skillfully to demonstrate criticality by either giving point of views, analyze and synthesize information to create a new ones, evaluate arguments and make proper conclusions. As well as CT is mainly a kind of thinking in which you interpret & make judgment about what you read or write.

Q8. How important do you believe critical thinking activities are in EFL classrooms?

A. not important

- B. somewhat important
- C. important
- D. Extremely important

Table3.6: Teachers' perception about the importance of CT practices in classrooms

Options	Numbers	Percentage%
A.	00	00%
B.	00	00%
C.	5	33.33%
D.	10	66.66%
Total	15	100%

Regarding the table, the majority of participants (66.66%) said that “extremely important” which means critical thinking is a vital skill in developing learners’ language skills and problem- solving. While (33.33%) chose option C which is “Important”. This results imply that the participants consider CT an essential part in curriculum.

Q9. In your opinion, have you observed any changes in students’ engagement when integrating critical thinking in classroom? (Why)

- A. Yes
- B. No

Table 3.7: Teachers’ observation of changes in students’ engagement when integrating CT in classroom

Options	Numbers	Percentage%
A.	12	80%
B.	3	20%
Total	15	100%

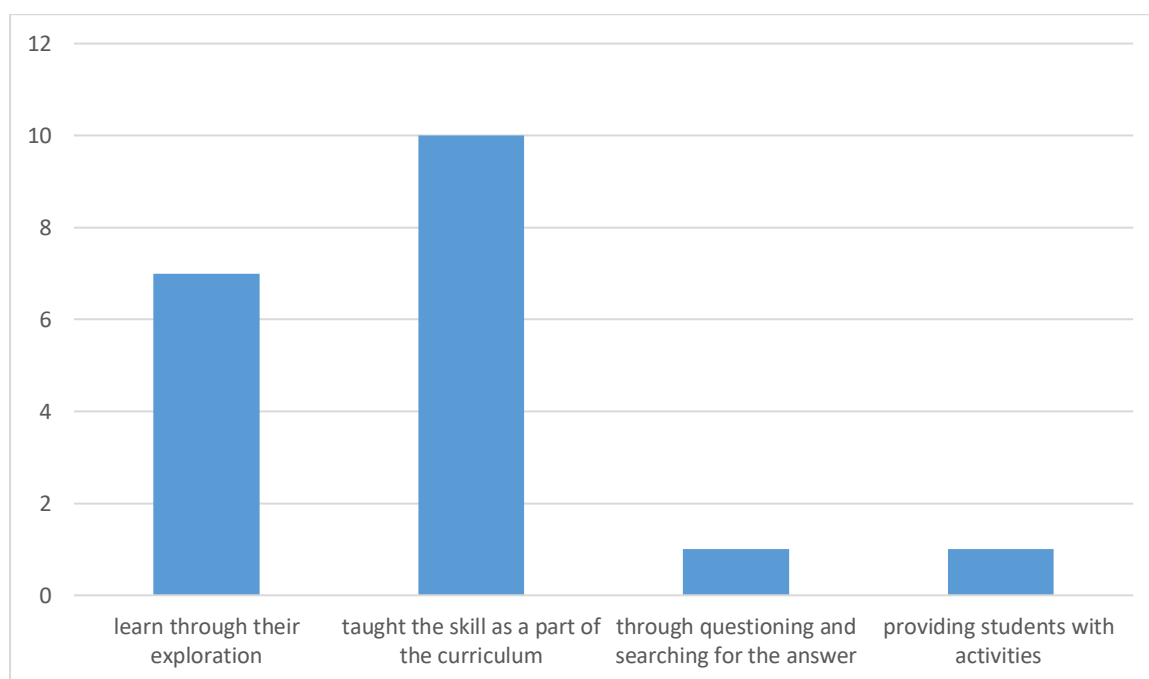
According to the table above the results shows that twelve participants (80%) observed changes in students’ engagements by saying they became totally involved, more interactive in the learning process by challenging and stimulate their thinking. As well as they ask questions,

justify their answers, trying to solve their problems and make decisions while using the English language. In addition, CT improves their understanding and expands their way of thinking for example in literature, the students become aware of the so many layers of interpretations Vis a Vis the literary texts taught. Whereas, only three teachers (20%) said No because may be they are a novice teachers.

Q10. How can EFL students learn to think critically in higher education? Whether

- A. A students can learn critically through their exploration
- B. They need to be formally taught the skill as a part of the curriculum
- C. Others (please specify)

Figure 3.3: How can EFL student learn to think critically in higher education



According to the results obtained, there is diversity in the answers. Most teachers agree about this statement “they need to be formally taught the skill as a part of the curriculum”. Also some of the participants think the opposite “students can learn critically through their exploration”.

As shown in the results, only two teachers give another option by consider students can learn critical thinking through questioning and searching for the answers while the second teacher say that learn through providing students with activities to enhance critical thinking and raise their awareness to CT in learning .

Section Two: Curriculum Design

Q11. On a scale of 1 to 5, how frequently do you implement critical thinking activities in your class?

- A. 1(never)
- B. 2(rarely)
- C. 3(sometimes)
- D. 4(often)
- E. 5(always)

Table 3.8. Implementation of critical thinking activities in classes

Options	Numbers	Percentage%
A.	00	00%
B.	00	00%
C.	7	46.66%
D.	6	40%
E.	2	13.33%
Total	15	100%

The teachers' responses vary from "sometimes" to "often" and "always". (46.66%) of teachers selected "sometimes" while (40%) of participants selected "often" and just two teacher (13.33%) selected "always". In addition to no one respond rarely or never implement CT in class. The results imply that teachers consider critical thinking is an important skill for them also for learners to learn in critical way.

Q12. In your opinion, what are the effective strategies in incorporating critical thinking into you curriculum?

- A. Inquiry-based learning
- B. Socratic questioning

- C. Problem-based learning
- D. Collaborative learning

Table 3.9. Effective strategies in incorporating critical thinking in curriculum

Options	Numbers	Percentage%
a-b-c	2	13.33%
b-c-d	2	13.33%
c-d	5	33.33%
c	3	20%
d	1	6.66%
All of them	5	13.33%
Total	15	100%

Through this question, we wanted to know teachers' strategies that have been used in their teaching. The participants answered by ticking more than one answer. The results shows that five teachers (33.33%) have said that problem-based learning and collaborative learning is considered the effective strategies that help learners integrate critical thinking in classroom. In other hand, (20%) of them (3 teachers) take into account problem-based learning as a strategies that help learners to solve any problems or situations faced. Whereas only two teachers (13.33%) respond by inquiry-based learning, Socratic questioning and problem-based learning are essential strategies that should take into consideration while teaching students critical thinking. Also, two teachers (13.33%) think the opposite by saying the combination between the three strategies: Socratic questioning, problem-based learning and collaborative learning are very helpful strategies to teach them critical thinking in classroom. In addition, (13.33%) participants (2teachers) have another point of views. They believe all of them might be required and tailored in accordance with students' abilities and needs. Finally, one teacher (6.66%) considers only collaborative learning as an effective strategies because students are often worked together in a small groups or pair work to achieve the goal.

Q13. What challenges do you face when integrating CT activities into your curriculum?

- A. Curriculum constraints
- B. limited resources

C. lack of interests of students

D. others (please specify)

Table 3.10. Challenges faced when integrating CT activities into your curriculum

Options	Numbers	Percentage%
A	2	13.33%
A-B	4	26.66%
A-C	3	20%
A-B-C	1	6.66%
C	5	33.33%
Total	15	100%

Consider the challenges to implement CT into curriculum in the table above. The results show that 33.33% of the participants (5 teachers) noticed that most of the students lack interests and motivation in learning because may be they are thinking that there is not opportunity after the study. Whereas, four teachers (26.66%) agreed on the challenges are in the curriculum constraints and limited resources. They believe that the problem is not in the students himself but in the curriculum. 20% of the participant (3 teachers) answered that curriculum constraints and lack of interests of students are the challenges faced when integrating CT activities into curriculum. Indeed, (13.33%) believe that only curriculum constraints is the problem faced when promoting CT in the curriculum. However, only one teacher (6.66%) has been viewed all of them is considered as a challenges.

Q14. How do you weigh the potential benefits of critical thinking activities in enhancing students' language?

All of the participants (15 teachers) hold an agreement about the statement of the potential benefits of critical thinking activities in enhancing students' language. They believe that critical thinking is very important & highly effective in enhancing their communication skills, expand their grammar, vocabulary and develop their speaking abilities. It leads them rarely on themselves in finding the real meaning of what they are looking for. Most of the teachers use critical thinking activities because it increases students' language as they give them flexibility to express themselves and improve their problem-solving.

Q15. In your opinion, what is the most significant benefit of incorporating critical thinking activities in EFL classroom?

Table 3.11. Teachers' view about the benefits of incorporating critical thinking activities in EFL classroom

Options	Number	Percentage%
Answered	13	86.66%
Not answered	2	13.33%
Total	15	100%

This question tends to attempt the benefits of integrating critical thinking activities in EFL classroom. 86.66% have been answered. Whereas, 13.33% has not been answered may be felt this question unnecessary or worthless Based on teachers' answers, the benefits of integrating CT in classroom that were provided are quoted as follow:

- "It enlarges students' scope for having a deep understanding of the topics they are in change of"
- "Enhancing students writing & even speaking skills. Break the traditional learning atmosphere"
- "It increase motivation and engagement"
- "Your critical thinking skills means being able to advocate your ideas & opinions"
- "The aforementioned benefits, critical thinking promotes deep language learning & use as it requires more analysis & interpretation. Moreover, CT fosters independent thought & autonomy"

- “the most significant benefit is fostering independent thinking & improving students’ problem-solving & communication skills in English”
- “Enhancing problem-solving skills. Get rid of the learning and enable students to understand and apply concepts creatively”
- “It helps students to use English as a tool for independent thought”
- “Good argumentation skills”
- “Develop their writing skills. Boosting their ideas & thoughts”
- “Students being able to generate a multitude of readings and interpretation”
- “Students will be able to manage their learning”
- “It gives the chance for more learner-centeredness and it provides more resources in teaching and learning”

Based on these benefits provided by teachers. It is noticed that critical thinking helps learners to boost ideas and thoughts. Also, it enhances students’ four skills of the language along with analyzing, synthesizing information and improving problem-solving & communication skills. As well as, teachers provide a clear benefits.

Q16. Any additional comments or suggestions regarding the incorporation of CT in EFL curriculum?

Table 3.12. Additional comments or suggestions regarding the incorporation of CT in EFL curriculum

Options	Number	Percentage%
Answered	9	60%
Not answered	6	40%
Total	15	100%

This questions search for the information about the teachers’ suggestions or comments concerning the topic. Only 9 teachers have responded by raising important points:

- CT is a part of students learning. It is encouraged their learning cycle. Thus, students’ have to reflect and search for the correctness of their ideas, understanding to guarantee a healthy learning.

- The use of AI & gamification can be used as a modern tool to enhance criticality among students.
- CT should be encouraged in reading, writing, and speaking. In addition to activities that enhance critical thinking. Awareness is very important.
- Thinking is an important mental process. It helps speakers further develop their arguments & position, their speech (communication & interaction) in strong manner.
- Stakeholders, teacher, administrative staff should all work to implement the teaching of CT in language classrooms by providing the adequate materials, time and everything that might boost the integration of CT in classrooms. Training is also required for effective integration & use. Learners, on their behalf, should learn to question, negotiate and engage in meaningful learning.
- Incorporating CT should balance structured teaching with opportunities for students to explore & apply skills in real-world contexts.
- CT skill as a mandatory competence and skill by decision makers, so it will be obligatory implemented instead of being supplementary skill.
- Teaching the theoretical foundations of CT before implementing it in courses.
- It should be part of all courses and all the contents should be taught through it.

3.4.2. Teachers' questionnaire findings:

After the analysis of the questionnaire, we conclude that teachers implement CT in their classes very often depending on the module. Based on teachers' views, CT is regarded to be a source of progress in students' level. Enriching students' vocabulary, expanding ideas and thoughts. In addition, approximately all participating teachers asserted the significant role of CT as a skill in developing students' academic achievement. They demonstrated the awareness of this skill in the definitions they provided in the responses of Q13. Additionally, most of the reporting teachers shed light on its impact on students thinking and that it enables them to see subject matter from multiple viewpoints. Thus, their arguments become more convincing and they becoming eager to transmit their ideas in an easy way.

Conclusion:

This chapter represents a methodology. We dealt with the teachers' questionnaire, its analysis and results in order to investigate their perceptions of integrating critical thinking activities in EFL curriculum design.

**Chapter Four: Discussions/ Limitations/
Recommndations**

Introduction:

This chapter includes the discussion of the main findings obtained from teachers' questionnaire due to prove or disprove our proposed hypotheses. It also provides the relationships of the results to the previous studies. Then, it highlights the limitations during conducting our research. And it ends with some recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

Discussion of teachers' questionnaire:

According the analysis report of teachers' questionnaire and their answers, our hypothesis are confirmed. Three hypothesis were set at the beginning of the work to be tested. First was that EFL teachers at Chadli ben Djedid University sometimes integrate CT in curriculum design that is, the implementation and practice of CT among educators is frequent and proficient. Second was that EFL teachers acknowledge the effectiveness of some strategies like problem-based learning, collaborative learning and inquiry based leaning. Thus, the actual findings among the majority of teachers supported the usefulness and effectiveness of problem-based learning and collaborative learning strategies in incorporating CT into the curriculum. The last hypothesis stated that teachers face some challenges and barriers which were firmly confirmed regarding the results from teachers' questionnaire. They also ranked the lack of interest in students (33.33%) curriculum constraint and limited resources (26.66%) as prominent challenges EFL teachers face when integrating CT activities in order to enhance students' language.

Limitation of the study:

Various obstacles and problems were faced during this study. First, time management and time limitation prevented us to carry out this research entirely. Second, the lack of guidance and supervision from our supervisor throughout the dissertation which carried ambiguity on how to handle some aspects of our research. Third, due to my partner's work as a teacher at middle school, we found difficulties to meet and discuss our research continuously and fruitfully. Lastly, we faced some obstacles to distribute and collect the questionnaire among teachers since they were almost busy with the final exams.

Recommendations and suggestions for further studies:

Recommendation for teachers:

- Teachers should be updated and motivated to adopt various strategies and techniques in order to meet students' needs.
- Teachers should encourage students' autonomous and global aware towards the usage of CT.
- Teachers should also balance structured teaching with the real world context by interactive, creative and thinking critically skills.
- The higher ministry of education should integrate the teaching of theoretical foundations of critical thinking before implementing it in courses.

Recommendation for students:

- Student should be aware of the critical thinking ability and its significance in the development of the cognitive ability.
- Students should be more interested in developing techniques and methods at different levels.
- Students should use critical thinking as a part of all courses and students' learning process.
- Students should take into consideration CT skills as a mandatory competence and skill by decision makers, so it will be obligatory implemented instead of being a supplementary skill.

Conclusion:

This chapter covered the discussion of the findings that we have collected from teachers' questionnaire and the relationship of the results to the previous studies. It also highlights the limitations during conducting our research. Moreover, the recommendations and suggestions for both teachers and students.

General Conclusion

General conclusion:

This study has been carried out to explore university teachers' perceptions of integrating critical thinking practices in EFL curriculum. In order to accomplish the research, a tool was adopted: a questionnaire addressed to teachers using a mixed method approach to provide much more detailed results.

The research is divided into five chapters, two theoretical chapters, two practical chapters and end with conclusion. The first chapter presents a general introduction including an overview of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, hypothesis and significance of the study. The second chapter highlights the literature review. It is divided into two main parts. The first part, deals with critical thinking, its components and its importance in higher education. The second part, reveals with curriculum design, its types and elements along with the role of teachers, key strategies, and challenges they faced. The third chapter is concerned of the full description of research methodology followed to achieve the objective of the study, research method, and research tool and data analysis procedures. The fourth chapter deals with data discussions. The limitation of the study and recommendations for further research. Finally, this work ended up with a conclusion

To sum up, the analysis of the results show that most of teachers have a positive perception about the integration of critical thinking in curriculum by using effective strategies and activities to enhance learners' communicative skills. This confirms the stated hypothesis.

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Appendix

Questionnaire:

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire is a part of master dissertation. It aims to gather your opinions and perceptions about integrating critical thinking activities into EFL curriculum design. Your responses will help us understand your point of views on the importance of critical thinking practices and how it can promote in EFL classroom.

Background information:

Gender

- male
- Female

Age

- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-above

Teaching experience

- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- Almost 18years

Degree

- Master's
- Doctorate
- Others (please specify)

Course taught

- Didactics
- Literature
- Methodology
- Others (please specify).....

Section One: Perception of Critical Thinking

1. Do you apply CT in your daily teaching practices?

A. Yes

B. No

2. How do you define critical thinking in the context of EFL teaching/ learning?

.....

3. How important do you believe critical thinking activities are in EFL classrooms?

A. Not important

B. Somewhat important

C. Important

D. Extremely important

4. In your opinion, have you observed any changes in students' engagement when integrating critical thinking in classroom?(why)

A. Yes

B. No

.....

5. How can EFL students learn to think critically in higher education? Whether

A. Students can learn critically through their exploration

B. They need to be formally taught the skill as a part of the curriculum

C. Others (please specify).....

Section two: Curriculum Design

6. On a scale of 1 to 5, how frequently do you implement critical thinking activities in your class?

A. 1(never)

B. 2(rarely)

C. 3(sometimes)

D. 4(often)

E. 5(always)

7/ In your opinion, what are the effective strategies in incorporating critical thinking into your curriculum? (Select all that apply)

A. Inquiry-based learning

- B. Socratic questioning
- C. Problem-based learning
- D. Collaborative learning
- E. Others (please specify)

7. What challenges do you face when integrating critical thinking activities into your teaching?(select all that apply)

- A. Curriculum constraints
- B. Limited resources
- C. lack of interest of students
- D. Others (please specify).....

8. How do you weigh the potential benefits of critical thinking activities in enhancing students' language?

.....
.....

9. In your opinion, what is the most significant benefit of incorporating critical thinking activities in EFL classroom?

.....
.....

10. Any additional comments or suggestions regarding the incorporation of critical thinking in the EFL curriculum?

.....
.....
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