

**PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHTER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
MOHAMED KHEIDER UNIVERSITY OF BISKRA
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**



**Active Learning and its Role at Enhancing Critical Thinking
The Case of First Year Students at The Department of English at
Biskra University**

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a
Master Degree in Sciences of Language

Submitted by:

Mr.Mohammed Amine Kerrouzi

Supervised by:

Dr.Ghecham Hadjer

Board of Examiners

Prof. Bashar Ahmed

(University of Biskra)

Dr.Chenini Abdelhak

(University of Biskra)

Dr.Rezig Nadia Betka

(University of Biskra)

Academic Year: 2023/2024

Declaration

I, Mohamed Amine Kerrouzi, do hereby declare that the work presented in this dissertation is solely my own effort and has not been submitted for any academic institution or University for any degree before.

This inquiry was conducted and completed at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, Algeria.

Certified

Mr. Mohamed Amine Kerrouzi.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the mentors who guided me, the colleagues and the friends who supported me throughout this journey. Your wisdom, encouragement, and camaraderie have been invaluable. To all those who have shared their knowledge and offered their insights, thank you for being an integral part of this work.

Acknowledgements

My Sincere gratitude and appreciation are addressed to my thesis supervisor **Dr.Ghecham Hadjer** who has given valuable time and provided great guidance to correct my research.

I would like to thank The Jury Members for their acceptance for reading and evaluating this research work. Their expertise and thoughtful critiques have been invaluable in shaping the final outcome of this study. I'am also deeply grateful to all the participants of the Questionnaires and the interviews. Your cooperation and honesty have provided crucial data and insights that were essential for this research. I would also like to thank the academic and administrative staff of Mohammed Khider University for providing the necessary resources and a conducive environment for conducting my research. Your assistance and support have been greatly appreciated.

Abstract

This dissertation investigates the correlation between Active Learning and the enhancement of critical thinking skills among students. In the contemporary educational landscape, a compelling imperative arises to delve into a comprehensive analysis of the efficacy of Active Learning in cultivating critical thinking skills among students. While the adoption of Active Learning has become pervasive, there remains a crucial need to scrutinize and understand the nuanced impact it exerts on the augmentation of critical thinking abilities within diverse academic settings. Despite the widespread implementation of Active Learning methodologies, a gap persists in our understanding of how effectively it fosters students' critical thinking skills across different academic environments. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining the correlation between Active Learning and the enhancement of critical thinking skills among students. The research aims to identify the extent to which Active Learning contributes to the development of critical thinking abilities in students by analyzing quantitative data and seeks to provide valuable insights into the efficacy of active learning in fostering critical thinking in the academic setting. As a sample, the researcher chooses to focus on 30 first-year English students at the University of Mohamed Khider. In collecting data, the researcher uses a Questionnaire administered online to the students and an interview for 6 Teachers, The questions are intended to elicit opinions from the participants and The questionnaire is distributed to first-year English learners. Both quantitative and qualitative data are then analyzed to provide insights into the relationship between Active Learning and critical thinking and how Active learning enhances critical Thinking skills among students.

Key Words : Active Learning , Critical Thinking , Cognitive Skills.

List of Acronyms

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

MKO: More Knowledgeable Other

PBL: Problem-Based Learning

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General Introduction

General Introduction

1. Background of the study

This study examines the active learning effect on the development of critical thinking skills. In present day education, educators need to well understand well what works best in teaching their students as they go for active learning approaches as a way of building them intellectually, this research clarifies nuanced connections between active learning methodologies and critical thinking abilities, hence contributing significantly to existing literature on the effectiveness of some pedagogical practices.

In educational theory, the conceptualization of active learning as a constructivist pedagogy demands critical attention. By using major theoretical frameworks rooted in socio-cultural theory and constructivism, this thesis sets out to provide a comprehensive theoretical basis for understanding how active learning creates conditions that foster critical thinking abilities.

Critical thinking in the contemporary educational landscape is of paramount significance, given its multifaceted aspects which are inclusive of analytical skills, problem solving abilities and development of independent intellectual inquiry. The study examines the empirical complexities and evidence surrounding different active learning processes from collaborative efforts to experiential undertakings that develop critical thinking.

Moreover, this thesis examines possible challenges that come with adopting active learning techniques through a range of theoretical frameworks and empirical studies. This means that it puts together relevant materials from the existing literature to find out the knowledge gaps with regard to how educators and institutions can fully incorporate active learning into various educational settings.

The Importance of this academic dissertation is to further the discussion on educational innovation by elaborating on how active learning and critical thinking interact in a dynamic manner. This thesis attempts to contribute to the existing knowledge base through a scholarly conversation that is supported by empirical evidence, with insights into teaching methods that promote both the acquisition of knowledge and the development of strong learners' abilities for critical thinking.

2.Statement of the Problem

In the contemporary educational landscape, a compelling imperative arises to delve into a comprehensive analysis of the efficacy of Active Learning in cultivating critical thinking skills among EFL students. While the adoption of Active Learning has become pervasive, there remains a crucial need to scrutinize and understand the nuanced impact it exerts on the augmentation of critical thinking abilities within diverse academic settings. This research aims to contribute to a deeper comprehension of the multifaceted relationship between Active Learning and critical thinking, shedding light on the specific mechanisms through which this pedagogical approach influences and shapes cognitive processes in various educational contexts.

3.Aims of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to undertake a rigorous examination of the interconnection between Active Learning and the development of critical thinking skills among EFL students. Going beyond this, this research endeavors to pinpoint the pivotal factors that impact the efficacy of Active Learning methods, aiming to provide valuable insights into the nuances of their effectiveness. Furthermore, the study aspires to formulate practical recommendations geared towards enhancing and optimizing the application of

Active Learning within diverse educational settings. Through this multifaceted approach, this research seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on pedagogical methods and their direct influence on the development of critical thinking abilities in EFL students.

4. Research Questions

Q.1 How does Active Learning contribute to the improvement of critical thinking skills in students ?

Q.2 What Are EFL teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of Active Learning as a way to enhance their EFL students critical thinking abilities ?

5. Research Hypotheses

H.1 Active Learning positively correlates with enhanced critical thinking skills in students.

H.2 EFL teachers have positive perceptions and attitudes towards the use of active learning and reports an enhancement in their EFL students' critical thinking abilities.

6. The Research Methodology for this Study

The Utilization of a Questionnaire for data collection in educational research offers several advantages, including relevance and comprehensiveness. By carefully considering methodological considerations such as the questionnaire design, sampling, and administration, researchers can maximize the effectiveness of this data collection method and obtain valuable insights into student perspectives within educational contexts.

Also, The Researcher used teachers interviews in this dissertation , the Implementation of teachers Interviews in educational research offers several advantages, including depth and

context, the use of teacher' Interviews for data collection in educational research offers several advantages, including detailed insights and rich qualitative data.

6.1. Population and Sampling

In the selection of participants, the researcher focuses on a sample of 30 first-year English students at the University of Mohamed Khider, Additionally the researcher sought to engage 6 EFL teachers, encompassing both experienced practitioners and early-career educators, to capture a vast perspectives and instructional approaches. This deliberate selection process aimed to ensure the inclusion of varied pedagogical backgrounds, teaching philosophies, and levels of familiarity with active learning methodologies.

By focusing on both students and EFL teachers, the research aspired to get a holistic understanding of the interplay between instructional practices and learner outcomes in the context of EFL education. Through the triangulation of perspectives from these distinct groups, the research aimed to clarify the complex dynamics shaping the integration of active learning as a means to develop critical thinking among EFL learners.

6.2. The Data Collection Tools

In collecting data the researcher uses a Questionnaire. The researcher will carry out an online Questionnaire for the students. It involves questions that are few in number and intended to elicit opinion from the participants.

the researcher also employed an interview-based methodology. Interviews were conducted with EFL teachers to gain insights into their perceptions and attitudes towards the integration of active learning for the enhancement of critical thinking abilities among EFL students. The

interviews consisted of a structured discussion, allowing for flexibility in probing responses and capturing nuanced perspectives from participants..

6.3. Data Analysis Techniques

While gathering the data, the Questionnaire is given to the first year english learners at Biskra University. Before the participants start answering the questions they will have a brief explanation about how they complete the Questionnaire ,The Interviews where given to EFL Teachers, This qualitative approach was chosen for its capacity to delve deeply into the lived experiences, pedagogical practices, and conceptual frameworks of EFL teachers, thereby enriching the empirical depth of this research, Both of the quantitative and qualitative data are then analyzed.

7.The Significance of the Study

This dissertation holds substantial significance as it delves into the exploration of active learning and its profound influence on critical thinking skills among students, illuminating a crucial domain within educational research. The import of this study lies in its potential to make noteworthy contributions to the refinement of teaching methodologies, thereby fostering the cultivation of essential abilities in learners. By uncovering the intricate relationship between active learning and critical thinking, this research aims to provide valuable insights that can inform educational practices and contribute to the continuous improvement of pedagogical approaches.

8.The Referencing Style of the Dissertation

Given the fact that the present research study belongs to educational researches the seventh edition of the APA (American Psychological Association) referencing and citation style was employed. it should be noted that the arrangements , including the layout and cover page. is guided by the standard of the supervisor.

9.Structure of The Dissertation

The dissertation is structured into Three chapters. The inaugural chapter will be dedicated to the theoretical framework, encompassing essential definitions of key terms and the identification of pertinent concepts associated with the topic under study. The second chapter will be dedicated to the research methodology for this study, The third chapter will involve a meticulous analysis of the data amassed from the Questionnaire and the interview, providing a practical exploration of the insights garnered through empirical investigation. This structure aims to offer a comprehensive and balanced examination of both the theoretical underpinnings and empirical findings, contributing to a deeper understanding of the active learning effect on critical thinking skills.

Chapter One

Literature Review

Chapter One : Literature Review

1.Introduction

In recent years, educational paradigms have undergone a notable shift towards fostering student engagement and deep understanding. This dissertation delves into the realm of Active Learning and its effect on Critical Thinking skills. This chapter explores seminal works by Bonwell and Eison (1991) who highlighted the significance of active learning in enhancing student outcomes. Moreover, it investigates researches by Prince (2004), Freeman et al. (2014), Vygotsky (1978) and explores the ideas and writings of other authors like John Dewey and Jean Piaget how wrote about the need to unravel the intricate relationship between active learning and the development of critical thinking abilities. As we navigate through the literature, a nuanced understanding emerges, paving the way for a comprehensive analysis of active learning and its profound implications on cultivating skills in learners..

Within the realm of educational theory and practice, the connectedness of active learning and critical thinking stands as a cornerstone for effective teaching and learning methodologies. Rooted in The Constructivist Learning Theory, as elucidated by scholars such as Dewey and Vygotsky, this symbiotic relationship between engagement and cognition forms the bedrock of contemporary pedagogical approaches. Through this lens, educators navigate the dynamic landscape of knowledge construction, leveraging active learning as a catalyst for fostering critical thought processes in students. This text delves into the theoretical underpinnings of this nexus, exploring how The Constructivist Learning Theory informs and enriches its implementation in educational settings. Additionally, it examines the nuanced considerations, including the role of cultural diversity and empirical evidence, that shape the practical application of these theoretical principles. This exploration also underscores the imperative of integrating theory and practice to cultivate a

holistic learning environment conducive to the development of lifelong critical thinking skills which are essential in the modern world. Ultimately it explores The deep historical perspectives of the subject.

2.Framework

2.1 Active Learning

Active Learning is a teaching method that actively engages learners in activities that demand their active involvement during the learning process. Instead of passively receiving information, students are encouraged to analyze, talk about, and use knowledge in practice through various means such as working in groups, solving problems or doing practical things with hands. Deep understanding is developed when learners are actively involved than when they are just taught. The idea of active learning was emphasized by Bonwell and Eison (1991) who pointed out its influence on student's engagement and success.

Active Learning is "a method of learning in which students are actively or experientially involved in the learning process and where there are different levels of active learning, depending on student involvement." (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). These techniques aim at stimulating processes involving higher order cognition by engaging learners beyond mere reception of information. To promote analysis, application and discussion, this method utilizes a range of activities including group discussions, problem-solving exercises and hands-on projects among others.

Contemporary educational paradigms insist on the centrality of student's active participation in the process of learning making it far more imperative than traditional approaches which rely heavily on lectures. The meta-analysis by Freeman et al. (2014) that examined over 200 studies showed strong evidence that supports a positive relationship between active learning and

improvement in student performance in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. This study emphasized how effective active learning is when it comes to promoting deep understanding and critical thinking.

This is because it creates a vibrant classroom environment and facilitates the long-term retention of information as well as problem-solving skills as it is stated by Prince (2004) "there is broad but uneven support for the core elements of active, collaborative, cooperative and problem-based learning in engineering education." (Prince, 2004). It is important to emphasize this because it serves as a foundation for other courses and is also useful for application purposes throughout their lives.

The positive impact of it on student engagement and achievement is a recurrent theme in educational research. Prince (2004) argued that the benefits extend beyond academic outcomes, influencing student's attitudes toward learning, Bonwell and Eison suggested that learners work collaboratively, discuss materials while role-playing, debate, engage in case study, take part in cooperative learning, or produce short written exercises. (Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

In higher education, where preparing students is of paramount importance, this method emerges as a pedagogical approach that aligns with the demands of an ever-evolving society. its The adaptability allows instructors to tailor their methods to diverse learning styles and preferences, promoting inclusivity within the classroom (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). This inclusivity contributes to the cultivation of a diverse and skilled workforce capable of navigating the challenges of a globalized world.

In conclusion, the integration of active learning into instructional practices reflects a commitment to fostering dynamic and engaging learning experiences. Supported by empirical evidence from studies such as those by Bonwell & Eison (2014) and other authors ,active learning

stands as a versatile and effective approach to promote not only academic achievement but also the development of critical thinking skills and a positive attitude towards learning.

2.2 Critical Thinking

“Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action” (Ennis, 2015)

Critical Thinking goes beyond memorization and requires individuals to actively engage with information, assess its credibility and draw well-reasoned conclusions, it is a cognitive process that involves the systematic evaluation and analysis of information, arguments or situations that are indispensable for analytical reasoning and sound decision-making. Critical thinking is defined by Ennis (2015) as a reflective and reasonable thought having implications on what one would believe in or do. Therefore, this multi-faceted ability demands that they interact with information beyond a superficial level of understanding, hence questioning assumptions, and exploring alternative perspectives.

The term critical thinking was coined by The American philosopher and educator John Dewey (Gosner, 2024) and its usefulness can be applied across various areas such as problem-solving skills, decision-making and effective communication. As people face complex challenges, the importance of thinking critically can be emphasized because it allows one to find his way through uncertainties and make better choices accordingly. It allows students to dig down into the layers of details that surround them so that we can evaluate their relevance for task completion.

Ennis (2015) asserts that reflective and reasonable thinking is in line with the contemporary views of critical thinking as a whole. Problem-solving situations require individuals with critical

thinking abilities to be skillful in considering multiple perspectives and objectively assessing evidence. Therefore, this cognitive adaptability does not only enable people to make decisions effectively, but also create an environment for open-minded inquiry and collaboration.

Critical thinking is also a defense against accepting information without questioning it. Information overload is a feature of modern times; hence, the ability to differentiate credible sources and assess information reliability became extremely important. Critical thinking's insistence on engaging actively with information means that one should not be just a passive recipient but also an active constructor of knowledge.

Regarding effective communication, critical thinking is essential. Good communication skills involve presenting well-thought-out arguments supported by evidence and logical analysis. People who think critically can follow complicated discussions, argue their points convincingly and have meaningful exchanges contributing to intellectual growth.

In conclusion, critical thinking emerges as a dynamic and essential cognitive process with far-reaching implications. Its integration into educational curricula and professional development initiatives underscores its foundational role in equipping individuals with the skills necessary for success in an ever-evolving and information-rich landscape.

2.3 The Relationship Between Active Learning and Critical Thinking

Active Learning and Critical Thinking are intertwined in the educational landscape, with active learning being an important factor for the development of critical thinking skills. According to Bonwell and Eison (1991), students who actively participate in their own learning process are more likely to understand deeply and think analytically, which is important for critical reasoning. The relationship between active learning and critical thinking is symbiotic because active learning

methods, such as problem solving exercises as well as collaborative discussions do provide cognitive challenges that make it possible to develop critical thinking abilities.

Research has shown that not only does active learning contribute significantly to student's understanding of the subject matter, but also helps students improve their critical thinking capabilities. Freeman et al., (2014) carried out a meta-analysis of over 200 studies where they found a positive correlation between using this method of teaching and improved performances at schools across different subjects. This fact emphasizes the need for the inclusion of active learning methodologies in educational curricula so that both knowledge acquisition and critical thinking can be promoted together.

In addition to promoting deeper understanding and analytical thinking it also helps students understand better and think more. It also fits different student ways of learning. Teachers can adjust their teaching to match different ways students think and include everyone. This can make learning better and help create a more skilled group of workers for today's world.

However, it is important to use active learning carefully. It can help make people think but only if it is done right. It should match the things students are supposed to learn, its effectiveness is contingent on various factors including the alignment with learning objectives, the instructor's proficiency in facilitation, and the level of student engagement. Thus educators and institutions must invest in professional development opportunities to enhance the instructors pedagogical skills and ensure the successful integration of active learning approaches into the curriculum.

The importance of integrating learning and critical thinking into practices is underscored by their symbiotic relationship. The empirical support, for learning does not only emphasizes its positive effects on knowledge retention but also highlights its role in fostering essential cognitive abilities. As the field of education evolves it is crucial to incorporate evidence based active learning approaches to prepare students for the global landscape.

The interaction between learning and critical thinking goes beyond the classroom environment. Through problem solving tasks and collaborative discussions students not acquire specific knowledge but also develop transferable skills necessary for continuous learning and professional success. The ability to think critically is increasingly seen as an asset in adapting to advancements and societal shifts.

Educational institutions should consider the lasting impact of learning on students cognitive growth and its relevance to their pursuits. As students transition into the workforce having developed critical thinking skills proves valuable in navigating professional domains. Employers, from sectors appreciate individuals who can analyze information tackle challenges and approach problems with a discerning perspective.

Educational institutions play a role, in creating dynamic learning settings aiming to equip individuals with not only knowledge, in their respective areas but also the skills to apply that knowledge effectively in new and unfamiliar scenarios.

By fostering environments where students actively engage with the material, educators are not just imparting knowledge but also cultivating a skill set that is essential for lifelong learning and adaptability. This approach is particularly vital in an era characterized by rapid technological advancements and global interconnectedness, where the ability to think critically and solve complex problems is paramount.

One of the fundamental aspects of active learning is its ability to cater to diverse learning styles. Traditional lecture-based teaching often fails to address the varied ways in which students absorb information. Active learning, on the other hand, encompasses a range of strategies such as group projects, peer teaching, and case studies that can be tailored to meet the needs of different learners. This inclusivity ensures that all students have the opportunity to engage deeply with the material, thereby enhancing their critical thinking abilities.

Moreover, the implementation of active learning strategies necessitates a shift in the role of educators. In this dynamic model, teachers become facilitators of learning rather than mere transmitters of information. This requires a comprehensive understanding of pedagogical techniques and a commitment to continuous professional development. Institutions must therefore invest in training programs that equip educators with the skills necessary to effectively implement active learning. This investment not only benefits the educators themselves but also enhances the overall quality of education provided to students.

The impact of active learning on critical thinking is also evident in the development of soft skills such as communication, collaboration, and adaptability. Through activities like debates, simulations, and peer review, students learn to articulate their ideas clearly, listen to alternative viewpoints, and work effectively in teams. These skills are invaluable in both academic and professional settings, where the ability to navigate complex social dynamics is often as important as technical expertise.

Active learning also fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among students. When learners are actively involved in their education, they are more likely to take initiative and seek out additional resources to supplement their understanding. This proactive approach is a cornerstone of critical thinking, as it encourages students to question assumptions, explore multiple perspectives, and draw well-reasoned conclusions based on evidence.

Incorporating technology into active learning environments can further enhance critical thinking. Digital tools and platforms provide opportunities for interactive learning experiences that are not possible in traditional classroom settings. For instance, virtual laboratories, online discussion forums, and educational games can create immersive learning experiences that challenge students to apply their knowledge in novel ways. These technological advancements can make learning more engaging and accessible, thereby promoting deeper understanding and critical analysis.

Active learning also aligns with contemporary educational goals that emphasize the importance of preparing students for the complexities of the modern world. As the nature of work evolves, so too does the demand for individuals who can think critically, innovate, and adapt to changing circumstances. By embedding active learning practices into the curriculum, educational institutions are better positioned to produce graduates who are not only knowledgeable in their fields but also equipped with the cognitive and interpersonal skills necessary for success in a variety of contexts.

It is also important to recognize the role of assessment in active learning. Traditional assessment methods, such as standardized tests, may not fully capture the depth of understanding and critical thinking skills developed through active learning. Therefore, educators must employ diverse assessment strategies that evaluate not only content knowledge but also the process of learning. Portfolios, project-based assessments, and reflective journals are examples of assessment tools that can provide a more comprehensive picture of a student's capabilities.

Ongoing research in educational psychology and pedagogy continues to shed light on the most effective active learning strategies. By staying abreast of these findings, educators can refine their methods to ensure that they are meeting the needs of their students. This iterative process of implementation, evaluation, and adjustment is crucial for maintaining the relevance and effectiveness of active learning approaches.

Furthermore, ongoing research and assessment are essential to refine and optimize active learning . Continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of these methods allows educators to adapt their approaches based on emerging best practices and individual learner needs. Rigorous assessment processes contribute to the ongoing improvement of active learning techniques and ensure their continued relevance in addressing the evolving demands of education.

In summary, the integration of active learning practices into educational frameworks is a multifaceted endeavor with far-reaching implications. Beyond immediate academic outcomes, the

cultivation of critical thinking through active learning aligns with the broader goals of preparing individuals for a dynamic and interconnected world. As educators and institutions invest in and refine these methods, they contribute not only to the intellectual development of students but also to the cultivation of a society capable of tackling the challenges of the future with agility and insight.

3.The Theoretical Foundations

The theory behind how active learning and critical thinking connect can be linked to The Constructivist Learning Theory. Dewey (1938) and Vygotsky (1978) posited that learning is a social, active process where individuals construct knowledge through meaningful experiences. Active learning agrees with this idea, giving students chances to truly make their own understanding, starting the path for critical thinking development.

The Constructivist Learning Theory, as outlined by Dewey (1938) and Vygotsky (1978), forms the theoretical basis for understanding the synergy between active learning and critical thinking. This educational framework asserts that learning is a dynamic, social endeavor wherein individuals actively construct knowledge through meaningful experiences. Dewey emphasized the significance of experiential learning, asserting that students learn best when engaged in hands-on, participatory activities.

Active learning links closely to the ideas of The Constructivist Learning Theory. students play an active role in building their own understanding. Research by Bonwell and Eison (1991) supports this perspective. They claim that when students plunge into learning actively, they understand more and can think critically.

Within the context of The Constructivist Learning Theory, active learning becomes a vehicle for the co-construction of knowledge, allowing students to collaborate in problem-solving exercises and engage in dialogues that challenge and refine their cognitive processes (Freeman et al., 2014)

This teamwork falls in line with what Vygotsky called the Zone of Proximal Development. Here the most effective learning happens when interacting and working with classmates who possess varying levels of expertise.

The dynamic synergy between Active Learning and Critical Thinking can essentially be understood as the core of The Constructivist Learning Theory. Teachers, by engaging students in learning, are responsible for shaping an academic environment that resonates with real life hurdles. This style complements the constructivist belief, that knowledge is not something we receive passively, but a structure we voluntarily construct on the solid foundation of existing cognitive frameworks. The philosophical underpinnings of The Constructivist Learning Theory, developed by scholars like Dewey and Vygotsky, offer a theoretical map for deciphering the mutual bond between proactive comprehension and critical reflection. Acknowledging the social and dynamic nature of acquiring knowledge allows educators to exploit the power of active learning. They can thereby facilitate collective knowledge construction and nurture the evolution of critical thought processes within students. This essentially synchronizes educational protocols with foundational theoretical principles.

Expanding on the base theory, it is key to acknowledge the subtleties when applying ideas of The Constructivist Learning Theory to active learning in various educational environments. Dewey's focus on thoughtful contemplation and the repeating pattern of problem solving matches active learning methodologies, which push students to deeply introspect their experiences. This element of reflection is crucial in nurturing meta-cognitive abilities, enhancing students' skill to oversee and control their thinking processes.

Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective highlights the importance of social interaction in the learning process. Collaborative discussions and group activities inherent in active learning not only facilitate the sharing of diverse perspectives but also mirror Vygotsky's idea of the More

Knowledgeable Other (MKO). In the active learning setting, peers, instructors, or external resources can serve as MKOs, guiding students toward a deeper understanding of complex concepts (Vygotsky, 1978).

When integrating active learning in teaching, it is crucial to recognize the role technology plays in enhancing these experiences. Useful technological tools provide engaging simulations, online teamwork, and an access to a wealth of information, reflecting the modern transformation of education methods. Introducing technology into active learning spaces not only boosts student involvement but also readies them for the digital requirements of the 21st century.

Furthermore, acknowledging the impact of cultural and individual differences on learning is essential when applying constructivist principles. Cultural perspectives and prior knowledge influence how students engage with active learning experiences, emphasizing the need for educators to create inclusive environments that accommodate diverse backgrounds and learning styles (Ambrose et al., 2010).

In summary, the application of The Constructivist Learning Theory to active learning practices underscores the need for a holistic understanding of the learning process. By recognizing the interplay between social interaction, reflection, and technology, educators can optimize active learning environments to cultivate not only subject-specific knowledge but also the critical thinking skills essential for lifelong learning and success in an ever evolving global landscape.

Empirical evidence suggests that active learning significantly contributes to critical thinking improvement. Freeman et al.'s (2014) meta-analysis demonstrated that active learning methods lead to better academic performance and higher order thinking skills. The nature of active learning, whether through collaborative discussions, problem-solving exercises, or real world applications, inherently demands cognitive engagement, promoting the analytical thinking essential for critical reasoning (Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

3.1 Historical Perspectives on Active Learning

A historical examination of active learning reveals that its origins are traced back to progressive educational movements. Dewey's (1910) advocacy for experiential learning laid the foundation for approaches promoting active learning. As time passed, celebrated educators such as Montessori and Piaget shaped the journey of active learning methods, highlighting the need for practical experiences and learner-oriented teaching. Recognizing the historical backdrop helps us value the ongoing advancement and assimilation of active learning in our educational systems.

Dewey (1910) underscored the importance of hands-on, experience-based learning. This concept strongly correlates with our present comprehension of active learning. His influential ideas gave rise to the progressive education revolution, promoting a step away from cyclical rote learning towards a more stimulating and practical method. His proposition that learning should be a vibrant and experiential procedure aligns gracefully with the main tenets of active learning. This modern teaching encourages students to be active participant in their learning journey.

Montessori (1912) made significant contributions, propelling the development of active learning techniques. Her promotion of independent learning and the notion of supporting environments were the bedrock for instruction methods focused on students. Montessori's theories emphasized the need to curate an environment that nurtures a sense of curiosity, investigation, and personal insight. Active learning today still resonates with these principles.

Piaget (1950) illuminated how a constructivist point of view underscores the importance of learners interacting actively with their surroundings to build knowledge. His concentration on the student as a dynamic contributor to the learning journey aligns with the core belief of active learning, which motivates learners to investigate, interrogate, and form comprehension through practical experiences. Progressively, active learning refined itself, taking cues from these pivotal

educational philosophers to cater to the evolving demands and frameworks of education. Tracing back from Dewey's progressive educational reforms, to Montessori's student-centered methodology, and Piaget's constructivist theories, laid down the robust foundation for the extensive variety of active learning methods adopted in modern classrooms.

Recognizing the historical context is crucial for teachers and scholars striving to polish and revolutionize active learning techniques. Viewing it through the historical perspective not only gives context to the evolution of these methods, but also guides current teaching choices. By grasping the roots and philosophical principles, teachers can customize active learning strategies to harmonize with progressive educational beliefs and societal demands.

The legacy of Dewey, Montessori, and Piaget continues to influence and inspire contemporary active learning methodologies. However, the evolution of active learning has not remained static; it has dynamically adapted to integrate technological advancements, psychological insights, and diverse pedagogical theories.

Furthermore, the shift towards the constructivist and socio-constructivist approaches has broadened the scope of active learning. Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory emphasizes the importance of social interactions and cultural context in cognitive development. This has led to a greater focus on collaborative learning, where students work together to solve problems, discuss concepts, and build knowledge collectively. Group projects, peer reviews, and discussion forums are some of the ways educators incorporate collaborative elements into their teaching, fostering a learning environment where students learn from each other's perspectives and insights.

Incorporating critical thinking into active learning has also gained prominence, Critical thinking is the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information in a logical and reflective manner. Active learning techniques such as the PBL ,case studies, and inquiry-based learning are designed

to cultivate these skills. In PBL, for example, students are presented with real-world problems and are required to research, propose solutions, and justify their reasoning. This not only engages them actively it also develops their ability to think critically and apply knowledge in practical contexts.

Another significant development in active learning is the emphasis on metacognition—thinking about one’s own thinking. Metacognitive strategies encourage students to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning processes. Techniques such as self-assessment, reflective journaling, and think-aloud protocols help students become more aware of their cognitive strategies and learning habits. This self-awareness fosters a proactive approach to learning, where students can adjust their methods and strategies to improve understanding and retention.

Active learning has also been enriched by the integration of interdisciplinary approaches. The interconnectedness of knowledge areas means that students benefit from seeing how concepts from different disciplines interact and complement each other. For example, a project-based learning activity might combine principles of mathematics, science, and technology to solve an engineering problem. This not only makes learning more relevant and engaging but also helps students develop a holistic understanding of complex concepts.

The role of assessment in active learning is another area that has seen significant innovation. Traditional assessments, which often emphasize memorization and regurgitation of information, are being replaced or supplemented by formative assessments that provide ongoing feedback and encourage reflection. Authentic assessments, which involve real-world tasks and projects, allow students to demonstrate their learning in meaningful ways. These assessment methods align more closely with the goals of active learning, emphasizing the application of knowledge and skills in practical contexts.

In the broader context of educational reform, active learning aligns with the push towards more learner centered and competency based educational systems. Educational policies and frameworks increasingly advocate for pedagogical approaches that prioritize student engagement, critical thinking, and practical skills. This shift is reflected in curriculum designs that are more flexible and adaptable, allowing for the integration of active learning strategies that can be tailored to meet the needs of diverse learners.

In conclusion, the historical examination of active learning, rooted in the progressive education movement of Dewey, Montessori, and Piaget, provides a foundation for appreciating the ongoing evolution of pedagogical practices. The continuous development of active learning reflects a commitment to engaging, student-centered education, emphasizing the enduring relevance of these principles across educational contexts.

3.2 Deep Studies on Active Learning and Critical Thinking

In the classical period of Ancient Greece, the philosopher Plato indicated that the teachings of Socrates are the earliest records of critical thinking. In the early dialogues by Plato, the philosopher Socrates debates several speakers about thinking, learning and deep life matter; this method is known as the Socratic questioning and is based on the foundation that thinking has structured logic, and allows underlying thoughts to be questioned (Paul & Binker, 1990). Since that period several empirical studies have explored the impact of active learning on critical thinking skills, Freeman et al.'s (2014) meta-analysis found that active learning significantly improved student performance and critical thinking outcomes. Similarly, Prince (2004) emphasized the positive correlation between active learning and critical thinking in science education. These studies provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of active learning in enhancing critical thinking across diverse educational settings.

Building on the foundational studies, subsequent research has delved deeper into the nuanced aspects of the relationship between active learning and critical thinking. The meta-analysis conducted by Freeman et al. (2014) not only demonstrated a positive correlation between active learning and academic performance but also highlighted the broader implications for critical thinking development. This comprehensive analysis encompassed studies across various disciplines, offering a holistic view of how active learning methodologies contribute to the cultivation of critical thinking skills.

Furthermore, the work of Anderson et al. (2011) delves into the role of active learning in fostering not only critical thinking skills but also creative thinking. Their study explored how problem-based learning, a form of active learning, stimulates both analytical and creative cognitive processes. This expanded perspective is particularly relevant as educational objectives increasingly emphasize the development of not only critical thinking but also creativity as essential components of a developed skill set.

These studies collectively underscore the robust empirical foundation supporting the positive impact of active learning on critical thinking. The diverse methodologies and disciplinary contexts explored in these studies contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted relationship between active learning and the development of cognitive skills.

The synthesis of findings obtained from Freeman et al. (2014), Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) with the additional works of Prince (2004) provides a nuanced perspective on the intricate interplay between active learning and critical thinking. The collective body of research substantiates the effectiveness of active learning in promoting not only academic performance but also enduring enhancements in critical thinking skills across diverse educational domains.

The work of Bonwell and Sutherland (2011) offers valuable insights into the intricate design and facilitation of active learning. Their research delves into the role of instructors as facilitators in

active learning environments, emphasizing the importance of intentional planning and structuring of activities to maximize critical thinking outcomes. This emphasis on the pedagogical aspects of active learning complements prior studies by providing a more granular understanding of the instructional practices that optimize the symbiotic relationship between active learning and critical thinking.

In a study conducted by Wallace et al. (2021), the conclusion was that in a comparison between students being taught by an active-learning instructor vs. a traditional learning instructor, students who engaged in active-learning outperformed their counterparts in exam environments.

In addition to the academic benefits, active learning also has positive implications for students' social and emotional development. Engaging in collaborative learning activities helps students develop essential interpersonal skills, such as communication, empathy, and teamwork. These skills are crucial for personal and professional success in a diverse and interconnected world.

Active learning also promotes a growth mindset, encouraging students to view challenges as opportunities for growth rather than obstacles. By providing a supportive environment where students can take risks and learn from their mistakes, active learning fosters resilience and a love of learning. This positive attitude towards learning can have lasting effects on students' academic and personal lives.

Moreover, the emphasis on critical thinking in active learning aligns with the broader goals of education in fostering informed and engaged citizens. Critical thinking skills are essential for navigating the complexities of modern society, from evaluating information sources to making informed decisions about social and political issues. By developing these skills, active learning prepares students to contribute meaningfully to their communities and the world.

The potential for active learning to address educational inequities is another important consideration. Traditional lecture-based approaches can disproportionately disadvantage students who do not thrive in passive learning environments. Active learning, with its emphasis on engagement and interaction, provides multiple pathways for students to demonstrate their understanding and develop their skills. This inclusive approach can help reduce achievement gaps and support the success of diverse student populations.

As the educational landscape continues to evolve, the principles of active learning are being applied in innovative ways. For example, project-based learning, where students work on extended projects that integrate multiple disciplines, embodies the principles of active learning. This approach encourages students to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts, enhancing their critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

Service-learning, where students engage in community service as part of their coursework, is another application of active learning principles. This approach connects academic learning with real-world experiences, fostering critical thinking and social responsibility. By addressing real world issues, service-learning helps students see the relevance of their education and develop a deeper understanding of the course material.

In higher education, active learning is being integrated into curricula through experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, research projects, and study abroad programs. These experiences provide students with hands-on learning opportunities that challenge them to apply their knowledge and skills in new and unfamiliar contexts. This experiential approach to learning enhances critical thinking by exposing students to diverse perspectives and real-world challenges.

Moreover It is essential to acknowledge the evolving nature of educational technology, as highlighted by the works of Dziuban et al. (2018) and Means (2019). Their studies delve into the

integration of technology enhanced active learning, emphasizing the potential of digital tools in creating interactive and dynamic learning experiences. This intersection of educational technology and active learning aligns with the contemporary demand for innovative teaching methodologies that develop EFL student skills.

In conclusion, the expanding body of research, encompassing works by Bonwell and Sutherland (2011), Dziuban et al. (2018), and Means (2019), further enriches our understanding of the multifaceted relationship between active learning and critical thinking. By exploring instructional considerations, motivational aspects, and the integration of technology, these studies contribute to a more holistic perspective on the diverse dimensions of the effect of active learning on cognitive development.

4. Conclusion

Originally from the foundational theories of progressive education espoused by Dewey, Montessori, and Piaget, Active Learning has evolved into a multifaceted pedagogical approach that fosters engagement, collaboration, and meta-cognition. Through the lens of The Constructivist Learning Theory, the dynamic interplay between active learning and critical thinking emerges as a central tenet of modern education, underpinned by the belief that knowledge is actively constructed through meaningful experiences.

Empirical studies, including meta-analyses and deep investigations, have consistently demonstrated its positive impact on academic performance, critical thinking skills, and cognitive development. From Freeman et al.'s comprehensive meta-analysis to Anderson and Krathwohl's exploration of creative thinking, the evidence overwhelmingly supports the effectiveness of active learning in cultivating not only subject-specific knowledge but also transferable skills essential for success in the 21st century.

Furthermore, the integration of those principles with interdisciplinary approaches, and inclusive instructional practices underscores its relevance and adaptability across diverse educational contexts. Whether through project-based learning, service-learning initiatives, or experiential opportunities, it provides students with the tools and mindset necessary to navigate complex challenges, collaborate effectively, and become lifelong learners.

As we look to the future of education, this method stands as a beacon of innovation and inclusivity, offering a pathway to address educational inequities, cultivate critical thinking dispositions, and empower students to thrive in a rapidly changing world. By embracing its principles and fostering a culture of inquiry, reflection, and collaboration, educators can unleash the full potential of every learner, equipping them with the skills and mindset needed to tackle the challenges and opportunities of the future.

The theoretical framework, rooted in Constructivist Learning Theory, establishes a conceptual basis for understanding how active learning align with the principles of meaningful, social learning. Historical perspectives reveal the roots of active learning in progressive education movements, emphasizing its continuous evolution to meet changing educational paradigms.

Previous studies, ranging from foundational works to contemporary research, collectively underscore the positive impact of active learning on critical thinking. Empirical evidence supports the correlation between active learning and enhanced academic performance, as well as the development of higher-order cognitive skills. The integration of technology and instructional considerations further enriches our understanding of the multifaceted dimensions of active learning.

In summary, the literature review establishes a robust foundation for the dissertation, emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between active learning and critical thinking. As education continues to evolve, the integration of active learning into instructional practices emerges as a

dynamic and essential approach for fostering not only academic achievement but also the development of critical thinking skills.

Chapter Two:
Research Methodology for This
Study

Chapter Two: Research Methodology for This Study

1.Introduction

In this chapter the researcher undertakes a comprehensive analysis, delving into the multifaceted results emanating from the gathered data. The primary source of this empirical investigation lies in the Questionnaire, a carefully made instrument presented to the students at the University of Mohamed Khider. This strategic initiative aims to unravel the opinions and experiences held by the participants, shedding light on their perceptions and insights pertaining to the intricacies of the problem that we are analyzing . As we navigate through this methodological exploration, it becomes evident that the utilization of the Students' Questionnaires and the teachers' interviews serves as important tools for elucidating the diverse perspectives and rich experiential nuances embedded within the academic community.

2.Research Approach

The research approach adopted in this study is a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. This approach allows for the integration of statistical analysis of numerical data and in-depth exploration of personal experiences and perceptions. By employing both questionnaires and interviews, the researcher can triangulate the findings, thereby enhancing the validity and robustness of the results. The quantitative component, through the use of a structured questionnaire, captures the general trends and patterns in students' opinions and experiences. The qualitative component, through interviews with EFL teachers, provides a deeper, contextual understanding on the subject.

3.Research Design

This study utilized a mixed-methods research design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. For the quantitative component, the researcher employed a questionnaire specifically designed for English students at the University of Biskra, for the qualitative component, the researcher conducted interviews with EFL teachers. These interviews provided in-depth insights and contextual understanding.

4. Data Collection Methods

The researcher employed both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. For the quantitative aspect, an online questionnaire was administered to English students at the University of Biskra. This questionnaire was designed to elicit detailed responses that would enhance the understanding of the problem under study. Additionally, for the qualitative aspect, interviews were conducted with EFL teachers. These interviews were structured to capture the teachers' perspectives and insights, providing a comprehensive view that complements the quantitative data collected from the students.

4.1 Questionnaire

A Questionnaire is a Quantitative tool which contains questions designed to bring out perspectives on issues of opinion from which generalizations can be drawn. In this study, the researcher dedicates the Questionnaire to students because they help in the continuity of the process by adding information to the researcher. The Questionnaire involves 10 close-ended Questions, The objective of the Questionnaire is to gather new information and additional knowledge from students' thoughts and experiences.

4.2 Interview

An interview is a qualitative research tool designed to elicit detailed perspectives and in-depth responses on specific topics from the participants. In this dissertation, the researcher utilized interviews with EFL teachers to gain comprehensive insights into their perceptions and attitudes towards the use of active learning strategies to enhance their students' critical thinking abilities.

By employing this data collection instrument, the researcher was able to collect nuanced and contextually rich data, which is essential for understanding the complex dynamics at play in EFL education. These insights provided valuable contributions to the dissertation, offering a detailed understanding to develop skills among EFL students.

5. Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedure involved two main steps:

1. **Questionnaire Administration:** The researcher administered an online questionnaire to 30 first-year English students at the University of Biskra. The questionnaire consisted of 10 closed ended questions designed to capture students' opinions and experiences regarding active learning and its impact on their critical thinking abilities. The online format ensured accessibility and convenience for students, facilitating a higher response rate.
2. **EFL Teachers' interview conduction:** The researcher conducted an interview with the selected group of EFL teachers. this interview was designed to elicit detailed insights into teachers' perceptions and experiences with active learning methods. The interview allowed for guided yet flexible discussions, enabling teachers to share their unique perspectives and experiences.

6. Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis procedures for this dissertation involved the following steps : For the questionnaire, the researcher first analyzed the questionnaire data to ensure accuracy and

completeness, which involved checking for any missing or inconsistent responses. Descriptive statistics were then used to summarize the questionnaire responses, with measures calculated to provide an overview of the students' opinions and experiences.

For the interviews, it was transcribed verbatim to create a textual dataset for analysis. The data were then analyzed using thematic analysis to identify overarching themes and insights, allowing the researcher to explore the nuanced perspectives of EFL teachers and understand their attitudes towards active learning and its impact on students' critical thinking.

By conducting this data analysis, the researcher was able to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem, drawing on both statistical trends and in-depth qualitative insights. This approach enriched the findings and contributed to a more robust and nuanced conclusion.

7. Population and Sampling techniques

The study aimed to find out the major cognitive functions of English students at Mohamed Khider University. Those statistics were collected through a questionnaire dedicated to 30 students of 1st year English studies at Mohammed Khider University. An interview with teachers was conducted to highlight their insights and experiences. This interview provided valuable qualitative data that enriched the research, offering a deeper understanding on the subject. The population for my study consists of first-year English students and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers at Mohammed Khaider University. From this population, I selected 30 students to complete a questionnaire and 6 EFL teachers to participate in interviews. My sampling technique is non-probability sampling, which means that not all members of the population have an equal chance of being selected. Specifically, I based my sampling technique on convenience sampling, selecting participants who were readily available and willing to cooperate.

8. Conclusion

In Conclusion, the research says that active learning is a valuable pedagogical approach in EFL education, promoting critical thinking and student engagement. The combination of Questionnaires for students and interviews for the teachers seek to provide a foundation for understanding the effectiveness of active learning and the perceptions of both students and teachers. These findings offer important implications for educators and policymakers seeking to enhance EFL education through active learning methods.

Chapter Three:

Results and Data Analysis

Chapter Three: Results and Data Analysis

1.Introduction

This Chapter explores the perceptions and attitudes of EFL teachers towards the use of the active learning method to enhance their students' critical thinking abilities. The study integrates quantitative data from questionnaires administered to first-year English students at the University of Biskra and qualitative insights from interviews with EFL teachers. The primary aim is to gain a comprehensive understanding of how this method can influence critical thinking in EFL contexts. By analyzing students' opinions and experiences alongside teachers' perspectives, the research seeks to identify effective active learning techniques and offer recommendations for their implementation in EFL classrooms. The findings underscore the significance of varied and engaging teaching methods, clear learning objectives, and a supportive educational environment in fostering critical thinking skills among EFL Students.

2.Results of the Students' Questionnaire

1-How often do you engage in active learning , such as group discussions or hands-on activities, in your current courses?

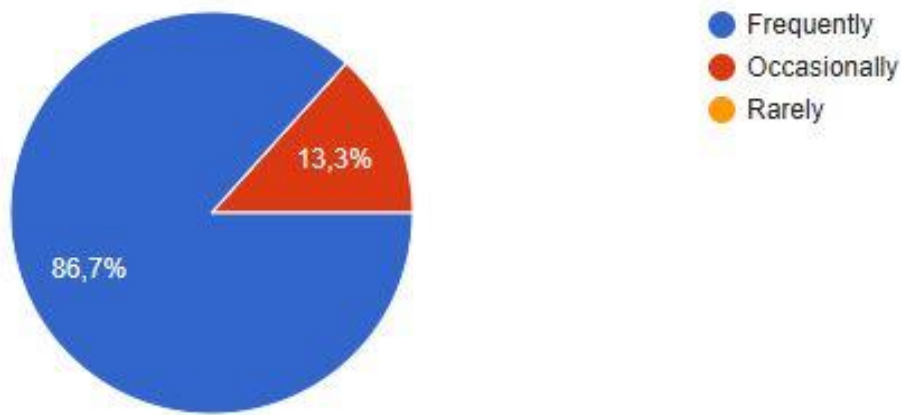


Figure 1: Frequency in Engaging in Active Learning Activities

The chart shows that 86.7% of students frequently engage in active learning , such as group discussions or hands-on activities in their current courses, This suggests that active learning is a common practice in the courses represented by the data.

Only 13.3% of students occasionally engage in active learning , and No participant said that s/he Rarely engage in them, This suggests that most of the participants find active learning to be a valuable part of their education.

Overall, the chart suggests that active learning is a commonly deployed teaching method at the english section at biskra university.

2- Do you think that Active Learning is more effective than the traditional lecture-based methods of teaching ?

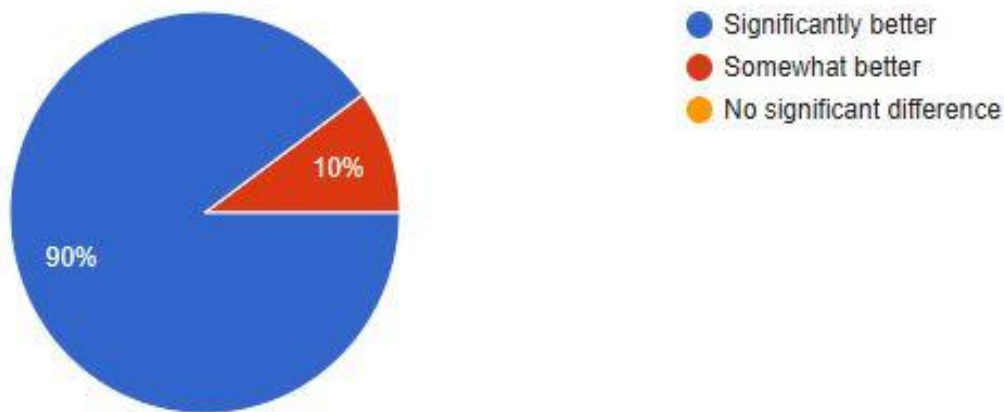


Figure 2: Contribution of Active Learning on Material Comprehension

The chart shows the percentage of students who believe that active learning contributes to their understanding of course material compared to traditional lecture-based methods.

90% of students believe that active learning is significantly better for their understanding of course material compared to traditional lectures, This suggests that a large majority of students find active learning to be a more effective learning method.

Only 10% of students believe that there is a small difference between active learning and traditional lectures in terms of their understanding, and No participant finds that there is no significant difference.

Overall, the chart suggests that students perceive active learning to be a more effective way to learn the course material than traditional lectures.

3- Can you recall a specific instance where an active learning activity positively impacted your critical thinking skills?

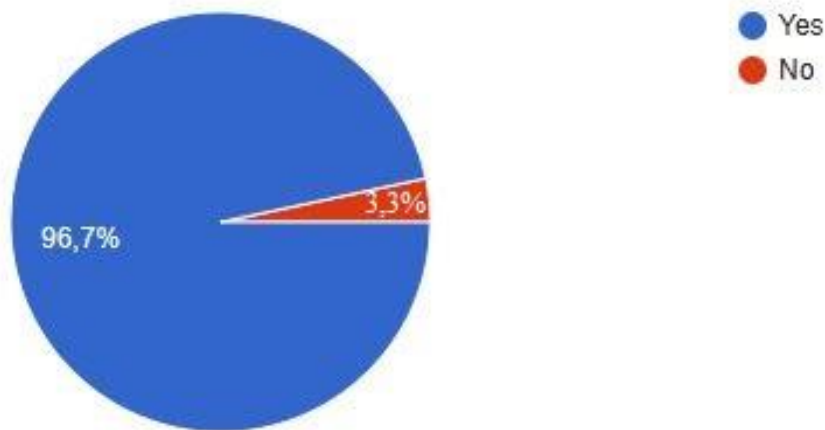


Figure 3: Positive Impact of Active Learning on Critical Thinking

The chart shows if students recall a specific instance where an active learning activity positively impacted their critical thinking skills.

96.7% of the respondents answered “yes” indicating that a large majority of them believe active learning has had a positive impact on their critical thinking skills.

Only 3.3% of the respondents answered “no”, suggesting that a small minority of students do not believe active learning has had a positive impact on their critical thinking skills.

Overall, the pie chart suggests that the respondent students generally believe that active learning has a positive impact on their critical thinking skills.

4- Do you feel that active learning enhances your ability to analyze information and solve problems?

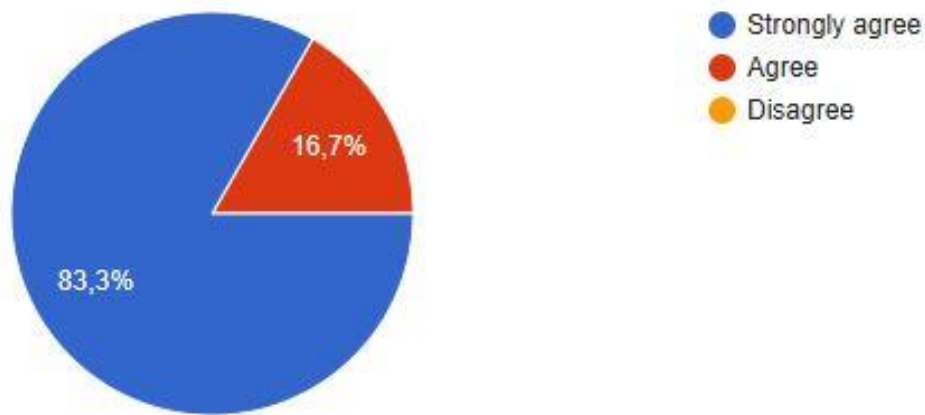


Figure 4 : Enhancing the Problem Solving and Information Analysis through Active Learning

The vast majority (83.3%) of respondents strongly agree that active learning enhances their ability to analyze information and solve problems. This suggests that most student participants have a positive perception of active learning and believe it is beneficial for their cognitive skills.

A small minority (16.7%) of the respondents also agree that Active learning enhances their abilities, and No participant Disagrees with this Assumption.

Overall, the chart suggests that students generally view active learning as a positive and effective way to improve their cognitive skills.

5- Have you noticed any differences in your retention of information when using active learning versus passive learning methods?

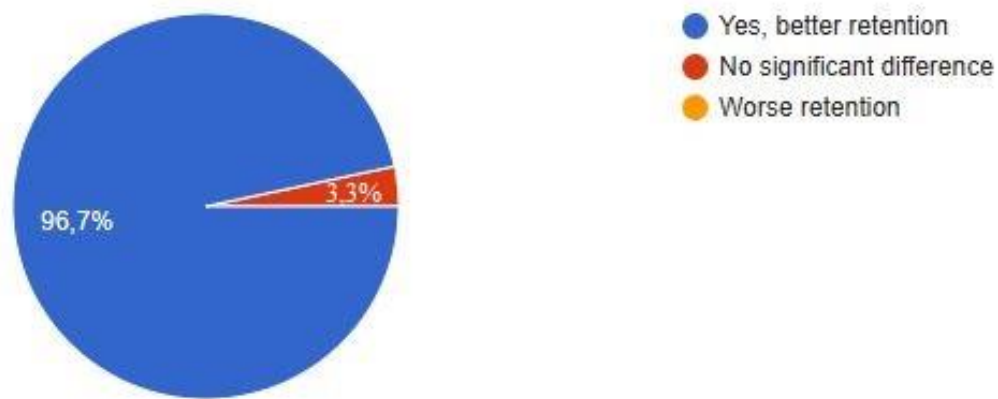


Figure 5 : Differences in the retention of informations.

96.7% of the respondents answered that active learning was significantly or somewhat better for retaining information than traditional lectures. This suggests that a large majority of people believe that active learning is a more effective method for retaining information.

Only 3.3% of the respondents answered that there was no significant difference between active learning and traditional lectures in terms of retaining information. This suggests that very few students find traditional lectures to be as effective as active learning for retaining information.

Overall, the chart suggests that students generally believe that active learning is a more effective way to retain information than traditional lectures.

6-To what extent do you believe active learning promotes collaboration and communication among students?

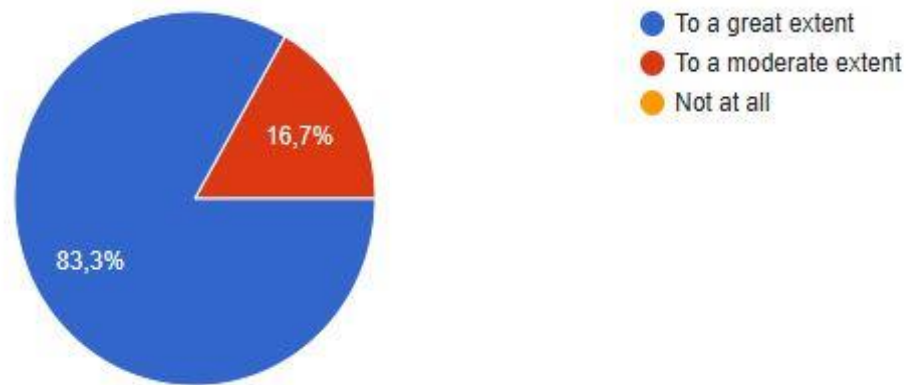


Figure 6 : The Extent to Which Collaboration and Communication are Fostered through Active Learning

83.3% of the respondents answered "To a great extent" indicating that a large majority of the students believe active learning is beneficial for collaboration and communication. This suggests that students see active learning as a valuable tool for fostering interaction and engagement among them.

16.7% of students answered "To a moderate extent", suggesting that a minority of students do not believe active learning is moderately effective for promoting collaboration and communication.

Overall, the pie chart suggests that students generally believe that active learning is a positive and effective way to promote collaboration and communication among students.

7- In your opinion, how does the implementation of active learning influence your motivation and engagement in the learning process?

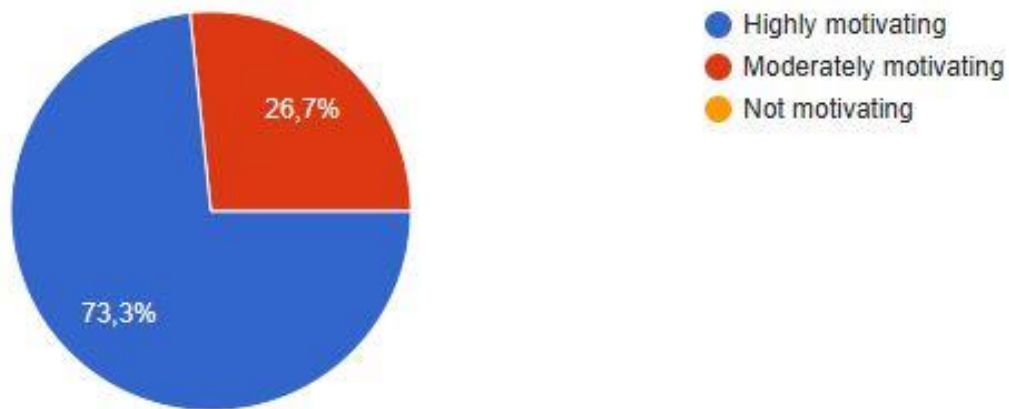


Figure 7 : Active learning and Motivation.

The majority of the respondents (73.3%) believe active learning is highly motivating. This suggests that active learning is generally seen as having a high positive influence on motivation.

A significant minority (26.7%) find active learning to be moderately motivating. This indicates that, for some learners, active learning can be a powerful driver of engagement and interest.

None of the participants believes that active learning is not motivating at all. This suggests that no one finds active learning to have a negative influence on their motivation.

Overall, the chart suggests that active learning can be a positive influence on motivation and engagement for many learners, although the degree of impact may vary.

8- Have you observed any challenges or drawbacks associated with active learning in improving critical thinking?

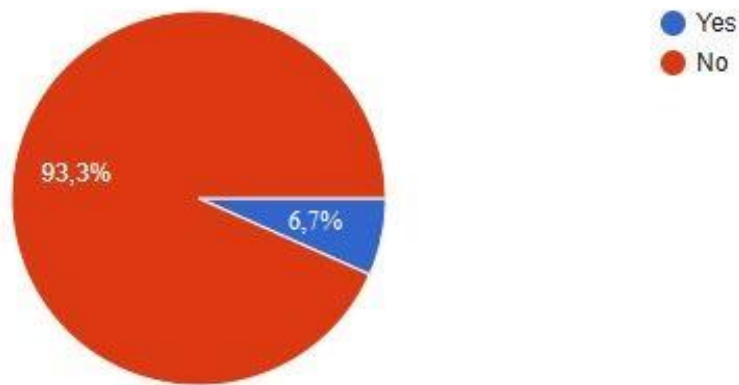


Figure 8 : Challenges Related to Active Learning

The overwhelming majority of the students (93.3%) answered “no”, indicating that they have not observed challenges or drawbacks associated with active learning for critical thinking. Conversely, a small minority (6.7%) answered “yes”, suggesting that some respondents perceive challenges or drawbacks with active learning for critical thinking.

9- How do you think active learning can be effectively integrated into various subjects to enhance critical thinking across disciplines?

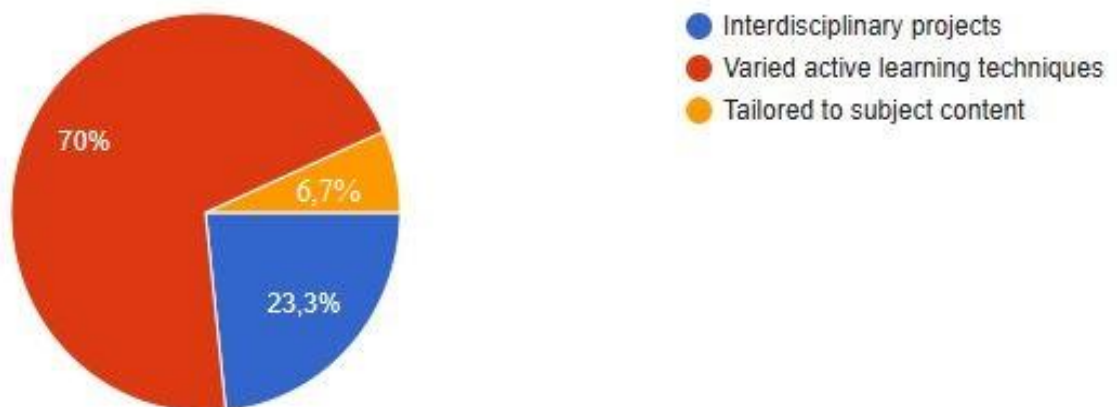


Figure 9 : Integration of critical thinking.

“Varied active learning techniques” (70%) is perceived as the most effective strategy for integrating active learning across disciplines. This suggests that a diverse range of activities, rather than a single approach, is seen as most beneficial for fostering critical thinking in different subjects.

“Interdisciplinary projects” (23,3%) is seen as the second most effective strategy. This highlights the potential of collaborative projects that span multiple disciplines to challenge students to think critically and make connections between different areas of knowledge.

“Tailored to subject content” (6.7%) is perceived as the least effective strategy. This may indicate that simply incorporating any active learning activity, without considering the specific content and learning goals of the subject, is not seen as very effective for developing critical thinking skills.

Overall, the chart suggests that a combination of varied active learning techniques and interdisciplinary projects may be most effective for promoting critical thinking across disciplines.

10-From your perspective, what recommendations would you give to educators to optimize the impact of active learning on students’ critical thinking abilities?

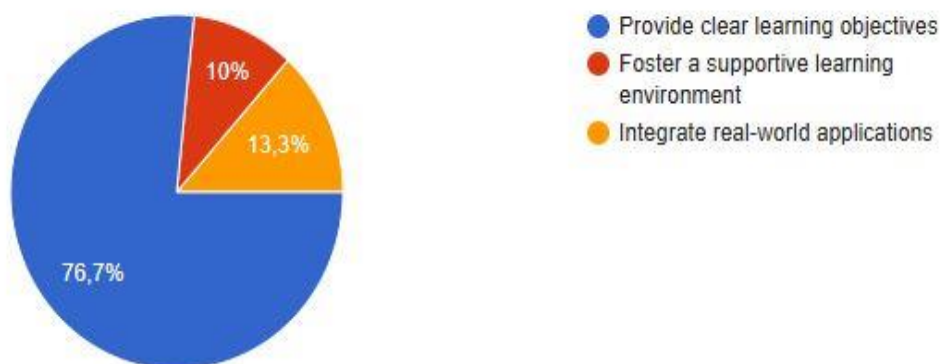


Figure 10 : Optimization of the impact of Active Learning on Critical Thinking.

“Providing clear learning objectives” (76.7%) is seen as the most important recommendation for optimizing the impact of active learning on critical thinking. This suggests that students need to know what they are expected to learn and think about in order to engage effectively in active learning activities.

“Integrating real-world applications” (13,3%) is seen as the second most important recommendation, This suggests that while connecting learning to real-world problems can be beneficial, it may not be essential for all active learning activities.

Fostering a supportive learning environment (10%) is seen as the least important recommendation, but still considered valuable by some students. This highlights the importance of creating a classroom climate where students feel safe to take risks, share their ideas, and learn from each other.

Overall, the results suggest that providing clear learning objectives and Integrating real-world applications are seen as the most important recommendations for optimizing the impact of active learning on students' critical thinking abilities.

3.Results of the Teachers Interviews

The following Interview is the second data collection tool which is used in this work, the interview delves into the dynamic intersection of active learning methodologies and their role in fostering critical thinking skills within the domain of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. Through a series of seven questions (see appendix B), six EFL teachers share their insights, perspectives, and practical experiences regarding the integration of active learning techniques in EFL classrooms. those perspectives are then analyzed. This inquiry seeks to elucidate the multifaceted dimensions of active learning, exploring its conceptual underpinnings, pedagogical implications, implementation techniques, and anticipated challenges. By engaging with diverse

voices within the field of EFL instruction, this exploration provides a comprehensive understanding of how active learning practices can be harnessed to enhance critical thinking abilities among EFL students. Through reflective discourse and pedagogical discourse, these interviews offer valuable guidance and recommendations for EFL teachers seeking to invigorate their instructional practices and cultivate a vibrant culture of active learning within their classrooms.

This Teachers' interview was conducted to obtain information about their experience in teaching English, their opinions, modes of thinking and the problems that students face while learning English as a foreign language.

Question 1: Introduction and Background

The teachers interviewed have diverse backgrounds and teaching experiences in EFL. Teacher 1, with seven years of experience and a specialization in Anglophone literature, highlights a broad teaching experience, including civilization, literature, grammar, and written expression. Teacher 2, with one year of experience, specializes in applied linguistics and has taught discourse analysis and pragmatics. Teacher 3, with three years of experience, also specializes in applied linguistics and teaches grammar, writing skills, and reading comprehension. Teacher 4, with six years of experience, specializes in English literature and civilization and emphasizes innovative teaching methods. Teacher 5, with two years of experience, specializes in didactics and students' psychopedagogy, teaching various courses to different levels. Teacher 6, with one year of experience teaches various EFL subjects. This variety reflects the diverse approaches and experiences within the EFL teaching community, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of active learning.

Question 2: Understanding and Perceptions of Active Learning

The teachers' definitions and perceptions of active learning in EFL contexts reveal its multifaceted nature. Teacher 1 sees active learning as essential for practice and interactive discussion, allowing students to correct errors and improve their English. Teacher 2 views it as a learner-centered pedagogy that promotes autonomy and self-initiated efforts, contrasting its appreciation in developed countries with deficiencies in Algerian contexts. Teacher 3 describes active learning as engaging students through meaningful activities that promote interaction and communication. Teacher 4 emphasizes student participation through discussions, projects, and hands-on activities, leading to deeper understanding and retention. Teacher 5 defines active learning as creating environments that support learner autonomy, with essential teacher guidance. Teacher 6 adds that active learning places the onus on the educator and enhances students' critical thinking skills, boosts retention, promotes motivation, and increases interpersonal skills. These perspectives collectively highlight active learning's emphasis on engagement, autonomy, interaction, and practical application in language learning.

Question 3: Effect on Critical Thinking

The consensus among the teachers is that active learning significantly enhances critical thinking skills. Teacher 1 associates it with error correction and vocabulary acquisition. Teacher 2 believes it motivates learners to take the initiative in searching for information, being selective, and reflecting on their learning. Teacher 3 emphasizes that active learning encourages students to question, analyze, and synthesize information, enhancing critical thinking through group discussions and case studies. Teacher 4 discusses activities like analyzing texts, debating issues, and solving complex problems as ways to foster deep thinking. Teacher 5 highlights task-based learning to stimulate analysis and problem-solving strategies, supporting students' critical thinking. Teacher 6 concurs, noting that active learners engage with diverse perspectives, which encourages them to ask more questions and view topics from distinct viewpoints, thus becoming more effective thinkers. These

insights illustrate active learning's role in promoting higher-order thinking skills, encouraging students to engage deeply with content and develop independent analytical abilities.

Question 4: Implementation Techniques

The implementation techniques vary across teachers, reflecting their diverse backgrounds and teaching contexts. Teacher 1 uses activities, oral presentations, and interactive questioning. Teacher 2 employs social constructivist approaches, especially problem-based learning, though not all lessons can be adapted to this approach. Teacher 3 integrates reading and real-world problem-solving tasks. Teacher 4 uses Socratic questioning and project-based learning. Teacher 5 focuses on task-based and project-based activities to stimulate analysis and problem-solving. Teacher 6 employs several strategies such as creating reflective spaces, teaching reasoning skills, and asking open-ended questions. Despite the differences, all teachers emphasize integrating these techniques into lesson plans to ensure continuous student engagement and critical thinking development. The variety of techniques used highlights the adaptability and creativity required in implementing active learning effectively.

Question 5: Challenges and Solutions

The challenges identified by the teachers highlight common barriers to implementing active learning. Teacher 1 mentions student disinterest, large class sizes, and mother tongue interference. Teacher 2 points to the lack of resources as a significant hindrance. Teacher 3 discusses varying proficiency levels and cultural expectations regarding classroom dynamics. Teacher 4 focuses on ensuring equal engagement in large classes. Teacher 5 notes the lack of technological tools and their impact on active learning effectiveness. Teacher 6 identifies introverted and timid students as a challenge. To address these challenges, the teachers employ various strategies, such as motivational incentives (Teacher 1), adapting activities to available resources (Teacher 2 and Teacher 5), differentiating tasks (Teacher 3 and Teacher 4), creating supportive learning

environments, and encouraging participation from all students (Teacher 6). These responses reflect the practical difficulties faced in EFL contexts and the innovative solutions developed by teachers to overcome them.

Question 6: Student Engagement and Response

The responses regarding student engagement and participation vary but generally indicate positive outcomes when active learning strategies are effectively implemented. Teacher 1 notes initial timidity but uses incentives to increase participation. Teacher 2 observes enthusiastic engagement due to the alignment with different learning styles. Teacher 3 finds that active learning is more stimulating and enjoyable for students. Teacher 4 reports increased engagement through interactive tools and varied activities. Teacher 5 highlights that active learning meets different learning styles and preferences, encouraging participation in a safe environment. Teacher 6 also reports positive responses, using regular presentations and rewards to motivate participation. These insights reflect the adaptive nature of active learning in catering to diverse student needs and fostering an inclusive, engaging classroom atmosphere.

Question 7: Advice and Future Directions

The advice given by the teachers emphasizes the need for patience, persistence, and gradual implementation of active learning strategies. Teacher 1 and Teacher 4 recommend using diverse, simple activities initially and increasing complexity over time. Teacher 2 acknowledges the long-term process of achieving effective active learning implementation. Teacher 3 and Teacher 5 stress the importance of staying updated with educational technologies and methodologies. Teacher 6 strongly recommends implementing active learning for its significant benefits in enhancing students' critical thinking skills. All teachers foresee active learning playing a pivotal role in the future of EFL education, especially with the integration of digital tools and resources. This forward-

looking perspective underscores the evolving nature of EFL teaching and the continuous need for innovation and adaptability.

4. Discussion and Synthesis of the Findings

The interview conducted with six EFL teachers at Mohammed Khaider University reveals valuable insights into the role of active learning methodologies in fostering critical thinking skills in EFL education. The teachers' diverse backgrounds and teaching experiences reflect varied approaches to active learning. Their understanding of active learning highlights its emphasis on engagement, autonomy, interaction, and practical application. All teachers agree that active learning significantly enhances critical thinking by promoting deeper analysis, questioning, and problem-solving skills. Implementation techniques vary, including interactive questioning, project-based learning, and problem-solving tasks, adapted to their specific contexts. Challenges such as student disinterest, large class sizes, lack of resources, and varying proficiency levels are addressed with innovative solutions like motivational incentives, resource adaptation, and differentiated tasks. Overall, teachers report positive student engagement when active learning is used effectively, though they emphasize the need for patience and gradual implementation, they foresee active learning as pivotal in the future of EFL education.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, there is a strong perception among teachers and learners that active learning is beneficial for critical thinking. The majority of the current study respondents indicated that active learning can enhance critical thinking skills, promote collaboration and communication, and improve information retention compared to traditional lecture-based methods.

Varied and engaging active learning techniques seem to be the most effective techniques. This suggests that a diverse approach incorporating different activities, rather than a single method, is crucial for stimulating critical thinking across disciplines.

Providing clear learning objectives and fostering a supportive learning environment are key recommendations. This emphasizes the importance of guiding students towards specific goals and creating a safe space for them to engage in active learning activities.

Overall, the charts and the interview provide encouraging evidence for the potential of active learning to enhance critical thinking skills in English language learners.

General Conclusion and Recommendations

General Conclusion

This dissertation explores the intricate connection between Active Learning and Critical Thinking. The first chapter begins with a comprehensive literature review, laying the groundwork for an understanding of the subject, The second chapter is dedicated to the methodology used in the dissertation , The third chapter unravels empirical findings derived from students' questionnaires and Teacher'interviews

This study assumes a prescriptive role for educational practitioners and policymakers. The implications resonate across the educational landscape, not merely advocating for the recognition of Active Learning as a potent stimulus for critical thinking but also underscoring its intrinsic integration into pedagogical practices. The findings serve as a call to educators, urging them to perceive Active Learning not merely as a pedagogical tool but as a transformative force molding the intellectual landscape of learners.

The consistent demonstration of the positive effect of Active Learning underscores its pivotal role in developing critical thinking skills. As educators and scholars explore the realms of effective education, these insights become invaluable, emphasizing the imperative integration of Active Learning methods to enrich the capabilities of learners. In essence, this study advocates for a pedagogical inclination towards methodologies that actively foster critical thinking in educational settings.

The results also serve as a clarion call to pedagogists, urging them to view Active Learning not just as a teaching tool but as a transformative agent shaping learners' intellectual minds and capacities. The consistent demonstration of Active Learning's positive impact underscores its important role in developing critical thinking skills.

Moreover, the dissertation highlights that the implementation of Active Learning can potentially redefine traditional educational paradigms. By encouraging a more engaged and participatory classroom atmosphere, Active Learning techniques promote an environment where students are not passive recipients of information but active participants in their learning processes. This shift from traditional didactic teaching methods to more dynamic, interactive approaches can significantly enhance students' critical thinking abilities, preparing them for the complexities of real-world problem-solving and decision-making.

The comprehensive literature review in the first chapter situates this study within the broader context of educational theory and practice, providing a robust theoretical framework that underscores the importance of fostering critical thinking through Active Learning. It synthesizes previous research findings, identifying gaps and highlighting the need for empirical investigations into the practical outcomes of Active Learning initiatives.

In the third chapter, the empirical findings derived from the questionnaire and the interviews provide concrete evidence of the positive impact of Active Learning on critical thinking. The data consistently indicate that students exposed to Active Learning methodologies demonstrate improved analytical skills, better problem-solving abilities, and heightened capacity for independent thought. These findings are corroborated by statistical analyses, adding rigor and validity to the study's conclusions.

In conclusion, this dissertation can make a significant contribution to the field of education by elucidating the powerful connection between Active Learning and the development of critical thinking skills. Its findings underscore the necessity of rethinking traditional pedagogical approaches and embracing innovative methods that actively engage students in the learning process. This study advocates for the integration of Active Learning into educational practices.

Recommendations

Researchers are hereby asked to:

- Explore specific active learning Methods in different disciplines to identify the most effective approaches tailored to the subject matter.
- Explore techniques for sustaining the benefits of active learning throughout the educational journey and into professional settings.
- Investigate the role of instructor proficiency in facilitating active learning and the impact of professional development on enhancing pedagogical skills.
- Develop training programs that empower educators to integrate and optimize active learning in diverse educational contexts.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

One of the primary limitations of this dissertation was the constraint imposed by time. The allocated period for conducting the research and compiling the findings was relatively short, which inevitably affected several aspects of the study. Due to this time limitation, it was not feasible to conduct longitudinal studies that could provide deeper insights into the trends and long-term implications of the research topic.

The limited time also affected the breadth of literature review and the extent to which existing theories and models could be critically examined and integrated into the research. While significant efforts were made to cover the most relevant studies, the constraints meant that some valuable literature might not have been incorporated.

Future research endeavors should aim to explore the long-term effects of active learning, delve into discipline-specific nuances, consider cultural influences, and investigate the role of instructor training to further refine and optimize the integration of active learning in diverse educational contexts.

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Appendices

Appendices

Appendix A

Students' Questionnaire

This Questionnaire aims to gather insights into the perceived impact of active learning on critical thinking skills among EFL students. Your responses will contribute to ongoing research seeking to understand the effectiveness of various active learning approaches in fostering critical thinking abilities, your responses will be kept anonymous and will be used for research purposes only. your cooperation is highly appreciated.

1. How often do you engage in active learning , such as group discussions or hands-on activities, in your current courses?

- a) Frequently
- b) Occasionally
- c) Rarely

2. Do you think that Active Learning is more effective than the traditional lecture-based methods of teaching ?

- a) Significantly better
- b) Somewhat better
- c) No significant difference

3. Can you recall a specific instance where an active learning activity positively impacted your critical thinking skills?

- a) Yes

- b) No

4. Do you feel that active learning enhances your ability to analyze information and solve problems?

- a) Strongly agree

- b) Agree

- c) Disagree

5. Have you noticed any differences in your retention of information when using active learning versus passive learning methods?

- a) Yes, better retention

- b) No significant difference

- c) Worse retention

6. To what extent do you believe active learning promotes collaboration and communication among students?

- a) To a great extent

- b) To a moderate extent

- c) Not at all

7. In your opinion, how does the implementation of active learning influence your motivation and engagement in the learning process?

- a) Highly motivating

- b) Moderately motivating

- c) Not motivating

8. Have you observed any challenges or drawbacks associated with active learning in improving critical thinking?

- a) Yes

- b) No

9. How do you think active learning can be effectively integrated into various subjects to enhance critical thinking across disciplines?

- a) Interdisciplinary projects
- b) Varied active learning techniques
- c) Tailored to subject content

10. From your perspective, what recommendations would you give to educators to optimize the impact of active learning on students' critical thinking abilities?

- a) Provide clear learning objectives
- b) Foster a supportive learning environment
- c) Integrate real-world applications

Appendix B

Interview Questions on the Subject of Active Learning and its role at enhancing EFL Students Critical Thinking.

1. Introduction and Background

- Can you introduce yourself and share a bit about your teaching background and experience in EFL?

2. Understanding the Perceptions of Active Learning

- How would you define active learning in the context of EFL instruction, and what are your perceptions of using it in your classroom?

3. Effect on Critical Thinking

- In your opinion, how does active learning influence the development of students' critical thinking skills?

4. Implementation Techniques

- What specific active learning Techniques do you use to promote critical thinking in your EFL classes, and how do you integrate these into your lesson plans?

5. Challenges and Solutions

- What challenges have you encountered when implementing active learning and how do you address these to ensure they are effective?

6. Student Engagement and Response

- How do your students typically respond to active learning activities, and what steps do you take to encourage participation from all students?

7. Advice and Future Directions

- What advice would you give to other EFL teachers who are looking to incorporate more active learning into their teaching, and how do you see the role of active learning evolving in EFL education in the future?

المخلص

تبحث هذه الأطروحة في العلاقة بين التعلم النشط وتعزيز مهارات التفكير النقدي لدى الطلاب. في ميدان التعليم المعاصر، تبرز ضرورة ملحة للخوض في تحليل شامل لفعالية التعلم النشط في تنمية مهارات التفكير النقدي بين الطلاب. توجد حاجة ماسة لتدقيق وفهم التأثير الذي يمارسه على زيادة قدرات التفكير النقدي ضمن البيئات الأكاديمية المتنوعة. على الرغم من التنفيذ الواسع النطاق لمنهجيات التعلم النشط، لا تزال هناك فجوة في فهمنا لمدى فعالية تعزيز مهارات التفكير النقدي عبر البيئات الأكاديمية المختلفة. ولذلك تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى معالجة هذه الفجوة من خلال فحص العلاقة الارتباطية بين التعلم النشط وتعزيز مهارات التفكير النقدي. يهدف البحث إلى التعرف على مدى مساهمة التعلم النشط في تنمية قدرات التفكير النقدي من خلال تحليل بيانات كمية ويسعى إلى تقديم رؤى قيمة حول فعالية التعلم النشط في تعزيز التفكير النقدي في البيئة الأكاديمية. وكعينة اختار الباحث التركيز على 30 طالباً من طلاب السنة الأولى في اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة محمد خيضر. في جمع البيانات، يستخدم الباحث استبياناً يتم تقديمه عبر الإنترنت للطلاب، ويتكون من بعض الأسئلة التي تهدف إلى الحصول على آراء المشاركين. يتم توزيع الاستبيان على متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في السنة الأولى، ثم يتم تحليل البيانات الكمية والنوعية لتوفير نظرة شاملة للعلاقة بين التعلم النشط والتفكير النقدي، بالإضافة العينة الثانية تشمل 6 اساتذة لغة انجليزية تم استخدام مقابلة كأداة ثانية لجمع بيانات البحث و الاجابة على الاسئلة المطروحة سابقا، النتائج اظهره ردود اجابية من قبل الاساتذة حول موضوع التعليم النشط و قدرته على تطوير التفكير النقدي لدى الطلاب.