

## Teaching Critical Thinking in Moroccan Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities

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### Abstract

To respond to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, most universities had to make radical modifications in their systems. In Morocco, the recent modifications made at the level of modules brought some promises as teachers were also involved in decision-making. However, Moroccan students' voices went largely ignored during this process. Therefore, the main aim of this study was to understand students' opinions about one of the most important courses they studied after the last reform: "Critical Thinking". Three research questions were used: What are university students' perceptions and attitudes toward the critical thinking course in Morocco? To what extent are Moroccan students satisfied with the course contents and the teacher's pedagogy? What are the views of Moroccan university students about the critical thinking exam they took at the end of the semester? Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data from 10 respondents. Qualitative content analysis was used through coding and classifying emerging patterns and themes. The results showed that although the students were generally satisfied with the course contents, they bitterly complained about different issues such as the theory-practice gap. The results, also, revealed that implementing any change in higher education without taking into consideration students' needs and interests might be detrimental to the teaching-learning operation. Ultimately, this study offers university teachers of critical thinking a toolkit of skills and competencies for effective teaching.

**Keywords:** critical thinking, effective teaching, logic, student-centeredness

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