

## **Critical Thinking Development: The Case of the English Course in the CPGE Classes in Meknes, Fes and Kenitra**

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### **Abstract**

Critical thinking is generally claimed to be an essential requirement to effective learning and productive living. In a world of rapid change and globalization, skills such as problem solving, decision making and critical thinking are believed to be particularly acute for engineering graduates. While the Moroccan public university has just started to gain interest in critical thinking development (Belghiti, 2012; El Kirat & Belghiti, 2014), the Moroccan engineering education has been fostering such skills for many years now; this has led the English Language Teaching (ELT) guidelines of the Classes Préparatoires aux Grandes Ecoles (CPGE) in Morocco to clearly emphasize the explicit use of critical thinking instruction in the English courses to develop the students' critical thinking and prepare them for the social and professional life. Accordingly, this study has attempted to investigate the extent to which critical thinking skills are important in the English course in engineering preparatory classes. It has also aimed to investigate the teaching and assessment practices used in the English classes to develop the students' critical thinking skills. Adopting the mixed methods approach, the study focused on the CPGE centers in Meknes, Fez, and Kenitra. The findings of the study revealed that both CPGE students and teachers are aware of the importance of critical thinking at the professional, academic, social and personal levels. The findings also revealed that the teaching and assessment of critical thinking is done in an explicit way in the CPGE English classes.

**Keywords:** CPGE, critical thinking instruction, critical thinking skills, engineering education