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ENSC Oral Skill Teachers' Perspectives of and Attitudes towards Critical Thinking Instruction

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Keywords:
Critical thinking,
Oral Skill,
Activities ,
Assessment,
Training.

Abstract:

This study aims to unveil the first year Oral Expression teachers' at l'Ecole Normale Supérieure -Assia Djebar- de Constantine practices, their perceptions of critical thinking, and the role it plays in their teaching. It uses a questionnaire to elicit data to answer two main questions: Are teachers aware of critical thinking skills and their importance in the 21st century? And are they willing to incorporate them in their teaching/evaluation? The study reveals teachers' familiarity with critical thinking and their willingness to undergo training in order to adopt it in their classes.

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 ⃰ Meryem Boulkroun

Introduction

The gist of higher education is "preparing for what comes next after education" (Cohen, 2015, p.222). For that reason, numerous studies have been conducted investigating what employers look for in graduates (O' Halloran, 2001), and findings show that the knowledge and skills explicitly taught in degree courses are "relevant to only about 50 % of vacancies, and in most cases graduate recruits require further training" (Cohen, 2015, p.224). As early as the 1980s, scholars such as McMillan (1987) called for the incorporation of critical thinking skills in undergraduate education. The USA followed the call and it consequently stated among "the eight broad goals for schooling …critical thinking and problem solving" (Bandyopadhyay & Szostek, 2019, p.260). In the 21st century, critical thinking is still "frequently proposed as one of the most important learning outcomes of a university education" (Schendel & Tolmie, 2017, p.673). In Algeria, however, critical thinking did not figure among the aims of education (Organisation of Education and Training Ordinance 1976) till the second reform (Orientation on National Education Act 2008). It is then that 'developing intellectual abilities' of learners (section 4), their 'observation, analysis, reasoning, and problem solving skills' (section 45), and their critical thinking skills (Ministry of Education, n.d.) were cited in the general aims of education. The question that this paper raises is whether teachers are familiar with critical thinking skills and are aware of their importance in the 21st century, and if they are, whether they incorporate/are willing to incorporate them in their teaching and/or evaluation. We hypothesise that if teachers were familiar with critical thinking and had a positive attitude towards it, they would be willing to incorporate it in their teaching. To answer the above mentioned questions, a questionnaire was distributed to all the Oral Expression teachers at the Higher Education College for Teachers (Ecole Normale Supérieure) -Assia Djebar- of Constantine (ENSC) during the academic year 2018/2019. The questions asked aim at unveiling the teachers' classroom practices and explore their perceptions of critical thinking and the role it plays in their teaching, as well as the reasons behind a probable neglect of such an important aspect.

1. Literature Review

1.1 Definition of Critical Thinking

Critical thinking started to be investigated in the USA in the 1970s (Sproule, 1987). Since then, so much ink has been spilled on defining this intriguing concept. As a result, "there is no consensus on a definition of critical thinking" (Fasko, 2003, p.8). Halonen, for instance, defines critical thinking as "…the

propensity and skills to engage in an activity with reflective scepticism focused on deciding what to believe or do" (Halonen, 1995, p. 76). Accordingly, critical thinking entails some traits of the mind such as autonomy, fair-mindedness, courage, confidence in reason, etc. (Paul & Nosich, 1993), skills such as observation, interpretation, analysis, inference, evaluation, problem-solving, decision-making, etc. (Schlecht, 1989; Gambrill & Gibbs, 2009), a critical attitude (Mason, 2008, p. 5), and having an objective translated in a belief held or action achieved at the end. Mason (2008, p.5) adds to these components having substantial knowledge of a particular content whether of concepts in critical thinking, or a particular discipline in which one is then capable of critical thought.

1.2. Importance of Critical Thinking

The importance of critical thinking does not only lie in its benefits in one's education. Critical thinking is beneficial on so many levels: It increases the chances of gaining knowledge and fosters autonomy (Lau, 2011, p.3) by ensuring that one has good reasons to believe or do what one believes in/does (Bowell & Kemp, 2015), preventing one from doing and believing wrong or silly things (Bowell & Kemp, 2015, p.23), helping cultivate emotions, values, and personal relationships (Lau, 2011, p.3), and equipping learners with "the means by which they can learn" (Mason, 2008, p. 13). Furthermore, critical thinking skills are "imperative in any job" and as such they ensure life success (Stobaugh, 2013, p.6). Finally, because critical thinkers are able to understand the world around them and make sound decisions, thinking skills help maintain democratic governments (Stobaugh, 2013, p.4).

1.3. Teaching Critical Thinking

Halpern (2007) asserts that critical thinking can be taught in schools. Her claim is based on the assumption that there are clearly identifiable and definable critical thinking skills that students can be taught to apply. Klein agrees with her and states that "critical thinking seems to be a trainable skill" (Klein, 2011, p.210). The main debate nowadays (Schendel & Tolmie, 2017, p.674) is whether to consider critical thinking as 'a generic skill' or rather as 'discipline-specific'.

Teaching critical thinking, however, "must be planned in order to be maximally effective" (Halpern, 2003, p.53). Lau (2011, p.3) suggests that developing any skill requires learning the theory, deliberate practice, and adopting the right attitudes. Consequently, teachers must teach the theory related to critical thinking, prepare cognitively demanding activities, and provide a good model for students.

First, teaching the theory must begin by adopting a specific framework of critical thinking. A good example would be the Paul-Elder model which describes critical thinking as universal intellectual standards (Clarity, Accuracy, Precision, Relevance, Depth, Breadth, Logic and Fairness) that must be applied to the elements of reasoning (Point of View, Purpose, Question at Issue, Information, Interpretation and Inference, Concepts, Assumptions, and Implications and Consequences) to develop intellectual traits (Intellectual Humility, Intellectual Courage, Intellectual Empathy, Intellectual Autonomy, Intellectual Integrity, Intellectual Perseverance, Confidence in Reason, and Fair-mindedness) (Paul & Elder, 2008). Teaching the theory also entails presenting learners with concepts such as argument, fact, opinion, evidence, fallacy… Second, preparing cognitively demanding activities (Stobaugh, 2013) entails varying the types of activities undertaken in the classroom into controlled, semi-controlled, and free and adopting activities that develop learners' critical thinking such as problem solving tasks (the Foundation for Critical Thinking, 1999, p. vii), information exchange tasks (Byrne & Rix, 1979), decision-making tasks, language games (Gambrill & Gibbs, 2009; Cohen, 2015; Byrne & Rix, 1979), puzzles (Cohen, 2015), and debates/dialogues (Freire, 1970). Finally, providing a good model starts with having a positive attitude towards critical thinking first, and then modelling it to learners in order to push them to adopt it (Brookfield, 2017, p.3).

1.4. Barriers to Teaching Critical Thinking

Critical thinking instruction is important (Appleby, 2006; Dunn et al., 2008,); however, many obstacles face those who wish to actually incorporate it in their courses. Such obstacles have led to resistance from some teachers (Halpern, 2003). This resistance is generally related to many factors, the first of which is time restraints as activities that are high level are more demanding in terms of time and effort to prepare and assess (Stobaugh, 2013, p.60). Another factor is the worry of covering as all the teachers are expected to cover a certain amount of knowledge before the end of the term. Also, the fact that some teachers are not comfortable with critical thinking makes it impossible for them to teach it to others. Additionally, because the outcome of teaching critical thinking is not always visible, teachers avoid it since there is no easy straight forward way to assess it (Halpern, 2003). Finally, some students resent critical thinking and this leads teachers to avoid it in their attempt to look for content that raises learners' motivation (ibid.).

To overcome these barriers, a number of measures can be taken. First, teachers need to understand critical thinking before they teach it to their students

(Halpern, 2003). Second, teachers need to change course format and replace lectures by more learner-centred, debate-based teaching (Stobaugh, 2013; Halpern, 2003). In order to do that, teachers might use activities that foster critical thinking in addition to their usual content. Finally, teachers might use alternative teaching methods like interteaching. Interteaching is a new method of classroom instruction; its roots go back to the work of Skinner and his operant conditioning. In its simplest form, it consists of a mutually probing, mutually informing conversation between two people. Applied in the classroom, it creates a learning atmosphere wherein both learners and teacher continually interact with one another. By so doing, the teacher can reinforce some of the behaviours that s/he hopes to see in leaners (Halpern, 2003, p.155).

1.5. Assessing Critical Thinking

Reed (1998) distinguishes three main approaches to assessing critical thinking skills: commercially available standardised general critical thinking tests (such as the Cornell Critical thinking Test, Level Z (1985), The Ennis-Weir Critical Thinking Essay Test (1985), Judgment Deductive Logic and Assumption Recognition (1971), Logical Reasoning (1955), and the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal (1988) (Stein et al., 2003, appendix)), research or instruction designed assessments, and teaching students to assess their own thinking.

1.6. Benefits of Teaching Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is "a seminal goal which, done well, simultaneously facilitates a rainbow of other ends" (Paul & Nosich, 1993, p.6). "As students learn to think more critically, they become more effective readers, writers, speakers, and listeners" (ibid.). Equipping students with critical thinking skills "enables them to reason effectively, make rational judgments and decisions, and solve problems" (Stobaugh, 2013, p. ix). Critical thinking protects the students from sloppy and conformist thinking (Mulnix, 2012, p.473). It caters for autonomy (Mulnix, 2012, p.473), and liberates students as it renders them self-sufficient (Siegel, 1980, p.17). Critical thinking also increases students' mastery of content because all content is embedded in a system of understanding which must be reasoned through, helps students become more proficient in a variety of modes of thinking, increases self-confidence, and consequently, helps the students develop many skills, abilities, and traits of mind (Paul & Nosich, 1993).

On a larger scale, "people who disdain critical thinking often jump to conclusions, fail to recognize biases, and are unwilling to consider various perspectives" (Stobaugh, 2013, p.2). Critical thinking "ennobles us as human

beings" (Jeevanantham, 2005, p. 121), helps sustain a democratic government (Stobaugh, 2013, p.4), and by so doing makes the world a better place.

2. Methods and Materials

In order to elicit data from the first year oral skill ENSC teachers, regarding their views of and attitudes towards critical thinking incorporation in their courses and their classroom practices, a 23-question questionnaire was designed. The choice of this instrument is motivated by its practicality in terms of time and effort of preparation, in addition to its potentiality to gather large amounts of information that is comparatively straightforward to analyse (Cohen et al., 2000; Dörnyei, 2003). The fact that all respondents are colleagues allowed the researcher to explain the purpose of the study thoroughly, and to answer all the enquiries made by the respondents regarding the wording or format.

2.1. Aims of the Questionnaire

The first aim of the questionnaire is to gain insights into the first year Oral Expression teachers' teaching practices, the content they teach, and the time they spend in each activity. The questionnaire also aims to investigate the teachers' views of critical thinking, their attitudes towards it, how familiar they are with its evaluation, and how they perceive the integration of critical thinking within the Oral Expression course. The questionnaire, therefore, helps find answers to how, when, and what to teach in order to establish a work plan for the integration of critical thinking within the Oral Expression course. The questions this paper attempts to answer are therefore the following:

(1) What are the typical activities in any oral skill course?

(2) Are ENSC first year Oral Expression teachers familiar with critical thinking?

(3) What are the teachers' attitudes towards the incorporation of critical thinking in their course?

(4) What are the possible obstacles to implementing critical thinking in Algeria?

(5) What can be done to overcome these obstacles?

2.2. The Target Population

The questionnaire was handed to all the teachers who teach/have taught first year Oral Expression in the Ecole Normale Supérieure Assia Djebar de Constantine. The return rate of the questionnaire was 100%. The researcher collected answers from eleven first year Oral Expression teachers during the academic year 2018/2019.

2.3. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of 23 questions (appendix A) that are of three types: close-ended (17 questions where the respondents are given various response options to choose from by ticking one or more of them), open-ended (five questions where teachers are allowed room to provide their own answers), and follow-up questions (question 4, 15, and 19); all the follow-up questions are in the following forms: please explain why, or please specify.

The questionnaire starts with a section dedicated to background information. It is made up of four questions meant to elicit data about the teachers' gender, their educational level, years of working experience, and whether teaching the oral skill was part of their training. This last question was followed by an inquiry of the type of training the yes-respondents received.

Section two of the questionnaire deals with teaching practices; it includes questions from five to thirteen. First, respondents were asked whether they teach theoretical aspects of the course such as communication strategies and discussion skills, whether they vary their activities as controlled, semi-controlled, and creative, and whether (and how) they encourage interaction between learners. In order to gain a fairer understanding of their classroom practices, the respondents were required to specify the amount of time they spend on each of the typical oral skill classroom practices. Questions 10, 11, 12, and 13 shift interest to the state of teaching Oral Expression in the ENSC; the respondents were asked whether they coordinate with fellow Oral Expression teachers in the ENSC, and in case they do, whether they have a say in the content they teach, the materials/media they use, and the evaluation criteria they follow.

Section three is the final and most important section in the questionnaire as it tries to unveil the teachers' views of and attitudes towards critical thinking. It goes from question 14 to question 23. Question 14 is concerned with the definition of critical thinking. Question 15 tries to clarify where teachers came to learn about critical thinking. Question 16 investigates the teachers' position vis-à-vis the teachability of critical thinking whereas question 17 explores the teachers' opinions regarding the ways that critical thinking can be taught. Question 18 deals with critical thinking evaluation and question 19 digs into teachers' suggested ways of testing critical thinking. Question 20 addresses the place critical thinking has in the respondents' instructional objectives, and question 21 tries to bring to light whether, according to the teachers, it is important for the students to acquire the criteria to use in the assessment of their own thinking and the thinking of others. Question 22 inquires into the obstacles faced while implementing/trying

to implement critical thinking in language curricula in Algeria. Finally, question 23 is an open-ended question that invites respondents to make recommendations regarding the implementation of critical thinking in the Oral Expression course.

3. Result analysis

Because the sample is rather small, the researcher proceeded with analysing the results herself. The respondents to the teachers' questionnaire are all female full-time university teachers who hold at least a Master's degree (36.36% are doctors). They all have a minimum of five years of oral skill teaching experience and 36.36% of them have been teaching it for more than ten years. This compensates for their lack of formal training in oral skill teaching (table n° 01.). Coordination, for them, represents the backbone of teaching. All first year Oral Expression teachers at the ENSC coordinate with each other. During the coordination meetings, they decide on evaluation criteria and the curriculum or part of it with varying degrees. Contrariwise, 36.36% of the respondents claim that they never discuss and/or decide on the materials and media used and even those who do ascertain that they only do it sometimes (36.36%) or rarely (27.27%). This transpires that, during coordination meetings, the teachers decide on the objectives of the course, the general content, and the evaluation criteria, but never impose the materials and media used.

Table n° 01: Whether teachers received training

	Yes	No	Total
N	03	08	11
%	27.27%	72.72%	100%

As far as the minutes of the oral skill classroom are concerned, most respondents (75.81%) explicitly teach communication strategies and discussion skills. They all affirm that they encourage interaction among learners. They also vary their activities between controlled, semi-controlled, and creative while specifying that presentations, role play, listening comprehension activities, and debates are among the most common activities, in addition to games/riddles, and problem solving tasks (figure n°01).

With respect to critical thinking perception, the definitions provided by the respondents reflect a good understanding of critical thinking that they have gained through personal reading, at school, in conferences/seminars, or while working in the ENSC. As an answer to the teachability of critical thinking, an overwhelming majority responded positively, adding that critical thinking can be taught via integrating activities and tasks that foster critical thinking such as discussions, problem solving activities, information gap activities, and self- and peer-

evaluation. Also, respondents mentioned choosing 'good' topics, incorporating thinking strategies, asking appropriate questions, encouraging alternative opinions, and teaching learners not to take anything for granted. As related to critical thinking assessment, 81.81% of the respondents maintain that critical thinking skills can be measured. Some believe that evaluating critical thinking involves testing the process of thinking (36.36%), some others think it is testing the product of thinking (27.27%), and some believe it is testing both (36.36%).

Figure n°01: The minutes of the classroom
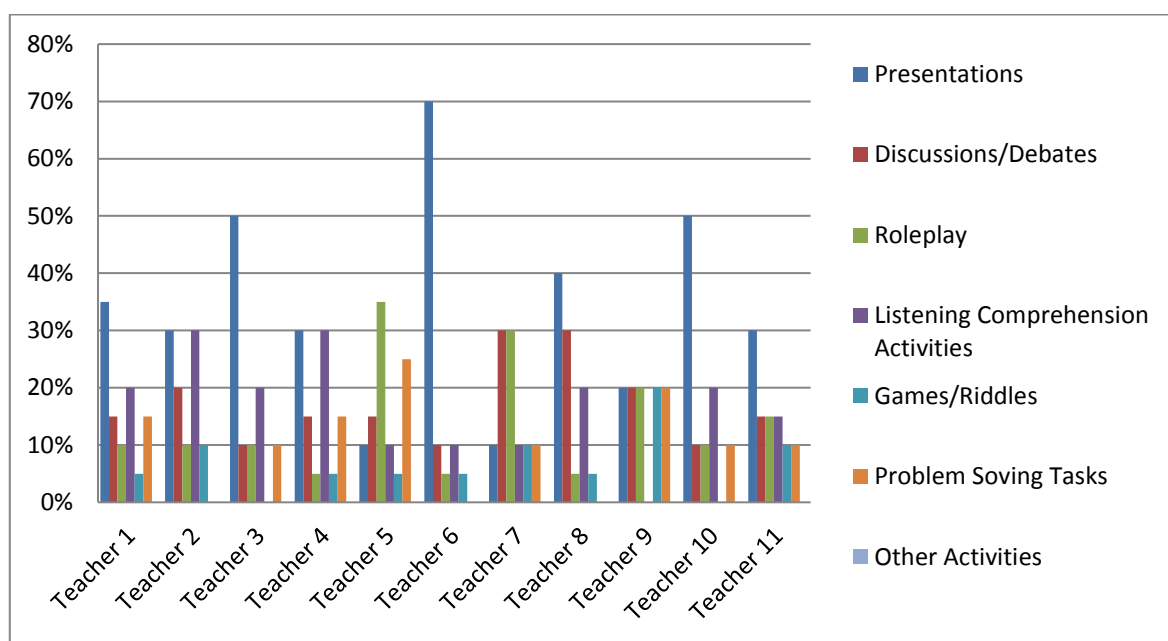
All the respondents consider critical thinking important with varying degrees (table n°02.) and 81.81% of them consider acquiring criteria to assess one's own thinking and the thinking of others of primary importance for students. Despite this positive feedback from the respondents, they highlighted some obstacles related to implementing critical thinking in language curricula in Algeria such as lack of knowledge of critical thinking, lack of motivation of both teachers and learners, teachers' focus on language at the expense of other skills, lack of teacher training and openness to new approaches and methods, in addition to time constraints, assessment constraints, imposing pre-determined objectives, and ignoring learners' needs. To face these obstacles, some first year Oral Expression teachers suggested the incorporation of activities such as debates, and problem solving tasks while others suggested coordination between teachers, in addition to further reading to gain a better understanding of this complex concept that is critical thinking. Teaching critical thinking skills to learners figured among the teachers' suggestions along with involving them more and inciting them to do

further research whenever an opportunity presents itself. One teacher recommended adopting a task-based approach in the teaching of first year oral skill to help develop critical thinking skills.

The data gathered from the teachers' questionnaire display the teachers' tendency to explicitly teach the theoretical aspects related to the oral skill course which transpires their inclination to teach critical thinking theory if they were trained to do so. This means that the implementation of the first step of Lau's model (Lau, 2011) described above, which highlights theory as a first step, is feasible. The variety of classroom activities and the freedom first year Oral Expression teachers relish in deciding on the materials/media used open the door for the integration of critical thinking activities in the oral skill course such as suggested by Stobaugh (2013).

Table n° 02: The importance of critical thinking

	Of primary importance	Of secondary importance	Of little importance
N	05	06	00
%	45.45%	54.54%	00%

This, in turn, ensures the application of the second step of Lau's (2011) model i.e., deliberate practice. All the activities used by teachers figure among the critical thinking activities suggested by scholars such as Cohen (2015), Gambrill and Gibbs (2009), the Foundation for Critical thinking (1999), Byrne and Rix (1979), and Freire (1970). All the teachers need is formal training that enables them to adapt their classroom activities to make them more directed towards developing learners' critical thinking. The teachers' good understanding of critical thinking (appendix B), their positive perception of it, and their approbation of its teachability testify of their readiness to incorporate it in language curricula which marks the third, and final step of Lau's model (2011) i.e., adopting the right attitude. Even the obstacles mentioned by the respondents were followed by recommendations (appendix C) regarding the best way to infuse critical thinking in the Oral Expression course such as adopting the right types of activities, modifying some classroom practices, and providing teacher training.

Conclusion

This paper analyses and interprets the data elicited by the teachers' questionnaire. The answers to the questionnaire show the ENSC first year Oral Expression teachers' classroom practices and their perception of critical thinking,

its teaching, and its evaluation. They show that these teachers are well aware of the importance of critical thinking in today's world and are in favour of integrating it in their curricula provided that they are trained to do so. Because their classroom practices already involve teaching some theoretical aspects such as communicative skills and discussion strategies, requiring Oral Expression teachers to present learners with critical thinking theory would not face resistance. As far as the activities used inside the classroom are concerned, all teachers profess varying their activities and using problem-based activities, role play, games, puzzles, debates/discussion etc. They also suggested changing their practices inside the classroom to make the course more critical-thinking-oriented, which leads to believe that they would welcome any activities that would improve critical thinking skills in learners.

The results of the study, therefore, answer all the questions raised. The typical activities in the Oral Expression course are presentations, discussions/debates, role play, listening comprehension activities, games/riddles, and problem-solving tasks which can, easily, be modified to develop learners' critical thinking. The investigated Oral Expression teachers are familiar with critical thinking since they provide definitions that highlight its main components; they believe that critical thinking is important and hence they have a positive attitude towards implementing it in their course. As to the obstacles related to implementing it in their course, they all relate it to the students' lack of knowledge of critical thinking and their lack of motivation. The teachers' lack of training, creativity, and their over focus on language at the expense of other skills, in addition to time constraints, assessment constraints, having pre-determined objectives, and ignoring learners' needs were also stated as obstacles. To overcome them, some measures can be taken such as incorporating activities like debates, problem solving tasks, coordination between teachers, and further reading to gain a better understanding of this complex concept in order to be able to teach it to students afterwards.

The first year Oral Expression teachers at the ENSC might dedicate two weeks (nine hours) of their class time to presenting learners with the theoretical aspects related to critical thinking such as its components, its concepts, ways to analyse inferences, evaluation of arguments, and thinking fallacies. This could be done at the beginning of the academic year when they teach students the theory related to the oral skill course. During the whole academic year, teachers only need to adapt their activities to make them directed towards developing learners' critical thinking. Finally, because learners tend to be more implicated in the

content in which, they know, they would be assessed, teachers can include some critical thinking assessment either along the academic year (via testing the process of thinking) or at the end of the academic year (via testing the product of thinking). However, in order to be able to do all that, teachers need to undertake training that initiates them to critical thinking, how to teach it via making activities more critical-thinking-oriented, and finally how to assess it.

Despite the efforts deployed, the paper presents some limitations. It focuses on the experience of Oral Expression teachers of the ENSC who benefit from conditions that may not be present in other institutions such as the relatively small number of students per group (an average of 30), a sufficient time frame (4 hours and a half per week), and good media (sophisticated language labs). A more comprehensive and more beneficial research work would expand to a larger population of Oral Expression teachers from different universities in Algeria.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is part of a research study. It is used to gather data about oral skill teachers. Please answer the following questions accurately and sincerely. All your responses will be strictly confidential and anonymous.

Thank you for your time.

Section One: Background Information

1. What is your gender?

a. Male   b. Female

2. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?

a. Bachelor's Degree   b. Master's Degree

c. Doctoral Degree   d. Professor

3. How long have you been teaching oral skill?   .... years

4. Was the teaching of oral skill part of your academic training?

a. Yes   b. No

In case your answer to the previous question is 'yes', please explain how.

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……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………

Section two: Teaching Practices

5. How often do you teach communication strategies and discussion skills in your class?

a. Never   b. Rarely   c. Sometimes   d. Often   e. Always

6. Do you vary your activities as controlled, semi-controlled, and creative?

a. Yes   b. No

7. Do you encourage interaction between your learners?

a. Yes   b. No

8. In case your answer to the previous question is yes, how do you encourage interaction amongst learners?

a. By providing them with a reason to speak (information gap, opinion gap activities…)

b. By changing seating arrangements so that learners are not always talking to the same partner.

c. By teaching communication strategies such as turn taking, follow up phrases, allowing thinking time.

9. What percentage of Oral Skill time is typically spent on each of the following activities? (Please note that the sum should equal 100%).

a. Presentations   ……….%

b. Discussions/Debates   ……….%

c. Role-play   ………..%

d. Listening comprehension activities   ………..%
e. Games/Riddles   ..………..%
f. Problem solving tasks   ………..%
g. Other activities (please specify both the activity and the percentage)
………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
10. In your institution, do Oral Skill teachers coordinate with each other?
a. Yes   b. No
     In case your answer is yes, please answer questions 11, 12, and 13.
Otherwise, please skip to question 14.
11. During coordination meetings, how often do you discuss and decide on the
curriculum or on part of it?
 a. Never   b. Rarely   c. Sometimes   d. Often   e. Always
12. During coordination meetings, how often do you discuss and decide on the
materials and media used?
a. Never   b. Rarely   c. Sometimes   d. Often   e. Always
13. During coordination meetings, how often do you discuss and decide on
evaluation criteria?
a. Never   b. Rarely   c. Sometimes   d. Often   e. Always
Section three: Critical Thinking
14. How would you define critical thinking?
………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………
15. How did you come to learn about critical thinking?
a. At school
b. In conferences/seminars
c. By Personal readings
d. Other means (please specify)
………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………...
16. According to you, can critical thinking be taught?
a. Yes   b. No
17. How do/would you foster critical thinking in your learners?
………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………
18. According to you, can critical thinking be measured?
a. Yes   b. No

19. To test critical thinking, would you rather test:

a. The process of thinking (mental abilities such as analysing problems, evaluating arguments, considering alternate points of view …)?

b. The product of thinking (the change in one's opinions, attitudes, behaviours)?

Please explain why.

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………………………………………………………………………………………

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20. How important is critical thinking to your instructional objectives?

a. Of primary importance

b. Of secondary importance

c. Of little importance

21. In your view, how important is it for students to acquire criteria to use in the assessment of their own thinking and the thinking of others?

a. Of little importance

b. Of secondary importance

c. Of primary importance

22. What are the obstacles to implementing critical thinking in language curricula in Algeria?

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23. Do you have any recommendations regarding the implementation of critical thinking in the Oral Skill course?

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THANK YOU

Appendix B: Teachers' Definitions of Critical Thinking

Respondents	Definitions
R1	It is being able to analyse facts, defend opinions by providing strong arguments. Also, being capable of facing problems and solving them.
R2	The ability to evaluate arguments and analyse and synthesise information and data.
R3	It is acting upon one's learning and using one's mind to solve problem situations.

R4	Critical thinking is a cognitive skill based on evaluating evidence about a particular issue.
R5	The ability to reflect on what is being taught. The analysis and evaluation of any knowledge.
R6	The ability to draw reasonable conclusions after analysing information objectively in order to solve a problem.
R7	Critical thinking is based on raising the awareness of learners from being able to breakdown the elements of a topic, to decide what could be relevant items or irrelevant, and push the learner to be able to combine his/her own knowledge with the relevant items in order to reach a higher level of reasoning.
R8	I would define it as the ability to not take any received information for granted. It is about doubting, analysing, handling one thought/idea from different perspectives, and being open to change one's mind.
R9	To me, critical thinking means being able to think in an orderly manner and find a way to analyse, evaluate a situation, or solve a problem.
R10	Critical thinking is the ability to think critically. In other words, it is thinking with the ability to provide judgements about specific situations. It is also questioning what one hears and not to accept things blindly.
R11	The ability to think (use your brain) in any problematic situation (problem solving, game, answering questions. Thinking is the sense that each individual does not swallow what he is given, but thinks, evaluates, accepts or rejects).

Appendix C: Teachers' Recommendations

Respondents	Recommendations
R1	In my opinion, students should be put face to face with critical situations or problems and asked to find the most suitable solutions (after analysing, discussing..)
R2	No recommendation.
R3	Readings and coordination.
R4	Critical thinking skills can be developed through a number of classroom activities that require discussion of ideas, analysis of information, and synthesis of input and which promote collaborative work between learners.

R5	By teaching students how to analyse, interpret, and evaluate ideas and selecting the proper tasks and activities that incite critical thinking like debates, discussions…
R6	Learning has no boundaries and students should be made aware that they have to search for more information about the topics presented in oral skill sessions, by doing so, they will be accustomed to think critically.
R7	No recommendation.
R8	No recommendation.
R9	This should be incorporated in the form of task-based approach to teaching speaking.
R10	We should think of a lot of activities to include critical thinking in our teaching of oral skill, we need to involve students by asking them to evaluate or assess their thoughts and others' thinking and try to come up with sound judgements about what they hear and read.
R11	Teaching students the techniques and strategies in the mechanisms of thinking. Things have to be taught gradually moving from easy to difficult or simple to complex. Providing students with situations to practice critical thinking simple situations that would pave the way to use it in more complex situations.