**SAMPLE INTERVIEW: INTERNATIONAL EFY STUDENT**

File ID: SS01\_M\_I

File Name: REC033-M-I-Bahrain

**Keys:**

I - Interviewer

SS01 - Interview Participant ID

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Interview:**

I so, how would like to introduce yourself?

**SS01** well, I was born and brought up in the middle-east, born on an island called Bahrain. I live there for around 10 years, and then we moved to Dubai, and we spent 9 years in Dubai before I came here to the Southampton

I so, may I ask your age?

**SS01** 19

I so, what type of education in the past

**SS01** it was like British curriculum when I was in Bahrain I went to British school, and then when we shifted to Dubai I went to an international school and there they did the IB programme, International Baccalaureate a diploma programme

I right. So, this is at an international school?

**SS01** umm

I and this you join at secondary level?

**SS01** grade 6

I so, what is grade 6?

**SS01** that’s the last year of primary

I Last year of primary? Year 6?

**SS01** I was 11 years old. Yeah, the high school starts at year 7

I Um, okay. So, 12 years that will be your secondary school?

**SS01** Yep

I so, this British school, what do you mean by British school? Was it a public …

**SS01** No, no, it’s a private school, but it was a, it had the British curriculum like they did the A Levels ( \_ ) this is the one in Bahrain

I and this is sort of a private school as well? okay, right.

**SS01** and that was in Bahrain

I right. So, how do you find yourself as engineering foundation student, being a student in the foundation year?

**SS01** I mean it’s very different to high school obviously, and the fact that I am so far away from home makes everything a new experience for me, but do you mean just foundation?

I um. You mention it’s different. So, how is it different?

**SS01** well, the cultures are very different, what I’m used to obviously going to an international school then living in Dubai which itself is an international hub. Going from that to less internationalism, if there’s a word? You know one coming here and then adapting to the culture here and learning, I mean the ways that are common here, things like that, and that’s what different. As a student, I’m obviously used to at high school classes of maximum 20, 22 students and then coming in the foundation year, walking to the lecture hall for the first time and surrounded by 200 students, that was all very different

I so, the class organisation itself from a small group to a large

**SS01** yeah, exactly, that was a big change

I and that don’t you think even in Dubai if you enter varsity the population, the organisation of a class will be a huge class as well or are you aware of any kind of …

**SS01** no, I wouldn’t know of the universities in Dubai, but from what I’ve heard from my friends there is 50 may be 55

I umm

**SS01** something like that, this is what I heard from my friends, I wouldn’t know myself, but that doesn’t seem like their lecture halls their classes as large as ours

I umm. So, just now you mentioned about UK being less international

**SS01** not less, not the UK but Southampton itself, majority of my friends were born and brought up here they’re locals all are here as England. Few of my friends are obviously come from abroad but it’s the intensity is not as much as back in Dubai

I is it because you don’t socialise much?

**SS01** no, is just that what I come across? I mean for example in high school I knew people from the (grade?) of around 100 students?

I umm

**SS01** I knew someone from, like all over from every country Papua New Guinea, South America, North America? Where else here is not as much, majority of my friends are British and others are Europeans. A few are like far-east Asia

I umm

**SS01** that’s about it

I so, these friends you’re talking about, are they from foundation year?

**SS01** a mixture of both, foundation as well as friends in my Halls

I okay. How about the learning experience, compared to previous and now? Is there any different or it’s about the same?

**SS01** I feel much more independent

I umm

**SS01** I mean in high school you have teachers constantly checking up on you, where else here you’re given work and it’s up to you to do it or not. No one will come around and asking have you done it. If there’s a deadline you’re just expected to hand in the work. No one will ask you how your progress is going things like they do in high school

I umm

**SS01** so, yeah. I find this different

I so, lack of monitoring?

**SS01** I don’t think is monitoring as much as they trying to help you to be more independent, like just telling you how it is may be in reality. So, it’s not lack of monitoring, it’s just helping you being more independent

I be responsible?

**SS01** be responsible have better time management things like that

I umm. So, sort of being responsible of your own learning, yeah? Right, umm. So, this going to be sort of, I don’t know how you’ll take it, but you can always try. So, what are critical thinking skills for you?

**SS01** [laughs] like, how do you mean?

I so, if you were to explain, okay this is what entails critical thinking skill, so how would you define it, personally as a student now…

**SS01** umm how would I…

I you don’t have to like sort of refer to a scholarly view

**SS01** yeah

I as a student…

**SS01** how I see

I yeah

**SS01** so, what’s expected of me when I’m asked to think critically?

I yes

**SS01** I’d say, well, you get a wide I mean a good idea

I umm

**SS01** of the problem you’re facing

I umm

**SS01** and then, I’d say you break it down into parts and then you look at each part individually

I umm

**SS01** and you go into more depth, and that way you for me that’s critical thinking because you’re going into more depth allowing you to understand the problem a bit more?

I umm

**SS01** therefore, coming out with efficient solution for it. To me that’s critical thinking

I that means a big chunk

**SS01** yeah

I you break it up and then you analyse it in depth?

**SS01** yep

I of each pieces or…?

**SS01** each piece

I and then what?

**SS01** fit it into one piece of chunk again

I umm

**SS01** that’s for me that’s what I would do

I so, what would be the word to describe the whole process, because you’re using lots of word to describe simple things? If you were to, I mean it’s good that means that you’re very clear about what you’re saying?

**SS01** uhm

I but, there are some words which are critical

**SS01** yeah

I which you can use that word and it means that. You’ve just said that, you the big thing you break into pieces, what is the word?

**SS01** ah ( \_ ) divide? (laughs) did I just said? Ah ( \_ )

I yeah, that’s absolutely the good thinking skills, that’s critical skills, but there’re actually some critical words when you use it means that?

**SS01** analyse may be?

I umm, when you put it together?

**SS01** ah ( \_ )

I s…?

**SS01** I’m lost

I so, it’s analyse, you break it into pieces

**SS01** oh, analyse

I and when you put it back is synthesise?

**SS01** oh, synthesise

I so, usually what happen is it’s easy to say critical, what is critical?

**SS01** uhm

I it’s a vague word isn’t it?

**SS01** yeah

I so, you got to have the idea of what it is, for example is actually breaking up big chunk and analysing

**SS01** yeah

I so, synthesise is putting back everything together

**SS01** okay

I so, for you critical is about analysing and synthesising, can I say that?

**SS01** yes

I so, did you have any experience learning this is the third question okay?

**SS01** uhm

I did you have any experience learning critical thinking skills in your previous education? If yes how and if no, why you haven’t had the chance to learn the critical thinking skills you think?

**SS01** you mean like…

I in your previous learning…

**SS01** how?

I yeah, like a module

**SS01** ah!

I like critical skills as a subject…

**SS01** if we were taught what critical thinking is?

I yeah

**SS01** er we weren’t taught as such. It was sort of implemented in all of the subjects we took in high

I umm

**SS01** there wasn’t such okay this is critical thinking and this how you meant to carried it out?

I umm

**SS01** it was just implemented

I umm

**SS01** in the subjects we took, so I guess

I umm, so it was incorporated yeah?

**SS01** yeah, I guess we’re doing without us knowing that we’re doing it

I but you know you’re doing something challenge

**SS01** yeah

I your normal…?

**SS01** we knew that but we didn’t know that it was critical thinking

I umm, give me example of things that you’ve done which…

**SS01** well, I took economics at higher level in high school

I umm

**SS01** as part of my [ IB? ] programme

I umm

**SS01** and that involved lot of critical thinking because you have to take into account various factors and how they affect the problem you’re trying to solve?

I uhm

**SS01** so, that’s how you have to take a problem like I said, break it up analyse it and then synthesise it

I umm, so sort of identifying contributing factors?

**SS01** exactly

I umm

**SS01** and then, their affects in the short terms and long terms things like that

I umm

**SS01** yeah, that’s an example for economics

I umm

**SS01** yeah, we’re doing it without knowing we’re thinking (laughs) critically

I so, it’s more of implicit yeah?

**SS01** yeah

I implicit approach?

**SS01** yeah, okay good

I so how important do you think, this is question number four, how important do you think critical thinking skills are for engineering foundation year as a student?

**SS01** I would say obviously they’re very important for us

I umm

**SS01** umm, as because, I’m trying to say the word correctly

I but, you think it’s important?

**SS01** I do believe it is important because…

I how important, if you were to give a figure, a percentage on it?

**SS01** a percentage?

I yeah

**SS01** I would say in the 90’s probably because…

I very important

**SS01** yeah, very important because foundation year students we haven’t sort of you would say being introduce to our actual degree. You know next year is when we actually start our proper degree, so critical thinking will obviously help us to understand how we’re meant to approach and solve problems in which we’ll face next year

I uhm

**SS01** for foundation engineering student critical thinking is very important as it preps us for next year

I as a preparation, yeah? Right, next we’re going to move on to critical thinking skills specifically for engineering because critical skills they’re very generic where everybody use it or chose not to use it?

**SS01** uhm

I and there’s also critical skills very subject-specific, we have engineering, medical, law, business like just now you mentioned about economics?

**SS01** yeah

I so, people use critical skills in a different context

**SS01** uhm

I so, how a humanities student approach a task could be different from how an engineering student approach the same task?

**SS01** yeah

I so, now the questions will be directly relevant to engineering critical thinking skills, okay? Right, so, in which semester, one or two do you think you had more opportunity to learn and practise critical thinking skills, is it semester one, two, both or none?

**SS01** for me personally, I would say semester two

I umm

**SS01** because semester one is just me adapting to university life?

I umm

**SS01** so, maybe I was probably doing things without realising [how?] it was?

I umm

**SS01** where else in semester two was I had settled in in a way. I knew what to do and when to do things like that, that’s when I had the chance

I so, is it because in semester two, you’ve the knowledge already, the content?

**SS01** yeah

I and now you’ve to challenge the theory, or something?

**SS01** yeah, exactly, err yeah, in semester two I did for example more reading into our topics which in sort of what helped me solve the problems in better ways. Where else in semester one I would skim and then try attempt the problems and then I find them very difficult, so yeah, I would say semester two definitely

I so, you were adopting easy way in semester one?

**SS01** pardon?

I you were adopting easy way which didn’t work is it?

**SS01** (laughs)

I right, okay. So, you realised semester two was more challenging which actually challenge your thinking than semester one?

**SS01** yeah, personally yes

I and semester one is more of a adapting to university life, yeah?

**SS01** yes, and not really, well I mean focusing on work but not as much as semester two

I umm, okay right. So, in your opinion which module or subject in the engineering foundation year provided you more opportunity to learn and practise critical thinking skills and why this module is better than the other, if there’s one?

**SS01** err [ \_ ]

I of course, all the modules have something going…

**SS01** yeah

I but, there must be some modules which have something more than the other?

**SS01** for me it was Mechanical Science, because the thing about Mechanical Science is that you have a set of formulas

I uhm

**SS01** and from those formulas you can drive new formulas, and these formulas can be applied to various problems, is not like you have one formula it can only be applied to this topic, you can apply to different sub-topics

I umm

**SS01** so, that’s why for me Mechanical Science helped me to think like you can say outside the box more critically, because you’ll look at a problem, you would, I would see what I’m given, this is where I divided to analyse

I umm

**SS01** I see what I’m given, what I need to find and then what formulas I can use to find that

I umm

**SS01** sometimes I would find that if I need to find for example X, I would need to first find A B C than I would get X

I umm

**SS01** with that, this is why I always split up my problems individually and then once I have the (variables?), the components I need I would synthesise

I umm

**SS01** and then I find the main fact that I need to see

I umm

**SS01** so for me Mechanical Science was where it helped me to think critically more than the other

I umm, this practice was it in the class or was it the practice on the Blackboard?

**SS01** it was, in class we were given a brief understanding of it and then when the worksheet came out…

I understanding of what?

**SS01** of any topics of what we’re learning

I content?

**SS01** yes, and then when the work sheets came out, we attempted the worksheets that’s where we found that you have to use, and the workshops helped a lot because there were some questions just, we found them difficult and then when we went to workshops

I umm

**SS01** we saw how the professors solved it and then we’re okay it’s not just a one step process you have to do various things

I umm

**SS01** and that helped a lot because we understood that you won’t find the answer immediately. You have to do, you have to play around with the formulas first

I right, okay. Now, besides the lectures every students in the foundation year is given opportunity to use the support classes?

**SS01** yes

I and, just now you mentioned about workshop sessions as well, so have you attended the workshops or support classes? If not why or if yes, do these workshop sessions encourage you to be more critical?

**SS01** I’ve attended almost all the workshops

I uhm

**SS01** because I’ve found them more helpful, where else the support classes maybe not so much, maybe up to the first month of the year

I uhm

**SS01** because everything I needed to know I would find it in the workshops

I uhm

**SS01** so, I haven’t really attended many support sessions. I found the workshops were more helpful

I so, why is it the support classes were not helpful?

**SS01** it wasn’t that it was not that helpful, many of my friends found them very helpful. It was just that what I needed to understand I got from the workshops

I umm

**SS01** so, I didn’t need to attend the support group

I so because of the workshops sort of compensated to the…

**SS01** exactly, and the workshops I found them, there were two umm [ \_ ]

I PGTA?

**SS01** PGTAs there and they can get around to you faster

I umm, so, usually you know each PGTA how many what’s the ratio like in workshop how many of you usually at a time?

**SS01** it really depends on the module

I umm, generally?

**SS01** for Mechanical Science it was around ten of us ten, eleven

I umm

**SS01** and we had two PGTAs, which is,

I okay

**SS01** obviously not everyone needs help in the workshops, so the ratio to the people that needed help to PGTA was better

I umm, okay. So, this questions will be based on PGTA. Now, apart from support classes students also provided with PGTA assistance?

**SS01** yeah

I so, what are their roles? Do they provide any supports or opportunities to practise your critical skills?

**SS01** the PGTAs themselves?

I umm

**SS01** they do when we need assistance, they do talk through the procedures and explain as well as give us the chance to ask questions of why they’re carrying out certain steps. So yes, I’d say the PGTAs are quite helpful

I so, they also help you to answer the question ‘why’?

**SS01** yeah

I umm

**SS01** why they’re doing certain things

I so, they also like, once you’re given the opportunities to respond to those questions they’re already encouraging you to be critical isn’t it?

**SS01** yes

I umm

**SS01** because when you ask why they give you first obviously the background and then how that applies to the problem which helps you to think that way for the following problems?

I umm

**SS01** so yes, in a way you’re thinking, they do help you think

I is there any specific workshop that you incline to say that you had more from that particular workshop?

**SS01** again for me it would be Mechanical Science

I okay

**SS01** that really help me to think critically because of the, yeah

I okay, so as a student in the foundation year in what aspect do you think that you had more opportunities to learn or practice critical skills, like being a student in the foundation year you have lectures to attend, your workshops, support classes, you do course works individually or group work

**SS01** uhm

I like the computer application?

**SS01** yeah

I you also have personal tasks like doing the worksheets for every week sometimes, ‘EE’ you have that don’t you?

**SS01** uhm

I and then attending workshops and other, so you have all these choices which one you think, sort of like talking about independent learning and trying to solve problems by yourself, which one actually gave you more opportunities to practise your skills?

**SS01** my critical thinking?

I umm

**SS01** it would for me would be the worksheets that we got every week

I umm

**SS01** the lecturers do help they give you a brief understanding, the lecture notes were good as well, but to in order to actually apply what we’ve learnt

I umm

**SS01** I’d say for me is the worksheets definitely

I umm, so, you benefitted more on doing the worksheets than…

**SS01** yeah, in order to think critically

I okay right, thank you

**SS01** is that it?

I yes, thank you very much for participating