**SAMPLE INTERVIEW: INTERNATIONAL EFY STUDENT**

File ID: SS01\_M\_I

File Name: Voice\_074-M-I-Bahrain

Date: 10th June 2015

**Keys:**

I - Interviewer

SS01 - Interview Participant ID

MS - Mechanical Science module

EE - Electricity and Electronics module

EP - Engineering Principle Module

I so, how was the exam?

**SS01** I mean some were easier than others?

I uhm

**SS01** but like one was harder than I expected (laughs), but on the whole I think they’re alright

I yeah? So, is it something surprising or you already expected this is how you’ll be tested?

**SS01** I mean the exam this year was a bit different to all the test papers that I had done

I uhm

**SS01** in order to revise for them so, because for example if you’re doing past papers up to 2006 you sort of get an idea of what types of questions will for Section A and what types for Section B. This year the questions were different to the exams we did, we were told it will be different, but we weren’t expecting it to be like that different

I umm, so when were you told about the changes, semester two, semester one or towards…

**SS01** it was in semester one

I okay. So, did they give examples of question?

**SS01** oh! Each module has its specimen paper to allow us to see the format and how the questions will be asked

I uhm

**SS01** and they were uploaded on Blackboard

I right, it was slightly different from past year questions, yeah?

**SS01** yeah

I umm, so when you were looking at the questions, could be any modules, so, how many questions do you think were not straight forward? They were actually encouraging you to be more critical in approaching the questions?

**SS01** [ \_ ] sorry, I lost the questions (laughs)

I (laughs) okay, looking through all the questions, since you’ve already attempted the questions, there might be some questions which you think you oh! I could it straight away

**SS01** yeah, when I’m looking at my actual exam? okay

I yeah, the one you just did

**SS01** alright

I and there might be some questions were, you think oh! This is beyond me, this question is actually asking me to be more critical

**SS01** yeah

I when approaching the questions?

**SS01** yeah

I so, in comparison to whatever you’ve seen, which questions, I mean how many questions do you think asking you, like challenging your thinking?

**SS01** for me it was, maybe up to three questions that I’ve in general

I umm

**SS01** for each modules that I found I’ve to spend more time on than I would have

I umm

**SS01** they’re other questions, umm some questions were fairly easy and straight forward to me, I don’t need that much of time on them, others were the general that I came across in the past papers

I umm

**SS01** so I knew how to approach them, so a few, two or three were new and I just had to think about it because it was the first time I was seeing that sort of a question

I umm

**SS01** I hadn’t come across it in any past papers that I’ve done

I so, these three questions that you’ve mentioned, what’s the distribution of marks like? Is it a Part B question…

**SS01** most of them were in Section A, so they carried five marks

I umm, no, the difficult ones, the ones you think…

**SS01** yeah, they were in Section A for some modules

I umm, and what are the modules

**SS01** there’s one in Maths

I umm

**SS01** MS I find fairly easy through out, so there were none in MS, EP there was one in Section B which carried fifteen marks and in EE I think there was two in Section A something like that

I umm, so EE had more questions which challenge your thinking?

**SS01** yeah

I so these questions which sort of encourage you to be more critical in approaching how you answer the questions

**SS01** yeah

I what’s the marks like, is it eight or fifteen marks, twenty…

**SS01** fifteen marks or five marks

I yeah

**SS01** in the case of Maths ten marks

I okay. so, even the five marks questions was difficult?

**SS01** yes, because it was like a new type, maybe it was asking for the same thing but the way it was phrased

I umm

**SS01** may have put be me off a bit

I right, the wording?

**SS01** yeah

I how the questions were worded, so is it because it was long or is it some words…

**SS01** for Section B yeah, (presently?) when I come across a question with lot like two paragraphs

I umm

**SS01** before even I start I’m immediately like not interested in it because I have to read a lot

I umm

**SS01** I prefer one to two sentences, I don’t mind the difficulties

I umm

**SS01** I just prefer shorter sentences and less words

I so, can you give example of questions with longer texts?

**SS01** EP, Engineering Principles, they usually have around paragraph and a paragraph and a half in the Section B questions

I okay. So, this is the third question, do you think having critical thinking skills, I mean some essential critical skills

**SS01** yes

I would have helped you answer the questions better?

**SS01** I mean in all the exams I was caring out critical thinking whether I knew it or not is a different story, but that’s how I’ve approached the questions and like I mentioned for MS I used lot of critical thinking in order to approach the question

I umm

**SS01** definitely critical thinking I believe is necessary to attempt the questions in every modules

I so, it really helps then yeah?

**SS01** yeah [ \_ ] maybe it would have helped more if we were told explicitly that what critical thinking is and how to apply it and stuff because I believe I was applying critical thinking without knowing that I was doing so, and it still helped maybe it would have been more efficient if we had been taught about it and told how to apply it

I umm

**SS01** in each module

I so, you personally feel that critical skills need to be taught explicitly?

**SS01** yeah

I why?

**SS01** so that it’s like the students can be aware of what kind of thinking to be applied to what kind of question. You can’t approach every question with the same

I umm

**SS01** mind set but, now like we were to do it like I said without we knowing, but if we were explicitly told than it would make, it firstly of all I believe it would have safe time

I umm

**SS01** because we’ll be in the correct mind set relative to the questions

I umm

**SS01** and it would be more help for us because we would know what the thinking process we have to go through in order to attempt the question

I umm, critical skills also involve time management

**SS01** right, I don’t know that (laughs)

I yeah, that means like quick thinking, making decision at the right time

**SS01** okay

I so rather than sort of pondering about it you got to make your decision

**SS01** yeah

I because you, during exam conditions you’re sort of working against the time

**SS01** yeah

I yeah? So to make the quick decision is also a part kind of critical thinking, so maybe that’s, they sort of implicitly testing as well?

**SS01** exactly, like as you said it’s implicit you know, umm, yeah if we’re told about it and how to apply it, it would have been helpful

I umm, okay. So, looking at the questions again, this is the fourth question okay? Is there any questions require critical skills which has not been taught or introduced in the class or during lectures?

**SS01** the thing is that I don’t remember being taught critical thinking in the year that we just had

I umm

**SS01** so maybe questions for example in Electricity and Electronics where you have to visualise what is actually happening in the circuits and in the EP, Engineering Principles where again you have to visualise what’s actually happening. Maybe we were supposed to apply certain ways of critical thinking but we didn’t know

I umm

**SS01** that we had to apply it, we were just attempting the questions based on you could say experience from the past papers

I umm, so doing the practice helped you more than what you’re getting in the class?

**SS01** yep, the lectures, I personally found the lectures it’s just a brief introduction of the topic

I umm

**SS01** what helped me the most were the online notes and the worksheets

I umm

**SS01** and obviously towards the exam the past year papers are available

I umm, so the worksheets were helpful as well? So, even then you’ve tried some past year questions, you tried the worksheets

**SS01** uhm

I is there any questions which is like is so different from what you’ve ever come across?

**SS01** in the exams that we’ve just did?

I yes, is there any questions?

**SS01** yeah, there were a few like again in EE there were some that it was the first time I was seeing it because I did past papers up till 2006, 2007?

I umm

**SS01** 2013 and 2014 and there were one or two questions in the EE, that’s just an example that I’m using

I uhm

**SS01** that weren’t come up one in all the papers that I had done

I umm

**SS01** so it sort of caught us off guard

I what was it about?

**SS01** it was about a ‘galvanometer’ basically the way it was phrased I needn’t see it before

I it’s the wording?

**SS01** I mean the whole question itself I’ve not seen it before

I umm, how about the topic?

**SS01** the topic that comes under that obviously pooped up a few times, but that specific device that they ask for the ‘galvanometer’

I umm

**SS01** and a way you can say that the question was phrased I was mixed up because are we supposed to draw one, draw a diagram as part of my answer, explain what is does or things like that. So, it was the first time I was seeing that sort of question

I umm

**SS01** and I can say from my friends like a few of my friends don’t even know what a ‘galvanometer’ look like

I umm

**SS01** so it just tells you that how frequent that question came in the past exams

I umm, so you have any practice on this in the worksheets?

**SS01** not that I can remember that, but the online notes, yes it does explain what is

I how about during lectures, did you have lectures on this

**SS01** yes, it was in semester one, very early

I semester one?

**SS01** umm

I I think even for MS, most of the modules you only have one exam isn’t it?

**SS01** yeah, only Maths has Part A and Part B

I yeah, so it looks like you’ve to go back and…

**SS01** yeah, it’s a whole year works

I umm

**SS01** obviously if you’re doing past papers you get an idea what comes up the most

I umm

**SS01** so you focus on that topic

I umm

**SS01** and like I said my friends don’t even know what a ‘galvanometer’ look like some of them

I umm

**SS01** so, obviously we wouldn’t focus on that part of the module when you’re doing past papers you get an idea of what’s most likely to come out

I umm, so, what was the allocation of marks like for this question?

**SS01** I believe it was ten, I’m not, it was a Section A

I Section A?

**SS01** yeah, it was Section A

I usually Section A would be easier than Section B isn’t it?

**SS01** but, it was the first question of the exam (laughs)

I oh!

**SS01** (laughs) like as you first open the papers we read it and then we were put off

I oh no! yeah, the first question should be easy isn’t it?

**SS01** yeah

I to give you the confidence?

**SS01** yeah, and they were in the past papers but

I this is, I mean there’s sort of, there’s a recurring pattern in how

**SS01** yeah

I from most of the students that I’ve interviewed responded, they said the first question itself was difficult

**SS01** yeah

I was for all the modules or just only for EE?

**SS01** just for EE (laughs) all other modules we knew, okay that is what we suppose to expect

I umm

**SS01** for EE was

I the first question, yeah

**SS01** put everyone off, many skipped that

I umm right. So, we talked about how many questions have direct relevance to critical skills been tested and if you’ve acquired the skills whether would helped you?

**SS01** yeah

I and now, if you actually have acquired some of the basic or essential critical skills do you think it would have helped you to really score to really do well in the exam

**SS01** if we were taught about them and how to use them, would it help me?

I no, if you already acquired those skills

**SS01** would it help me

I to score not just to pass to really do well

**SS01** to score high, definitely. First, the time management, it would have safe time, because we would know how to approach the questions, secondly we would know what type of mind set to be in when we’re answering those questions

I umm

**SS01** cause, currently what I felt was you answered one question and then you had to at least spend thirty seconds looking at the second question and seeing how would you approach it recalling all the things related to it

I umm

**SS01** with the critical thinking acquired

I umm

**SS01** all these might have been done much quicker

I umm, coming back to time management, yeah?

**SS01** yeah, and also confidence, we feel confident yes that we’re applying and once we’re done, I mean you can acquire and answer in the exam but there’s still that feeling that is it even the right answer, that did I approach the question correctly

I umm

**SS01** because it make sense to us that doesn’t mean it’s right

I umm

**SS01** if we’re taught this critical way of thinking

I umm

**SS01** we at least have that assurance that I’ve applied the correct type of critical thinking and approached it correctly

I umm

**SS01** and that confidence really helps you in an exam

I so, you sort of a bit still doubtful about that, umm?

**SS01** exactly

I right. so, just now you mentioned about some questions being simple some questions being difficult, yeah? So, when you say a question is simple what makes it simple for you?

**SS01** we’ve come across it before and pass…

I no

**SS01** in the exam?

I yeah

**SS01** what makes it simple is that you come across that types of question before

I umm

**SS01** we know how to solve it

I um

**SS01** if the question has any hidden tricks things like that that we easily miss out, we recall those tricks, for example in MS you’ve to be very careful that you’re using, when you’ve (vectors?), you always make them in two components

I umm

**SS01** so things like that, umm that’s what make it simple basically

I so familiar, what do you mean by familiar? That means you’ve seen it before?

**SS01** yeah, a type obviously not the same question before

I yeah, so how do make things familiar for you

**SS01** for me if I’ve done it before, because that form type of question did not only comes out once in the pass papers that I did, but came up a few times

I so, past year exam practice, yeah?

**SS01** yeah

I so, the more you practise on the topic or the question when it’s tested in a different way you’re able to…

**SS01** yeah

I so, what’s make it difficult then?

**SS01** the wording can make it difficult sometimes as well as I said long paragraphs can put me off the question

I long text?

**SS01** yeah, long text and if I haven’t come across it before like the ‘galvanometer’ question

I umm, so how about skills, critical thinking skills

**SS01** like, what do you mean?

I like a question could be simple if you already know how to apply the skills

**SS01** yep

I or a question could be difficult if don’t know how to apply the skills?

**SS01** yeah

I So does critical come into play as well?

**SS01** in a way it does, but I think practise is what helps me more, because I’ve done that question before

I umm

**SS01** the critical part comes in when I have to take in the new information

I umm

**SS01** and know, what I already know and apply it to the new question. That’s where little bit of critical thinking, because not every questions going to be the same, there’s going to be a little bit of twist in them that’s where the critical thinking comes into play, but majority of it’s familiarisation

I umm, okay right. So, how about, coming to difficult questions, how about topics if the topic is not relevant yeah is the galvanometer?

**SS01** yes

I so they test on you on topics that you’re not…

**SS01** that I haven’t been tested before or in the past papers

I umm, yeah ok. Now, when you look at all the modules which questions you think, which module had more critical thinking questions, do you think?

**SS01** it’s not difficult, critical thinking?

I it depends, because for some critical itself can be difficult

**SS01** okay

I and for some if they’re already been exposed those skills that’s easy, so…

**SS01** in the exam that we did, the module that I found myself thinking the most critically it would be EP. I found EP, where I had to like you say critically, but the questions and see what’s happening, things like that

I umm

**SS01** and then, there would come EE, but EE was more difficult than it was more like panicking and rushing and having time to go through the critical thinking process (laughs)

I so, when you mentioned EP give me, and you give example?

**SS01** I mean, heat transfers

I umm

**SS01** when heat goes from one place to the other you have to see what components it goes, not component but how the heat is transferred from one place to the other, and if there would be any loses and where about along the stage there would be the loses

I umm

**SS01** there is, whether the question says it’s the ideal system there’s aren’t any, things like that basically, where you have to sit down and say that what happens for example, another example is converting ice to steam

I umm

**SS01** it has the whole stage, so that’s where the critical skills comes in to actually see what’s happening

I umm

**SS01** in each stage

I umm

**SS01** calculate each stage like we said the last time and synthesise the whole thing

I umm, is it something to do with logical order?

**SS01** sometimes, for EP

I because logical order is more on Maths and MS?

**SS01** yeah, the example I’ve just give you converting ice to steam, that’s all logical order, umm yeah

I so, you feel EP has more critical questions

**SS01** for the exams we did, yeah

I so, EP is more critical and EE

**SS01** (laughs)

I you classified as difficult, and how about MS?

**SS01** I found MS is fairly easy

I why easy?

**SS01** well lots of practice put into it and the questions which came up was similar to the questions that we’ve come across before

I umm

**SS01** with obviously with some change in the ways they were put across

I umm

**SS01** but still, I found that MS was easy because the things they teach in MS I’ve always been better at them, things like electricity, heat transfers

I umm

**SS01** I’ve always been good at the (kinematics?) and the mechanics questions

I umm

**SS01** that’s why I found MS fairly easy

I umm, how about Maths?

**SS01** Maths, was the next easiest one for me

I so usually MS and the Maths they usually go together isn’t?

**SS01** yes

I umm, okay. You’ve lots of worksheets on the Blackboard for every module, do you have it for every module?

**SS01** yes

I okay, so referring to the worksheets, that you’ve done looking at the questions is there any similarities to the exam questions or was it the worksheets were more difficult than the exams, or much easier than exams ir, if they complemented each other very well?

**SS01** for EE the exam was more difficult than the worksheets

I EE?

**SS01** yes

I okay

**SS01** for the other three modules, for MS worksheets tested you more, than the exam did

I EE the worksheets were easy? And then?

**SS01** than the exam

I okay

**SS01** for Maths, they sort of complemented each other

I umm

**SS01** and EP it was same case, I mean some worksheets were easier, and some more difficult

I so EP was like…

**SS01** almost complementing each other almost

I umm okay, so doing the worksheet you think it really helped you…

**SS01** it really help, yeah.

I So, when you look at the wordings in the questions could be any modules, so do you read it as a whole or do you look for key words?

**SS01** first as a whole then maybe that as a whole maybe twice

I umm

**SS01** depending like for EP when they’re usually longer I read them twice

I umm

**SS01** and then I go and I start, you can say dissecting the questions

I umm

**SS01** noting down what I know and what I have to find out and how I’m going to find it

I umm

**SS01** it depends on the module really

I so, the key words, can you give me some of the key words which you would look for?

**SS01** ‘prove’, umm ‘show’

I umm

**SS01** ‘calculate’, ‘determine’, ‘draw’, sometimes because there’s a few times that I’ve forgotten to draw the diagrams while doing worksheets

I umm

**SS01** and I looked back, and I realised as they want graph as well so ‘draw’, and yeah, those are the usually the ones

I okay, so the words ‘calculate’, ‘prove’, ‘show’, ‘determine’ and ‘draw’, based on these five words which words require critical skills?

**SS01** ‘prove’, because you need to get the outcome that stated in the question

I umm

**SS01** ah, graphs I use to, no not graphs, umm ‘determine’ and ‘calculate’

I so, what do you understand by the word ‘determine’?

**SS01** to identify, to find out the solution

I uhm

**SS01** which is why you need to think critically because you need to know how you gonna approach the question

I umm

**SS01** in order to get the required result, umm…

I so, when you talk about ‘determine’, actually what it is asking you to do? Okay the first is to identify, because one word has a lot of task involved…

**SS01** yeah

I yeah, so when you talk about ‘determine’ you say you identify, and then what do you do?

**SS01** you work with that to so the end result does ‘determine’ what the questions asking you to find out

I umm

**SS01** so you have identify what the problem is, see what you’re going to apply to it and then just calculate the final outcome

I so, when you decide which one to apply, what’s that involve? Let’s say you have three choices to choose from

**SS01** yeah

I yeah, so you got to choose one

**SS01** umm, the one that takes the least…

I for you to choose, you have to look at A, B, C but you…

**SS01** the three paths that I can take to the same solutions

I yeah

**SS01** which one…

I yeah

**SS01** the one requires the least amount of time

I umm

**SS01** I mean you can use different formulas to get the same answer

I umm, but how do you decide that?

**SS01** I guess it just that, I just play it out in my head that once I get this and I’m able to use that answer and get that. So, for me I just choose the shortest path to the question because of the time constraints, that’s how I choose which path to take

I umm

**SS01** and other than that, if I see that one doesn’t work then I move on to the next one

I umm

**SS01** and see if that applies

I umm, so that’s making decision?

**SS01** yeah

I right, anything else?

**SS01** umm (laughs)

I so, when you come across a question you think you don’t want to waste your time there, you want to move on, why do you make that decision?

**SS01** no, not move on from the question, I decide not to use one way of finding the solutions, I yeah, I don’t move on from the question. It’s the, like I’m at a question, I have three different ways I can use it to solve it. When I realise that one doesn’t work I then move on to the next way to solving it

I umm

but, I don’t move on from the question

I so, let’s say you have three sections for one question, and then you look at the first one, you think it’s going to take time or you really don’t understand, do you keep wasting your time on the first question…

**SS01** I mean to an extend I spend some time on the first question, when I really think that I can not solve it then only I move on

I umm

**SS01** to the next one, it’s not like I just look at it no I can’t do it next. No, I sit at it and I actually think about it, I don’t just move on from it immediately

I umm, why you don’t move on from it immediately?

**SS01** because I know myself that I don’t see the obvious, so I just need some time, that’s why just don’t quick move on quickly

I umm

**SS01** maybe I feel I’m missing the obvious

I right

**SS01** sometimes that has been the case

I umm

**SS01** so again it’s coming back to managing your time

I umm, so you make sure you spent some time on the question before deciding whether you want to move on? And then you mentioned just now about calculate, so why do you think critical skills to calculate?

**SS01** ah ( \_ )

I just now you mentioned calculate, proof, determine is critical

**SS01** yes

I yeah, so why is it calculate is critical for you?

**SS01** because in order to calculate correctly you need to apply the right amount of steps also the ones which I would take least amount of time which is why calculate involves critical thinking, and obviously you have to be able to judge if your answer makes sense in a way or not

I umm, so, but then but again how you would know that this approach is going to take shorter time compared to the other?

**SS01** I just try my chances never know for certain, I just hope it’s not going to take that much of time

I umm, okay right, and I also because you’ve done lots of past year questions

**SS01** yes, most probably

I that helps you to decide as well, yeah?

**SS01** yeah

I this is the last question, now, there’ll be some similarities to the previous questions, now looking at all the wording in the questions, there are lots of words which are verbs, action words which what actually asking you to do

**SS01** yes

I when we talk about critical thinking skills, skills are all about verb isn’t it?

**SS01** uhm

I like playing tennis in tennis skills is about how you play

**SS01** yep

I so in critical skills is about how you apply your critical thinking

**SS01** yep

I which is also a verb

**SS01** yeah

I so when you look at the wordings, what are the words when you look at it, oh this is critical based on the exam

**SS01** like what verbs do I look at?

I yes, I know you’re not going to focus on that but when you look at those words you these are actually asking me to be critical?

**SS01** umm ( \_ )

I like for example to ‘define’ something, okay. ‘Define’ is a verb word an action word, so define which asking to…

**SS01** state something

I so do you think that’s critical?

**SS01** no

I so, those kind of words is there any words that you can think of?

**SS01** ‘show’

I ‘show’, ‘show’ is critical?

**SS01** I believe ‘show’ is critical because you have to see how you’ve approached the answer

I umm

**SS01** which involves which critical path to take, umm decide which formula you can apply

I umm

**SS01** to come out with the outcome they’re asking you to ‘show’

I okay

**SS01** so, all those would be, again ‘show’ and ‘proof’, ‘proof’ as well. That’s the two words I sit down and think how am I going to ‘proof’ what they’ve ask me to do

I it’s more of to justify?

**SS01** umm, probably

I so these two words you feel more of critical words, ‘show’ and ‘proof’?

**SS01** yes

I so, that’s about it. Okay thank you

**SS01** okay