**SAMPLE INTERVIEW: INTERNATIONAL EFY STUDENT**

**File ID: SS01\_M\_I**

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

**Date: 18th March 2016**

**Interview:**

I **what is your perception towards critical thinking skills now?** It has been a year now isn’t?

**SS01** I think it’s just as necessary and the, it helped, my idea of critical thinking back in foundation year

I umm

**SS01** is the same, like my critical thinking of a foundation year

I umm

**SS01** has helped me like adapt to the first year, so I would say that was quite helpful and yeah I would say more or less a same. Is just the way you approach question, for example any tasks first year

I yeah

**SS01** it’s obviously going to be different than foundation year

I so what programme are you in now?

**SS01** Mechanical Engineering

I Mechanical Engineering. So just now you said you tried to adapt to whatever you’ve learnt in foundation year, can you give some examples

**SS01** I mean the module that we’re taking in foundation year

I umm

**SS01** in a way similar to the some of the modules that we’re taking now

I okay

**SS01** they’re just named differently

I umm

**SS01** and the content

I yep

**SS01** is more in depth

I right

**SS01** for example, like we had Engineering Principle in foundation year

I yeah

**SS01** to do with fluid and stuff, we have the same stuff called (thermos fluid?), it’s obviously more in depth, more complex equation

I umm

**SS01** so that’s why I say it’s similar for me

I so, if you were **to put it simply critical thinking skills for engineering, how would you define it now**?

**SS01** define critical thinking?

I umm

**SS01** I would say…

I focus on engineering studies

**SS01** to use critical thinking to tackle tasks

I umm

**SS01** to use critical thinking to tackle tasks

I umm

**SS01** I would say it’s we had to first look at what the task is demanding of you, then think about what you need to do to attack those certain problems

I umm

**SS01** then relevant solution and methods to tackle the tasks

I so, are you saying problem solving?

**SS01** yep, more or less

I umm, can you give an example

**SS01** I mean we would like, for example for the course works we received on individual problem they would require critical thinking because you have to visualise, come out with what involved. You know what’s going on in the whole problem and attack it in the relevant manner

I umm, do you think you’ve given me the same answer when I first interviewed you?

**SS01** I can’t remember the first time (laughs)

I (laughs)

**SS01** I can’t remember the first time

I I think it was slightly different

**SS01** yes, because it was a year ago

I right, so **do you believe critical thinking skills is important for engineering studies at foundation level?**

**SS01** yeah, definitely

I if they important, **what would be the effective way for you as a student, how would you prefer the skills to be taught?** Would you prefer the explicit way or would you prefer as an individual module or…

**SS01** what, critical thinking?

I umm

PRACTICE

**SS01** I’d say not explicit, I’d say implicit way would be fine because every student gonna have his own way of applying the critical thinking methods. So if they’re taught in as a separate module students would think that they had to apply the certain, they have to work within certain guidelines, and some won’t be able to

I umm

**SS01** so, if it’s taught in a more implicit manner students can still use critical thinking skills in their own ways to tackle questions, so I won’t say it should be taught as a separate module

I you got to be more open than being very specific, yeah?

**SS01** yes

LANGUAGE

I right, so **do you think students need a good command of English to learn academic critical thinking skills**, if yes why and if no why? Do you think students need good academic English for them…

**SS01** I would say yes, because first of all the country we’re in and the language and the modules been taught in, so obviously we need to have a good, solid speaking understanding of English in order to comprehend what’s happening. So, I would say yes, definitely a strong background in English would be necessary

I **so, you think good command of English is important in order to apply critical thinking skills effectively in engineering studies?**

**SS01** oh! In that case applied, then no because applying critical skills everyone does it in their own way

I umm

**SS01** so, I don’t think language plays a necessary role in applying critical thinking skills. I think you can apply them in any language but obviously the solution must be in English

I okay, let’s try to focus on academic critical thinking skills

**SS01** okay

I in here, based on UK context do you think you need it’s important to have good command of English to apply critical skills? Because for example, I give you an example the word ‘analyse’ which is one of the critical word

**SS01** yes

I how would you perceive it in your own language? Is it same how you would applied in your own language and in academic English, is it same?

**SS01** it’s more or less it’s the same meaning, but obviously to understand what ‘analyse’ is asking you to do you need to have a good understanding, a good English speaking skills obviously. Otherwise you won’t even be able to translate it back into your own language to see how you’ll be able to tackle the problem

I umm

**SS01** so yes, in that sense you need to have a good base of English speaking skills so that you can comprehend what the tutors asking you to do and translate it in your own language if it’s necessary

I so, you believe it’s good to have a good command of English

**SS01** yeah

I to help…

**SS01** definitely, yes

I **is there any situations that it’s not necessary?**

**SS01** as a module?

I no, in general, being an engineering student you know how important…

**SS01** I think working with numbers, numerical, formulas and stuff, you don’t really need to. In my opinion you need to have a good understanding of English when comes to like writing reports and things like that, then yes English plays a vital role in ( \_ )

I the language doesn’t play a vital role when dealing with numbers is that what you’re saying?

**SS01** yes, but obviously critical thinking skills is still important is just that the language is not vital when playing with numbers for me. Where else if you were to write or if you’ve word problems things like that then critical thinking skills and language go hand in hand like together

I umm, let’s say you’ re given a formula or problem and you have to solve the problem, for example in exam setting, I mean you’re fighting against the time

**SS01** yeah

I so, do you think language is not important to answer the question? I mean there’s lots of ways to solve a problem

**SS01** yeah

I there might be a shorter or longer way to answer the question, but if you don’t understand what is…

**SS01** what’s going on in the question, but again that depend on the question. If it’s a Maths exam…

I yeah, that’s what I’m saying, if it’s a Maths

**SS01** then it’s fine because

I it’s fine?

**SS01** yes, you don’t need to, I mean if you see certain signs, like the (integrals?) sign or the differential sign you don’t need the language to understand what it’s asking you to do

I umm

**SS01** you automatically know, where else if you have other like word problems involve

I umm

**SS01** then yes, you need to have a good understanding of English

ATTITUDE

I okay right. So, **do you still believe critical thinking skills are very important for engineering studies**, or they’re not?

**SS01** yeah, I’d say they’re very important because without them you wouldn’t know what, like what you’re required to do basically or how to tackle the questions like you said easier way

I umm

**SS01** there’s a longer way, so like if you lack critical thinking you won’t find the most efficient way of attacking the problem in the limited amount of time you have for example in exam period

I umm

**SS01** I would say critical skills are essential skills

I right. So, because you believe it’s important and essential for engineering studies**, in your opinion do you think it’s necessary for the students to be assessed of their critical thinking skills, a formal testing**?

CT AND ASSESSMENT

**SS01** how would they, what do you mean? So, just an assessment based on their critical thinking?

I do you think students need to be assessed because it’s important and to find out if they’ve actually got it before they graduate?

**SS01** isn’t that, aren’t they in a way are already been assessed through exams and tests and course works? Isn’t that already testing their critical thinking? For example someone is not doing too well or doesn’t know how to attack certain questions he would approach the professor and professor will show him the ways to attack the questions, therefore improving critical thinking

I umm

**SS01** so, I would say they always been assessed when come to exams and stuff

I umm

**SS01** so, I think there’s no need to assess them explicitly

I umm, so what you’re trying, you can correct me, okay?

**SS01** sure

I so what you’re trying to say is that learning of the skills is like in on-going

**SS01** yes, exactly

I therefore, you don’t have to…

**SS01** it just happens spontaneously while you’re working on the questions, you simultaneously without you realising you’re improving on your critical thinking

I umm, okay. But, do you think students will benefit if there’s sort of an assessment?

**SS01** umm, personally, no I wouldn’t

I you wouldn’t

**SS01** I wouldn’t because I used to have my own ways of attacking tasks and problems

I umm

**SS01** and if I’m assessed based on certain guidelines or marked schemes then I don’t, personally I don’t think I would perform well

I okay right. Let’s say a student need to be assessed what would be…

**SS01** on critical thinking?

I yeah, as a students what would be for you an effective way to assess?

**SS01** critical thinking?

I yeah

**SS01** I’m not sure, I wouldn’t assess critical thinking

I put yourself as a student

**SS01** okay

I because from the beginning you mentioned it’s vital, it’s important for engineering studies, and it’s one of the core skills you need to have, yeah?

**SS01** yes

I so therefore, the purpose of testing is to find out if students got it or not

**SS01** yeah

I yeah, because it’s vital it’s important to know if the students got it before they actually graduate, so, if you were the student how would you prefer to be assessed?

**SS01** umm ( \_ ) to see if I understood

I umm

**SS01** critical thinking?

I umm

**SS01** before I graduate?

I umm

**SS01** maybe more practical problems in my case

I umm

**SS01** because I’m more interested in practical work, like labs and things like that then, in theory stuff, so if I want my stuff to be assessed critical thinking present me a practical or real life situation

I uhm

**SS01** and then assess how about solving that instead of some text book questions, that’s how I want to be assessed

I umm, you, just now you mentioned you’re in Mechanical Science, if you were to be assessed based on that how would you prefer to be assessed in Mechanical Science?

**SS01** oh! In the context of Mechanical Science?

I yeah, because you undergraduate programme is Mechanical Science

**SS01** I ( \_ ) I mean at the, during our introductory meet

I umm

**SS01** we were given a chance to dissemble a lawnmower motor

I umm

**SS01** so, if I was presented with a problem to see what was wrong, why was it not functioning properly, something like that I would prefer to be assessed on

I umm

**SS01** then sitting down and solving some word problem from a text book or past papers

I so you prefer practical than theory?

**SS01** yeah, that would help me to assess my critical thinking as well

I so you prefer practical than theory, why?

**SS01** I’ve always interested in hands on work than learning from text book than, I always find myself, I perform better whenever we came to practical side of science

I umm

**SS01** both high school and here, lab as well

I umm, can you give example in the programme you’re in now an incident that you were consciously aware that, ‘oh, this involve lots of critical thinking’?

**SS01** umm ( \_ )

I say any project or individual, group work, or any observations

**SS01** we had to write a group essay

I umm

**SS01** on a (autonomous?) vehicles

I umm

**SS01** and I was given the economy aspect of it, what would be the economy impact if (autonomous?) vehicles were to be introduced commercially

I umm, what’s (autonomous?) vehicle?

**SS01** self-driving cars

I that means you don’t need a driver?

**SS01** you don’t need, it drives it self

I umm, okay

**SS01** yeah, umm so, I found that needed lots of critical thinking because I have to incorporate various perspectives and look at the implementation of the autonomous vehicles

I uhm

**SS01** from different point of views

I okay

**SS01** to see how they will impact…

I different people

**SS01** different people ( \_ )

I different people, stake holders?

**SS01** exactly

I okay

**SS01** from economy perspectives, so I found even though I don’t know I was doing it, but now I think about it, that involved lots of critical thinking too, because obviously they’ve have various impacts

I umm

**SS01** from high supply of labour due to unemployment to different, less demand for garages and stuff like that. So, now I think about it, that involve lot of critical thinking

I so, this was group work?

**SS01** yes that was group work

I and the example you’ve just given is individual contribution?

**SS01** yeah, individual contribution

I so, what about other members?

**SS01** someone took politics as an approach, others took environmental ( \_ ), what is it call?

I impact?

**SS01** yeah, environmental impact, some took law, safety measures and things like that, yeah

I and yours was writing a report on the economic factors, okay right. Now this question is about, you know critical thinking skills is a complex area to explore as it is. So based on your first language, your culture, your previous learning background, we’re gonna touch on that, yeah

**SS01** okay

I so**, in your opinion to what extent student’s first language affect their understanding on critical thinking skills?**

**SS01** umm ( \_ )

FIRST LANGUAGE + ENGLISH

I what’s your first language if I may ask?

**SS01** English yeah, I think here they’re understanding of critical thinking and they’re comprehending it is more in my opinion based on the strengths in the English language

I umm

**SS01** because the stronger you are in English if it’s a second language the better like you’ve said you can translate back into your own language

I umm

**SS01** because I know I’ve a Greek friend

I yep

**SS01** and, recently we had essays to read and then compare them, write a report on them, and he obviously had trouble understanding some words

I umm

**SS01** so, what he would do obviously translate them back to his own

I umm

**SS01** but he would do it using Google translator

I right

**SS01** he wouldn’t, he hadn’t enough knowledge to do it himself, like we had to make it easier for him

I umm

**SS01** obviously when you use Google translator it’s not always close to the meaning

I yeah

**SS01** where’s me, I can fairy understand, I would find a synonym

I yeah

**SS01** or something like that and it would be easier for me

I umm

**SS01** so I think critical thinking is for me depends on more on your strength in the English language

I so, do you believe, first language does affect…

**SS01** no, I wouldn’t say no

I first language doesn’t affect?

**SS01** especially here, in this country

I yeah

CULTURE

**SS01** in the culture we’re in, I would say it strengthen their English language, that (assess?) how you critically analyse problems

I umm, so how about cultural background? Does it affect your thinking skills? Maybe, some students, because this is an international based university

**SS01** yeah

I many students are coming from different cultural background which promotes critical thinking skills and some don’t for various reasons. So, **do you think the culture that you’re from promote or does it give you any opportunities to apply the skills or has it been there all the time?**

**PREVIOUS LEARNING**

**SS01** for me personally, it has always been there. I was brought up in Bahrain, went to school to a British school from the start obviously

I uhm

**SS01** like you said more open minded, was encouraged then at the age of ten I moved to Dubai live there for another nine, ten years

I umm

**SS01** went to international school, Dubai itself is a very international itself, so nothing, I’ve never felt like I was held back, I was always have been encouraged to be open minded, think critically, to think outside the box. I’ve never felt like I was held back due to like you said for various reasons

I right, that’s is because of the type of education that you received?

**SS01** and obviously the country where I was brought up in, both Bahrain and Dubai they not very, what can you say conservatives when comes to like education

I uhm, so now we’ll talk about your previous learning background, so **you had English medium all way through, yes?**

**SS01** yes

I so, how would you say, **does it affect the way you thinking now?**

**SS01** what having?

I studied in an English medium?

**SS01** like having gone through English speaking…

I do you know anyone from your same country but gone through a different education system? Do you feel the same or a bit alien when you speak to them, because of your background, education system?

**SS01** no, obviously ( \_ ) from back home? They’re from the same education culture which I’m from, so I don’t think there’s any difference

I umm, so was it an advantage for you…

**SS01** yes, definitely, because as I’ve said, I’ve always have been encouraged from school, from home to think outside the box and I would say, yes. Growing where I did, went to the schools where I did was definitely was an advantage

I so, did you have enough practice in your previous learning?

**SS01** I wouldn’t

I can you think of something, there must be something that was exciting that you did, and to think of it now you realised, ‘oh, that’s critical thinking’?

PREVIOUS LEARNING

**SS01** in high school?

I yeah, could be any past learning

**SS01** they do it in a way, for example we had an experiment with a ball launcher

I ball launcher?

**SS01** yeah, and it was, I remember was our first lesson on it

I yes

**SS01** and we were given a task, for example at what angle would the ball will fly the furthest?

I uhm

**SS01** and that obviously involved critical thinking, because you obviously have to have a good guess vertically up or horizontally down. That, now to think about it involved critical thinking

I so, this is the final question. I’m going to ask the same question, I asked you to define what critical thinking skills to you now? And after talking about it, what is your understanding of critical thinking skills now? see it in an engineering student perspectives

**SS01** In engineering perspectives, I would say the ability to look at a question or any dilemma in front of you, understand first of all what is happening, then what it’s asking you to do

I umm

**SS01** then obviously the main part is that how you go about achieving the solution for the problem, that I would say my definition for engineering perspectives

I thank you very much for taking part

**SS01** hope it would be useful

I definitely, every words you said were useful