Developing Critical Thinking through Postgraduates Assignments: An Analytical Study

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ABSTRACT

Academic people of researchers and Postgraduate students face difficulty in their reasoning out facts. They are misguided due to the absence of their critical thinking. Due to such situations, they are followed by a wrong path of beliefs. It is the role of critical thinking to remove the doubts in their misjudgements and depend on a sound way of reasoning. Critical Thinking is an important topic in Academic world that most researchers strive to achieve in their daily academic activities. To think critically needs a deep and reasonable way of thinking. Pinpointing ideas that haunt us is a step towards objectivity. It gives everybody chances to be active participants rather than passive ones. It provides them with information, conclusions and points of view. Practising critical thinking is a means for avoiding mistakes and serious misunderstandings during writing assignments, reports and research papers as well. This study aims at describing and showing the faults of postgraduates in their assignments and presents solutions for their misjudgement. The study is divided into two sections after the Introduction. The first one is concerned with the theoretical part of defining Critical Thinking, the aims and basic factors required in the process of critical thinking. The second section is about practicing some positive and negative aspects in their critical thinking and showing the postgraduates' faults in ideas, views and beliefs in their activities and assignments. Due to the principles required in critical thinking, everyone can get benefit from his/her misjudgements and mistakes.

Keywords: Critical Thinking, postgraduates' Assignments, Questions, Sound Reasoning.

INTRODUCTION

A) CRITICAL THINKING IN THE UNIVERSITY:

Steven D. Schafersman in his article An Introduction to Critical Thinking (3) states that:
Critical thinking means correct thinking in the pursuit of relevant and reliable knowledge about the world. Another way to describe it is reasonable, reflective, responsible, and skillful thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do. A person who thinks critically can ask appropriate questions, gather relevant information, efficiently and creatively sort through this information, reason logically from this information, and come to reliable and trustworthy conclusions about the world that enable one to live and act successfully in it.

Critical thinking is an important issue for learners. Universities encourage their students to be 'independent learners' and critical thinking is central to this for it helps the students to depend on themselves when they analyze, evaluate and synthesise information from a variety of sources and present their own justified interpretation. This is known as employing 'higher order thinking skills' (The Open University 9). Robert J. Sternberg (1986: 4) in his Critical Thinking, Its Nature, Measurement and Improvement states that:

The study of critical thinking is of particular interest because of its confluence of three traditions of thought—the educational, the philosophical, and the psychological. Indeed, if there is a modern day founder of the "critical-thinking movement," it is almost certainly John Dewey, who was simultaneously an educator, a philosopher, and a psychologist.

In 1950s, Benjamin Bloom identified a set of important study and thinking skills for university students, which he called the 'thinking triangle' (Bloom, 1956: see Figure 1)
Another skill that the university students need to develop is to have the ability to read with a critical eye, asking appropriate questions about the material that students read is necessary. If the reader listens and reads the material passively, this will not help him and he is not going to comprehend the material. So it is better for the reader to ask appropriate questions of the material, investigate solutions to any problems, create new belief as a result and then reflect on what he has gained. This is called enquiry-based learning. Specialists in Critical thinking support the view that the reflective, enquiry – based approach helps the reader to develop deeper into the materials they read. Asking Questions lead to Investigate Solutions which Create Knowledge and Finally reflect on results (The Open University 11).

B) WHAT IS AN 'ARGUMENT'?

Toulmin (12) in his book The uses of Argument, presents his views about arguments believing that arguments are produced for many purposes. Not every argument is raised to defend an assertion for some of them are not reliable. He continues in the same page, stating that:

we shall be interested in justificatory arguments brought forward in support of assertions, in the structures they may be expected to have, the merits they can claim
and the ways in which we set about grading, assessing and criticising them. It could, I think, be argued that this was in fact the primary function of arguments, and that the other uses, the other functions which arguments have for us, are in a sense secondary, and parasitic upon this primary justificatory use.

An Argument can be said to have four basic elements: (i) a claim, (ii) evidence, (iii) a warrant and (iv) any qualifications to the argument that might be necessary.

The aim of critical thinking is to try to maintain an 'objective' position. During the process of reading, it is necessary to check our understanding and review other sections when any mysteriousness takes place. Before evaluating the material, it is better first to identify the information, analyze the material and compare and apply the information. Concerning the first point, the main points of the argument should be summarized, along with the claims, it is useful to use the evidences and reach at conclusions. During the process of reading, the reader should check if the material he reads is relevant to his needs or not. This will be achieved only during analyzing the material. The objective step is to ask few questions like: Does this piece of information have a theory or can be applicable to a theory? Is the material that we analyze is contemporary or old? Is the material comprehensive? Or there is a need for more information to comprehend. This part of information is completed with questions about theories and which theory is suitable for the material under discussion. For example: Apply a psychological theory to Alice Walker's case in her novel Colour Purple.

C) EVALUATING AN ARGUMENT

It is possible to evaluate an argument by depending on Coherence of the argument and supporting evidence. By coherence we mean the student or the researcher should check if the line of reasoning is logical. The researcher has to state his conclusions in a way that serve and support his claim. Supporting evidence is the other point that the student or academic person should evaluate through few questions like: Does the evidence support all of the claims made? Is the evidence appropriate for the topic? Is the evidence recent and suitable to your claims and serves your purpose? How does this evidence compared to other evidences? Does it complement or contradict?, and finally are there any methodological issues about the collection of the evidence?. (The Open University 16). As it is clear the argument is a vital part of any academic assignment. The following reveals ways to keep the researcher close to academic writing.

D) TAKING NOTES CRITICALLY:

This is a stage where the researcher or an academic student can think critically and will be able to take notes during the semester. The notes are supposed to be logical, objective to the arguments. The serious question is how can you defend your arguments in your assignments? The researcher or an MA or Ph. D student should defend his/her point of views against bias, lack of supporting evidence, incompleteness and illogical reasoning. Using critical thinking while taking notes will help students avoid mistakes.
Description
Claims
Evidence for claims
Strengths/weaknesses
Questions and queries
Links to other topics

Figure 2  Introducing Critical thinking into your note taking  (Ibid 18)

SECTION ONE: Definition of Critical Thinking

Critical analysis is derived from two words. ‘Critical’ comes from the Greek ‘kriticos’, meaning to discern and separate [the issues]. ‘Analysis’ comes from the French ‘analyser’, meaning to undo  (Judge et al 8). Critical thinking means correct thinking in the pursuit of relevant and reliable knowledge about the world. Another way to describe it is reasonable, reflective, responsible, and skillful thinking that focus on deciding what to believe or do. A person who thinks critically can ask appropriate questions, gather relevant information, efficiently and creatively sort through this information, reason logically from this information, and come to reliable and trustworthy conclusions about the world that enable one to live and act successfully in it. Critical thinking is not being able to process information well enough to know to stop for red lights or whether you received the correct change at the supermarket. Such low order thinking, is sufficient only for personal survival; most individuals master this. True critical thinking is higher-order thinking, enabling a person to, for example, responsibly judge between political candidates, serve on a murder trial jury, evaluate society's need for nuclear power plants, and assess the consequences of global warming. Critical thinking enables an individual to be a responsible citizen who contributes to society, and not be merely a consumer of society's distractions (Schaferman 3). Students face difficulty in stating their problems, sometimes the student presents the problem without sufficient information. This will affect the degree of reliability which is necessary. King, et al (1990: 170) in Critical Thinking Among College and Graduate Students state that:

Teaching students to reason well about both well- and ill-structured problems is a common goal for post-secondary institutions. Different academic disciplines, however, seem particularly suited for teaching college students such thinking skills. For further information, theoretical information is necessary in this field.

1.2. Theoretical Background

Emily R. Lai in her Critical Thinking: A Literature Review (2011) had presented a comprehensive study about the theoretical background of critical thinking. She claims that the literature on critical thinking has roots in two primary academic disciplines: philosophy and psychology (Cited in Lewis & Smith, 1993). Sternberg (1986) has also noted a third critical thinking strand within the field of education (5). These separate academic strands have developed different approaches to defining critical thinking that reflect their respective concerns. Each of these approaches is explored more fully below.

1-The philosophical approach.
The writings of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and more recently, Matthew Lipman and Richard Paul, exemplify the philosophical approach. This approach focuses on the hypothetical critical thinker, enumerating the qualities and characteristics of this person rather than the behaviors or actions the critical thinker can perform (Lewis & Smith, 1993; Thayer-Bacon, 2000). Sternberg (1986) has noted that this school of thought approaches the critical thinker as an ideal type, focusing on what people are capable of doing under the best of circumstances. Accordingly, Richard Paul (1992) discusses critical thinking in the context of “perfections of thought” (9). This preoccupation with the ideal critical thinker is evident in the American Philosophical Association’s consensus portrait of the ideal critical thinker as someone who is inquisitive in nature, open-minded, flexible, fair-minded, has a desire to be well-informed, understands diverse viewpoints, and is willing to both suspend judgment and to consider other perspectives (Facione, 1990). Those working within the philosophical tradition also emphasize qualities or standards of thought. For example, Bailin (2002) defines critical thinking as thinking of a particular quality—essentially good thinking that meets specified criteria or standards of adequacy and accuracy. Further, the philosophical approach has traditionally focused on the application of formal rules of logic (Lewis & Smith, 1993; Sternberg, 1986). One limitation of this approach to defining critical thinking is that it does not always correspond to reality (Sternberg, 1986). By emphasizing the ideal critical thinker and what people have the capacity to do, this approach may have less to contribute to discussions about how people actually think. (Lai 6).

Definitions of critical thinking emerging from the philosophical tradition include: “the propensity and skill to engage in an activity with reflective skepticism” (McPeck, 1981: 8); “reflective and reasonable thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do” (Ennis, 1985: 45); “skillful, responsible thinking that facilitates good judgment because it 1) relies upon criteria, 2) is self-correcting, and 3) is sensitive to context” (Lipman, 1988: 39); “purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or conceptual considerations upon which that judgment is based” (Facione, 1990: 3); “disciplined, self-directed thinking that exemplifies the perfections of thinking appropriate to a particular mode or domain of thought” (Paul, 1992: 9); thinking that is goal-directed and purposive, “thinking aimed at forming a judgment,” where the thinking itself meets standards of adequacy and accuracy (Bailin et al., 1999b:287); and “judging in a reflective way what to do or what to believe” (Facione, 2000: 61) (qtd in Lai 7).

2-The Cognitive Psychological Approach.

The cognitive psychological approach contrasts with the philosophical perspective in two ways. First, cognitive psychologists, particularly those immersed in the behaviorist tradition and the experimental research paradigm, tend to focus on how people actually think versus how they could or should think under ideal conditions (Sternberg, 1986). Second, rather than defining critical thinking by pointing to characteristics of the ideal critical thinker or enumerating criteria or standards of “good” thought, those working in cognitive psychology tend to define critical thinking by the types of actions or behaviors critical thinkers can do. Typically, this approach to defining critical thinking includes a list of skills or procedures performed by critical thinkers (Lewis & Smith, 1993). Philosophers have
Developing Critical Thinking through Postgraduates

often criticized this latter aspect of the cognitive psychological approach as being reductionist—reducing a complex orchestration of knowledge and skills into a collection of disconnected steps or procedures (Sternberg, 1986). For example, Bailin (2002) argues that it is a fundamental misconception to view critical thinking as a series of discrete steps or skills, and that this misconception stems from the behaviorist’s need to define constructs in ways that are directly observable. According to this argument, because the actual process of thought is unobservable, cognitive psychologists have tended to focus on the products of such thought—behaviors or overt skills (e.g., analysis, interpretation, formulating good questions). Other philosophers have also cautioned against confusing the activity of critical thinking with its component skills (Facione, 1990), arguing that critical thinking is more than simply the sum of its parts (Van Gelder, 2005). Indeed, a few proponents of the philosophical tradition have pointed out that it is possible to simply “go through the motions,” or proceed through the “steps” of critical thinking without actually engaging in critical thought (Bailin, 2002 cited in Lai 8).

Definitions emerged from critical thinking that have the cognitive psychological approach include “the mental processes, strategies, and representations people use to solve problems, make decisions, and learn new concepts” (Sternberg, 1986: 3); “the use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome” (Halpern, 1998, p. 450); and “seeing both sides of an issue, being open to new evidence that disconfirms your ideas, reasoning dispassionately, demanding that claims be backed by evidence, deducing and inferring conclusions from available facts, solving problems, and so forth” (Willingham, 2007: 8). Jonathan Baron in his book Thinking and deciding (2008) claims that there is a field called self-deception and wishful thinking and believes that persistence in an irrational belief can be a kind of self-deception in which we make ourselves believe something through the use of heuristics or methods of thinking that we would know (on reflection) are incorrect. By this view, if we were aware that our thinking was biased when we did it, we would not accept its results (215).

3-The educational approach.

Finally, those working in the field of education have also participated in discussions about critical thinking. Benjamin Bloom and his associates are included in this category. Their taxonomy for information processing skills (1956) is one of the most widely cited sources for educational practitioners when it comes to teaching and assessing higher-order thinking skills. Bloom’s taxonomy is hierarchical, with “comprehension” at the bottom and “evaluation” at the top. The three highest levels (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) are frequently said to represent critical thinking (Kennedy et al., 1991). The benefit of the educational approach is that it is based on years of classroom experience and observations of student learning, unlike both the philosophical and the psychological traditions (Sternberg, 1986). However, some have noted that the educational (Lai 9) approach is limited in its vagueness. Furthermore, the frameworks developed in education have not been tested as vigorously as those developed within either philosophy or psychology (Sternberg, 1986). Critical thinking is essentially a questioning, challenging approach to knowledge and perceived wisdom. It involves examining ideas and understanding the meaning of critical thinking and why it is important and the way our own attitudes impact on our critical thinking. It is essential that within the process of critical thinking the writer

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substantiates the stance they have taken by providing evidence about the issue they are discussing in such a way that their judgments are seen as secure and verified. (Judge et al 1). Critical thinking is important because some of the most important skills you will need to learn as a student are the ability to think both critically and objectively about an issue and present a well-constructed argument. Critical and analytical thinking skills such as these will be essential to most aspects of our study, whether we are listening to lectures, contributing to seminars or reading about our subject. Argument here does not mean disagreement; it simply means presenting a strong case to support a point of view. You do not have to be an argumentative person to do this. On the contrary, good critical writing means using reason and evidence to support your point. However, essential to any analysis is the ability to be honest about your own biases and prejudices, flexible in considering alternatives and opinions, and willing to reconsider and revise views where honest reflection suggests that change is warranted. You also need to cultivate a healthy scepticism of: statements which begin with ‘It is obvious that . . .’; arguments which are unsubstantiated and unbalanced; and arguments which have a particular political, professional or anecdotal bias (as opposed to researched evidence). You also need to verify the source of any research/literature you are considering. Two common problems can lead to confusion when thinking critically about a subject: ambiguity and subjectivity. (Judge et al 4). The following section is about the process of analysis.

Section Two: The Process of Analysing postgraduate's assignments:

Postgraduate students are twelve students, ten of them are MA students and two Ph.D students. Both MA and PhD students were given assignments for assessing their critical thinking processes. About the connection between ‘Criteria’ and ‘Critical Thinking’ Matthew Lipman (1988: pp 38-39) in Critical Thinking What it can be? writes that:

We suspect an association between the terms ‘critical’ and ‘criteria’ because they have a common ancestry. We are also aware of a relationship between criteria and judgments, for the very meaning of criterion is a rule or principle utilized in the making of judgments. A criterion is an instrument for judging as an axe is an instrument for chopping. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that there is some sort of logical connection, between critical thinking and ‘criteria’ and ‘judgment’. The connection of course, is to be found in the fact that judgment is a skill, critical thinking is skilful thinking, and skills cannot be defined without criteria by means of which allegedly skilful performances can be evaluated. So critical thinking is thinking that both employ criteria and that can be assessed by appeal to criteria.

The following are the questions of their assignments preceded by a table of Criteria to assess in the critical thinking process:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Thinking Stage (1-5)</th>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Did The Student -----------</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observe</td>
<td>----gather an appropriate number of resources ?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyse</td>
<td>----identify all major themes?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>----identify arguments that are opinion only compared to those that are evidence-</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Developing Critical Thinking through Postgraduates ……

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Contextualise</th>
<th>Reflect</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>----pose questions that are unanswered by the literature?</td>
<td>---consider the analysis and evaluation in light of the specific context</td>
<td>---test the question that they posed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Criteria to assess in the critical thinking process

Another criteria that has been used to check the level or the ability of postgraduate students to write essays and reports related to their critical thinking stage is the use of rubric in the following way:

**Evaluation of MA and Ph. D students' Assignments of Salahaddin University/ College of languages/ English Department/ Literature/ Critical thinking processes depending on Rubric/ 1916/1917 – Grading from the second column = 4-3-2-1.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description</th>
<th>Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplained, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.</th>
<th>Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions</th>
<th>Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question</td>
<td>Information is taken from sources with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning.</td>
<td>Information is taken from sources with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning.</td>
<td>Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shows an</td>
<td>Expla</td>
<td>Evidence selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>nation of Issues</td>
<td>-ing and using information to investig ate a point of view or conclusi on</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.</td>
<td>Some assumptions, identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others’ assumptions than one’s own (or vice versa)</td>
<td>Other’s assumption and several relevant contexts when presenting a position. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly. Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others’ assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious</td>
<td>Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.</td>
<td>Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis/takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' point of view are acknowledged within position/perspective/thesis/hypothesis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes</td>
<td>Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion);</td>
<td>Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion);</td>
<td>Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect</td>
<td>Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect</td>
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</table>
(consequences and implications) are oversimplified

| some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly. | student’s informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order. | consequences | consequences |


**Questions related to the Element of Thought**

1- Dear MA and Ph. D Student:

   In an essay form, answer the following but please think objectively before answering it. Imagine that you face a problem in a subject with one of the Instructors. How can you give us an example about the nature of the problem? Can you prove that it is really a serious problem? To what degree can you give more details about the problem? How can you relate it to the problem? What are the factors that lead to the rise of such a problem? Can we view or look at this problem in another way or another perspective? Does your point make sense? Do you have evidence to support this? Do you think that your problem deserves to take it into consideration? Have you ever asked yourself if you were fair in representing your view?

2- Dear MA and Ph. D student:

   Choose any assignment given to you by your Instructor either in The Novel or, Literary criticism in MA or, in PH. D. stage. Send me your assignment please taking all the necessary points of writing your report into consideration. Can you prove that your assignment is academic? Does your effective piece of writing have:
   a- A clear and logical line of reasoning?
   b- Lack of prejudice?
   c- Relevant and recent data?
   d- Enough appropriate and reliable evidence?
   e- Conclusions that are supported by the argument and evidence?

3- Dear MA &P.H. D. Students:

   Write an essay which contains an argument.

   Note: Most academic writing will contain an argument which has a line of reasoning, a point of view, a position that is being defended, A case that is being made, leading to conclusion.

4- Dear PhD students:

   Can we apply a psychological theory while analyzing Alice Walker's *The Colour Purple*? Write an essay showing the suitability or the opposite case of such theme. Such assignments, questions and ideas are important for urging different

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stages in the university to develop their mental ability. Dr. William T. Daly recommends that when the instructor provides students the general questions. They should organize their notes around these questions. They start to paraphrase, summarize, or outline all reading assignments (Cited in Schafersman 9). So getting students to write more is the best, and perhaps the easiest way to enhance critical thinking. After presenting the above-mentioned questions and assignments to ten of MA postgraduates and two of PhD students, it had been revealed that only three of the ten MA students were able to stick to the criteria of critical thinking and five others pass but do not achieve success in comprehending all the requirements of the critical thinking skills but two of the students were not able to pass in their academic writing. Concerning PhD students, both students were able to have good assessment in their assignments of critical thinking. This refers to the fact that universities should pay more attention to the material of teaching critical thinking skills and this will lead the researchers to be scholars and more successful in their field. Having few students who comprehend the process of critical thinking should not disappoint us, it is normal but we have to keep urging our students to learn more. Both criteria are out of five and the first one has six items whereas the rubric criterion has five items. The researcher has consulted a statistician for checking the differences that students have in achieving success in their assignments. For further clarification see the table below of using the criteria of critical thinking skills and rubric to assess the MA and PhD students' assignments:

Assessing MA students' Assignments Critical Thinking (1/Criteria +2/Rubric) The number under each column refers to grading assessment of the student according to the principles of evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>MA/PhD</th>
<th>MA/PhD</th>
<th>Item 1</th>
<th>Item 2</th>
<th>Item 3</th>
<th>Item 4</th>
<th>Item 5</th>
<th>Report</th>
<th>C1</th>
<th>C2</th>
<th>C3</th>
<th>C4</th>
<th>C5</th>
<th>C6</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Report</th>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
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Graph(1)

The number under each column refers to grading assessment of the student according to the principles of evaluation.
Concerning the report assignment given to MA & PhD students, the researcher (instructor) has been disappointed with the results:

The researcher after consulting a statistician, it had been found out that students vary in their way of writing their assignments. Following the statistician's method, One way ANOVA, (one way of analyzing the variances), the results have been analysed and the average of each item in the method result in the fact that the postgraduate students were much better in the way of writing their reports. As it is clear from the Graph No 1. Unfortunately, some of them did not score good marks in other standard values of rubric and assessment criteria. The significance of this study lies in the fact that there appears differences between and within groups which is necessary for such study. Due to students' mistakes and shortcomings in responding to Rubric and Criteria assessment of critical thinking, the researcher suggests that different departments in the colleges of university should pay more attention to the academic way of writing their assignments, and research paper following the standard way of critical thinking.

Some of MA students summarize their report assignments without evidence. Without using page numbers and titles or even starting with introduction. They do not pose questions concerning the subject matter. Some of the assignments are attached at the end of the research.

The essay assignment is written unfortunately mostly with no evidence supporting the argument. Instead it is full of emotive language and subjective vocabularies expressing anger which in itself is biased and not considered to be academic. Some essays have conclusion of four lines and some do not have conclusions at all. Some students generalize without specific examples from the text. In some essays the postgraduate students discuss some problems without suggesting any solution. It is a closed argument away from objectivity. Some others write with terrible mistakes in grammar and without cohesion.

4- In spite of the fact that few of the MA students respond to the process of critical thinking skills and two of PhD students but these skills led them to reveal another email:journal@epu.edu.krd
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objective aspect of their thinking which is honesty in their character, honesty in their resistance to unreasonable way of teaching. Most of the students did not put page numbers and they have forgotten to give their passages a specific title. This affects their writings in a negative way. As a result of all positive and negative points it is very necessary to apply such criteria in our duties and academic activities in our university and various specializations.

CONCLUSION

Critical thinking is not an easy task. Only those who have good deal of knowledge and experience can achieve success. Students in general should try hard to be critical thinkers. Those postgraduate students who are skilled are the instructor's favourite to test them. Some of the students prove that they are able to present scholarly views when given assignments. Critical thinking skills are really needed in our reading, thinking and writing and in working with others as well. It is very necessary to keep in mind that critical thinking skills will definitely increase our objectivity, it will prevent us from being biased, it pushes every academic person to search all sides of an argument, test the soundness of the claims made and test the soundness of the evidence used to support the claims. The more we practise these skills, the better our understanding of life will be and we can easily become a truly independent learner and thinker. Both the instructor and the student should get benefit from their feedbacks for it will lead both to think critically and objectively towards the subject.

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http://www.freeinquiry.com/critical-thinking.html


Foundation for Critical Thinking

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www.open.ac.uk/skillsforstudy

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Developing Critical Thinking through Postgraduates

This study aims to describe the errors committed by postgraduate students in their academic tasks assigned by their teachers, and to correct or propose solutions for their misconceptions. This study is divided into an introduction and two chapters. The introduction includes a discussion on the importance of critical thinking in academic research today. Critical thinking requires objective thinking and gives each individual the opportunity to be positive. It provides us with facts, opinions, and arguments. It is a way to avoid mistakes during writing, performing tasks, and academic research reports.

This study aims to describe the errors committed by postgraduate students in their academic tasks assigned by their teachers, and to correct or propose solutions for their misconceptions. This study is divided into an introduction and two chapters. The introduction includes a discussion on the importance of critical thinking in academic research today. Critical thinking requires objective thinking and gives each individual the opportunity to be positive. It provides us with facts, opinions, and arguments. It is a way to avoid mistakes during writing, performing tasks, and academic research reports.

The study was conducted to understand the errors committed by postgraduate students in their academic tasks. The study was conducted using qualitative research methods. The study sample included 20 postgraduate students from different disciplines.

The study results showed that the postgraduate students faced various errors in their academic tasks. The most common errors were related to the use of logical arguments, presentation of facts, and opinions. The study results also showed that the students had difficulty in critical thinking and decision-making. The study results indicate the need for critical thinking training to improve academic performance and research accuracy.

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Developing Critical Thinking through Postgraduates ……

Oneway

Descriptives

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Name          | Gender | 'MA/PHD' | Report Evaluation (5 M) | Result of 3d Assignment |
---------------|--------|----------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
O. Kh          | Male   | MA       | 2                       | Did not Pass            |
Sh. Kh         | Female | ==       | 4                       | Passed                  |
E. H           | Female | ==       | 2.1/2                   | Passed                  |
A. B           | Male   | ==       | 3                       | Passed                  |
K. M           | Female | ==       | 2                       | Did not Pass            |
R. S           | ==     | ==       | 3                       | Passed                  |
H. S           | ==     | ==       | 2                       | Did not Pass            |

D. A           | Female | ==       | 2.1/2                   | Passed                  |
A. T           | ==     | ==       | 4                       | Passed                  |
(.Sh. J )      | ==     | ==       | 4                       | Passed                  |
Kh. I          | Female | PHD      | 4                       | Passed                  |
H. A           | Male   | ==       | 4                       | Passed                  |

Table (2) Report Grading of MA & PHD Students.

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PTJ vol. 8 No.2, 2018; doi:
Developing Critical Thinking through Postgraduates ……

Table (3) Rubric Evaluation of (MA) And (PHD) Students

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<th>Item 3 (Evaluat)</th>
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Assessment Criteria Out of 5 marks for the second Assignment

| (D.A)      | Female | 3               | 2               | 3               | 3               | 2               | 3               |
| (A.T)      | Female | 2               | 2               | 1               | 1               | 2               | 1               |
| (Sh. J)    | Female | 2               | 2               | 2               | 3               | 2               | 3               |
| (Kh. I)    | PHD    | 4               | 3               | 3               | 4               | 4               | 3               |
| (H.A)      | PHD    | 3               | 3               | 4               | 3               | 4               | 4               |