



Exploring University Students' Views on How Critical Thinking is Promoted in Focus Group Discussions

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study is to examine students' perceptions of the integration and development of critical thinking skills through Focus Group Discussions class in an English Education Study Program.

Methodology: This study employed a mixed methods research design. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire survey and structured interview as research instruments. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis in the form of index percentage score, while qualitative data were analyzed through thematic-analysis to identify patterns related to students' perceptions of critical thinking development.

Main Findings: The results of the study indicate consistently positive students' perception, shown by high index percentage scores, that Focus Group Discussion activities effectively develop critical thinking skills which include analytical reasoning, evaluation of multiple perspectives, synthesis of ideas, and evidence-based argumentation. Interview results reveal that peer interaction, clarification questioning, familiar topics, lecturer guidance and feedback strongly support critical engagement. However, students face challenges such as limited background knowledge to the unfamiliar topics, low confidence, and difficulty interpreting complex information.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study offers insights into how Focus Group Discussion functions as a structured pedagogical strategy for developing critical thinking in EFL context. It not only provides an overview of students' perceptions of the integration of critical thinking skills, particularly in terms of analyzing, evaluating multiple perspectives, and synthesizing ideas, but also through the use of mixed-methods approach, highlights specific components of Focus Group Discussion that support or hinder students' critical engagement.

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important 21st century skills that college students need to have is critical thinking. Critical thinking is a pivotal academic skill that enables students to scrutinize or reflect on any knowledge and information they encounter [1]. Higher education should foster students' capacity to analyze, assess, and develop solutions to real-world problems in addition to imparting knowledge, since graduates are expected to think critically and solve problems. The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) class has a great potential to facilitate the development of critical thinking abilities in addition to English communication skills. Through structured discussions, students can develop their English communication skills simultaneously with critical thinking

abilities by expressing their opinions, evaluating arguments, and finding evidence-based solutions to problems that relevant to their lives.

Critical thinking is a purposeful, reflective judgment process involving rational consideration of evidence, context, and reasoning standards to decide what to believe or do [2]. It encompasses two main dimensions: cognitive skills (interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation) and thinking dispositions (open-mindedness, curiosity, and truth-seeking). Critical thinking involves identifying problems, asking clarifying questions, constructing logical arguments, using supporting evidence, synthesizing ideas, and solving problems contextually [3]. These perspectives show that critical thinking is not merely a set of skills, but a disciplined intellectual habit that guides thoughtful and effective decision-making [4]. According to Paul and Elder [5], critical thinking is the art of analyzing and evaluating one's own thinking in order to improve it. They emphasize that it is a self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective process that relies on rigorous standards of excellence. A well-cultivated critical thinker is someone who can formulate clear questions, gather and interpret relevant information, reach well-reasoned conclusions, consider alternative perspectives, and communicate effectively when addressing complex issues.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, critical thinking enables students not only to comprehend texts linguistically but also to analyze meaning, evaluate information, synthesize ideas, and articulate opinions with strong arguments. Nowadays, as education shifts toward competency-based curricula, innovative approaches that combine language learning and critical thinking development are needed [6]. Such skills significantly contribute to English communication by helping learners assess logical reasoning, recognize assumptions, and use language accurately [7]. As a result, students can develop into self-sufficient, self-assured people who are prepared to actively engage in the global community [8]. However, the effectiveness of integrating critical thinking in EFL settings depends on how teachers conceptualize it. Teachers who understand critical thinking deeply ensure that lessons are both relevant and engaging, thereby cultivating student autonomy and confidence needed to master systematic questioning, problem solving, evidence evaluation and logical inference [9].

Some researches highlight the importance of integrating critical thinking into language learning. For example, Gunawan in his research found that critical thinking enables students to express ideas, challenge assumptions, and consider different perspectives [10]. Another of his research reported that critical thinking sharpens higher-order cognitive skills—analyzing, evaluating, and creating—leading to more effective communication [11]. Likewise, Srisudarso also reported improved EFL students' critical thinking through narrative techniques in story analysis [12]. In addition, some other studies reported that collaborative learning and reflective activities also can enhance students' critical thinking through peer interaction and problem solving [13], [14].

One effective strategy for developing critical thinking is implementing Focus Group Discussions. Focus Group Discussion is a small-group discussion technique facilitated by a moderator to explore multiple perspectives, opinions, and ideas on a specific topic [15]. Focus Group Discussions are conducted to gather participant perspectives in a non-threatening settings, which stimulate learning, enhance participant awareness, promote a democratic and effective decision-making. By challenging concepts, contrasting points of view, and coming to consensus, group interaction helps participants develop critical thinking skills [16]. Through Focus Group Discussion, students will not only build high confidence, good communication and collaboration skills but also will have the ability to think critically, creatively and innovatively as they prepare arguments and discussions [17].

In language learning, Focus Group Discussion provides opportunities for improving speaking vocabulary, grammar, comprehensionability and fluency [18]-[20], while fostering attentive listening, evaluation, and constructive response in a collaborative and reflective learning environment [21]. Similarly, Focus Group Discussion has been found to be effective in improving students' reading ability while also strengthening self-confidence, communication skills and peer-interaction [22]. Another empirical study support these benefits, reporting that Focus Group Discussion enhances students' speaking skills by increasing confidence, reducing anxiety and motivating students to participate actively [19], [23]-[25]. In short, these findings indicate that Focus Group Discussion is a valuable pedagogical approach for developing EFL students' language skills.

The English Education Study Program of Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang (UMT), through its Focus Group Discussion (FGD) course, aims to produce graduates who have good communication skills in English along with other 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. The Focus Group Discussion class supports these goals by providing opportunities for students to enhance their English fluency while engaging in meaningful, context-driven discussions. Focus Group Discussion activities not only enhance their speaking but also encourage deeper cognitive engagement through analytical reasoning, evaluation, and evidence-based argumentation—elements that contribute to the development of students' critical thinking skills. Consequently, it is necessary to find out whether students have already experienced the impact of the Focus Group Discussion course on the development of their critical thinking skills.

Although numerous studies have examined the effectiveness of Focus Group Discussion activities in improving speaking ability, communication skills, and classroom interaction, limited studies have specifically evaluated how critical thinking is perceived and experienced by students in Focus Group Discussion sessions, particularly in English as Foreign Language for higher education contexts. Previous studies related to the use of Focus Group Discussion mostly highlighted instructional effectiveness or language performance, while student-perception-based evaluation of critical thinking development remains underexplored, particularly in Focus Group Discussion classes. This gap is important to fill because students' perceptions can provide valuable insights into the extent to which discussion activities facilitate analytical reasoning, evaluation of multiple perspectives and evidence-based argumentation. Therefore, this study is considered novel and urgent because it investigates critical thinking development from students' perspectives through a mixed-methods approach and examines how Focus Group Discussion activities contribute to higher-order thinking skills needed in twenty-first century education.

Based on this background, this research aims to explore students' perception on the enhancement of students' critical thinking in Focus Group Discussion class. Despite the many studies reporting on the impact of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) approach in enhancing students' speaking skills, there is still a gap in understanding its effect on students' critical thinking. Therefore, this study offers novelty by examining how Focus Group Discussion functions as a pedagogical strategy for developing critical thinking in the English as Foreign Language context. It explores students' perceptions of integrating critical thinking, such as analyzing, evaluating various perspectives, and synthesizing ideas. In addition, through a mixed-methods approach, it also highlights specific components that support or challenge students' critical thinking.

The research problems are formulated as follows. First, what factors support to the development of critical thinking in the Focus Group Discussion class? Second, what factors challenge the development of critical thinking in the Focus Group Discussion class? Third, what are students' perceptions of the integration of critical thinking into the Focus Group Discussion class? To answers those questions, the objectives of this study are: (1) to investigate students' perceptions of the integration of critical thinking into Focus Group Discussion course through environmental issues; (2) to investigate the factors that support the development of critical thinking in the Focus Group Discussion class and (3) to investigate the challenges in developing critical thinking in the Focus Group Discussion class. The findings of this study are expected to provide insights into the implementation of Focus Group Discussion sessions, not only to enhance students' communication skills in English but also to support the development of their critical thinking.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research was conducted in the English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang with thirty one second-semester students enrolled in the Focus Group Discussion class. The course allows students to analyse real-world problems, evaluate multiple viewpoint, and articulate arguments using academic English. Therefore, Focus Group Discussion activities create opportunities for students to enhance their speaking skills and critical thinking competencies.

This study employed a mixed-methods research design that combines methods of data collection and analysis from both quantitative and qualitative approach [26]. This design was chosen in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of students' critical thinking development in the Focus Group Discussion class. The quantitative component consisted of a questionnaire that generated data that measured students' perceptions of the implementation of critical thinking in the Focus Group Discussion class, while the qualitative component consisted of structured interviews that supported the quantitative data. The mixed method design allowed the researcher to gain a more holistic view of how critical thinking was developed through Focus Group Discussion activities, as well as the factors that supported or challenged this process. It enabled the researcher to capture participants' authentic expressions, experiences and perceptions of how Focus Group Discussion activities help them analyse issues, evaluate ideas and formulate arguments in English.

The research procedure consisted of four main stages: preparation, data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation. During the preparation stage, the researcher developed the research instruments, including a questionnaire consisting of 15 close-ended questions and a structured interview guide comprising five open-ended questions. In the data collection stage, quantitative data were obtained through the distribution of the questionnaire to 31 students enrolled in Focus Group Discussion class. To complement the questionnaire, qualitative data were collected through structured interviews with three students (two female students and a male student). Conducted via WhatsApp calls. The data analysis stage involved analyzing the questionnaire responses using descriptive statistic and examining the interview data to identify relevant themes. Finally, the analyzed data were interpreted to draw conclusions regarding the students' perceptions of how critical thinking was integrated into Focus Group Discussion activities.

The acquisition of quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire. The questionnaire is a data collection instrument administered by providing respondents with a set of written questions or statements to

respond [27]. The use of this questionnaire aimed at measuring students' perceptions of how critical thinking was implemented during Focus Group Discussion activities, particularly in relation to analyzing issues, evaluating ideas, and formulating arguments in English. The closed-ended questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale consisting of Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The data were obtained from the questionnaire were analysed by comparing the total actual score to the criterium score (the maximum possible score) [27]. The formula is as follows:

$$\text{Index \%} = \text{Total Actual Score} / \text{Criterium Score} \times 100 \% \quad \dots(1)$$

Total Actual Score = The actual accumulated score from respondents for a specific item or overall questionnaire.
Criterium Score = The maximum possible score (highest Likert score multiplied by the total number of respondents).

The index % score then interpreted to indicate the level of students' perceptions (0-20= very low; 21-40 = low; 41-60 = medium; 61-80 = high; 81-100- very high).

To complement and deepen the quantitative findings, qualitative data were gathered through structured interviews. In a structured interview, the researcher has prepared the same set of questions for each respondent. The interviews were conducted to clarify and support the questionnaire results by exploring students' learning experiences in greater depth. Through open-ended questions, students shared their perspectives on how Focus Group Discussion activities contributed to their critical thinking development, as well as the challenges and supporting factors encountered during the discussions. The qualitative data provided contextual explanations that enriched the quantitative results and offered a more nuanced understanding of how Focus Group Discussion activities facilitated students' abilities to analyse issues, evaluate ideas, and construct arguments in English.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study are presented through the integrations of results from the questionnaire and student interviews. These data sources provide a comprehensive understanding of how critical thinking is fostered, challenged and perceived within the Focus Group Discussion class.

3.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire results in table 1 reveal consistently high index score across all fifteen statements, ranging from 78.71 % to 90.97%. These scores suggest that students had positive perceptions of how critical thinking is implemented in the Focus Group Discussion class. The highest index score (90.97%) was recorded for the statement indicating that the overall implementation of critical thinking in Focus Group Discussion enhances students learning experience. This demonstrates that the student not only recognize the presence of critical thinking instruction but also perceive it as beneficial and impactful. High index scores were also observed for items related to evaluating different viewpoints critically, synthesizing information from various sources and responding to lecturer feedback – each exceeding 85% -- indicating that the instructional design and interactional pattern within Focus Group Discussion strongly facilitate analytical engagement. Meanwhile, the lowest scores were recorded for statements related to reflective thinking (78.71 %) and the practice of asking clarifying questions (79.35%). These findings suggest that while critical thinking skills are being developed, students may still require additional support in activities that deeper self-reflection or more active inquiry during discussions.

Table 1. Questionnaire Results on Students' Perceptions of Critical Thinking in the Focus Group Discussion Class

No.	Statements	Responses (31 respondents)					Index %
		AA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	AD (1)	
1	The Focus Group Discussion class helps me analyze issues more deeply before giving my opinion.	14	12	2	2	1	83.23
2	Discussions in the Focus Group Discussion class encourage me to evaluate different viewpoints critically.	13	16	1	1	0	86.45
3	The lecturer provides guidance that helps me think logically and systematically during discussion	15	12	2	1	1	85.16
4	The topics discussed in the Focus Group Discussion class make the discussions more meaningful and relevant to real life.	11	15	3	1	1	81.94
5	I feel more confident expressing arguments supported by evidence during Focus Group Discussion sessions.	13	12	3	2	1	81.94
6	The Focus Group Discussion activities help me identify	9	17	3	1	1	80.65

	problems clearly before discussing possible solutions.						
7	I am encouraged to ask clarifying questions during discussions to enhance my understanding.	14	10	4	2	1	81.94
8	The Focus Group Discussion class improves my ability to compare, contrast, and synthesize different ideas.	17	10	2	1	1	86.45
9	The learning atmosphere in the Focus Group Discussion class supports open-minded and respectful discussions.	13	14	2	1	1	83.87
10	The Focus Group Discussion class provides opportunities for me to practice asking clarifying questions through its activities and structure.	9	16	3	2	1	79.35
11	I often reflect on my own reasoning process during or after Focus Group Discussion activities.	9	15	4	2	1	78.71
12	The group interaction in the Focus Group Discussion class motivates me to justify my arguments with logical reasoning.	12	18	1	0	0	87.10
13	The Focus Group Discussion class encourages me to consider multiple perspectives before making a conclusion.	10	15	3	2	1	80.00
14	The lecturer's feedback helps me improve my critical thinking skills.	17	10	2	1	1	86.45
15	Overall, the implementation of critical thinking in the Focus Group Discussion class enhances my learning experience.	18	12	1	0	0	90.97

Note: AA= Absolutely Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; AD = Absolutely Disagree

3.2. Interview

Question 1 : How do the Focus Group Discussion activities help you think more critically?

Student A : "Focus Group Discussion offers a way to think critically by exchanging information and opinion. It helps me to express my arguments while gain information from other people and give feedbacks".

Student B : "Focus Group Discussion helps me think more critically because I have to listen to my friends' opinions and compare them with my own thoughts".

Student C : "Through Focus Group Discussion s, we can discuss current issues. I also have learned to think more carefully before responding and evaluate ideas more critically".

Question 2 : Can you give an example of a moment in the Focus Group Discussion class when you had to evaluate or question your classmates' ideas? What made it challenging or helpful?

Student A : "Discussing a serious topic such as Israel vs Gaza in Focus Group Discussion class. Some of their opinion and arguments has a data based on an article news, but without reading critically could led to misinformation. So i had to confirm the information based on the history. This allows me to recall my memory information of a history and what I have learned in school".

Student B : "For example, when we talked about the plastic waste problem, I had to evaluate my friend's ideas. It was a bit challenging because I was afraid of misunderstanding or offending someone, but it also helped me see new points of view".

Student C : "One memorable moment in the Focus Group Discussion was when we discussed the Palestinian issue. I supported boycotting affiliated products, but a classmate argued that it could harm local workers through layoffs. It was challenging because the topic was sensitive and required me to stay objective and polite. However, it helped to defend my opinion with more balanced reasoning, while also learning to appreciate different points of view".

Question 3 : In what ways do the lecturer's instructions or feedback support your development of critical thinking during Focus Group Discussion sessions?

Student A : "Giving our opinion about a certain topic. For example: 'What is more important, Love or Money?'. And by encouraging us to have our arguments based on article, news, or personal experience".

Student B : "The instructions and feedback from the lecturer were very helpful, because they showed me what I needed to improve so I could think more critically".

Student C : "The instructor's instructions and feedback helped me to develop my critical thinking skills during the Focus Group Discussion class. The instructor always asked us not only to express our opinions, but also to explain the reasons based on evidence and facts. Instructions such as "what is the basis of your argument?" or "try looking at it from another perspective" helped me get used to analyzing issues more deeply to make factual statements. As a result, I became more confident in constructing strong arguments and more critical in evaluating other people's opinions".

- Question 4 : What kinds of Focus Group Discussion materials or activities motivate you the most to express better reasoning or evidence-based arguments? Why?
- Student A : “An Focus Group Discussion Challenge in group. It challenges me and improve my skill to express my arguments. Also, it requires a lot of search and gain information from internet so it helps my reading comprehension too”.
- Student B : “I feel most motivated by materials like case studies or real data, because they let me give reasons and arguments based on evidence”.
- Student C : “The Focus Group Discussion materials or activities that most motivated me to express my opinions better were the discussions of social issues relevant to real life. Topics like this encouraged me to seek relevant information and evidence so that the opinions I expressed were more accurate. The discussions allowed participants to respond immediately to one another so that I need to express my opinions in a more structured, clear, and data-supported manner. This would make me think more carefully to construct strong arguments”.
- Question 5 : What challenges do you face when trying to think critically in the Focus Group Discussion class?
- Student A : “One of the challenges is not understanding or familiar enough with the topic. It needs a lot of time to find the information”.
- Student B : “My challenges are that I am not very confident in sharing my opinions, and sometimes I find it difficult to understand reference data that is quite complex”.
- Student C : “One challenge in thinking critically during Focus Group Discussion is understanding complex issues with multiple perspectives. I also need to ensure that the information I use is accurate and relevant. Listening to different opinions also requires me to stay open-minded and objective. However, this helps me learn to think more systematically and critically”.

The interview data provides further depth to support the quantitative findings. The respondents consistently described Focus Group Discussion as a space that requires them to exchange perspectives, compare ideas, and articulate argument with greater clarity. They noted that the dialogic nature of the activity force them to examine the validity of information, especially when controversial or complex topics are being discussed. The interviews also highlighted the role of the lecturer’s instruction, questions and feedback, which students perceived as instrumental in guiding them to be logical and evidence-based reasoning. At the same time students acknowledge several challenges, such as unfamiliar topics, fear of misunderstandings and interpreting complex data.

3.3. Discussion

The integration of results across data sources allows the study to address the research questions concerning supporting factors, challenges, and overall students’ perception of critical thinking in the Focus Group Discussion class.

Regarding the first research questions, the findings indicate that the development of critical thinking is supported by three interconnected elements: the structure of Focus Group Discussion activities; the role of the lecturer and the relevance of discussion topics. The interactive and collaborative nature of Focus Group Discussion encourages students to evaluate ideas, analyze issues from multiple angles, and justify their viewpoints with evidence. High index scores on statements related to evaluating different viewpoints and synthesizing ideas confirm that Focus Group Discussion creates a context in which critical engagement becomes a natural part of classroom dialogue. The interviews serve this interpretation, with students describing how the process of listening, comparing and responding to peers’ arguments pushes them to refine their thinking and expand their perspectives. This finding is relevant with the statement by Mahdi [21] that Focus Group Discussion enhances students’ attentive listening, evaluation, and constructive response.

Another factor that strongly supports critical thinking development is the lecturer guidance. Students emphasized that instructions, scaffolding questions and constructive feedback help them organize their thoughts more logically and reason more coherently. High index scores related to lecturer guidance and feedback demonstrate that students highly value their instructor’s role in shaping their cognitive processes. In addition, Interview responses affirm that encouragement to use evidence from academic articles, news reports or empirical data increase students’ confidence in formulating well-supported arguments. This suggests that pedagogical strategies that integrate explicit modelling and feedback significantly contribute to students’ critical thinking development.

A third factor pertains to the relevance and meaningfulness of discussion topics. Students responded positively to topics connected to real-world issues, explaining that these themes motivate deeper inquiry and more critical engagement. The index score for topic relevance, which remains high, indicates that authentic and contextually rich materials stimulate students’ desire to analyze information thoroughly and participate actively

in discussion. These findings underscore the importance of content selection in fostering critical thinking within discussion-based learning environments.

The second research question concerns factors that challenge the development of critical thinking in the Focus Group Discussion class. Despite the generally positive findings, several obstacles emerged from the qualitative data. Students frequently reported difficulty engaging with unfamiliar or complex topics, particularly those requiring background knowledge or interpretation of reference data. These cognitive challenges align with the lower index scores for reflection and clarifying questions, suggesting that students may struggle when required to evaluate information deeply or pose analytical questions during discussion. Additionally, affective factors were found to hinder critical thinking. Students noted feelings of insecurity in misinterpreting peers' arguments, and anxiety about contributing incorrect information. Such concerns can inhibit open inquiry and reduce willingness to engage in evaluative dialogue which are essential components of critical thinking. These imply the need for additional pedagogical support that targets both cognitive and emotional dimensions of learning.

The third research question examines students' perceptions of the integration of critical thinking into the Focus Group Discussion class. The combined results demonstrate that students perceive critical thinking as strongly embedded in Focus Group Discussion activities. High index scores across nearly all questionnaire items signify that students recognize opportunities to analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and communicate ideas critically. Interview participants likewise articulated that Focus Group Discussion enhances their reasoning abilities, improves their capacity to assess information, and encourages them to express more evidence-based arguments. Overall, students view Focus Group Discussion not simply as a discussion platform but as a learning method that actively cultivates critical thinking competencies. They also acknowledged that lecturer support and structured discussion activities play central roles in facilitating the integration of critical thinking. This is consistent with the findings of Fung, To, and Leung [28] which report that the effectiveness of group discussions in fostering students' critical thinking is determined by how teachers play their crucial role as facilitators through the use of appropriate instructional strategies. Similarly, other studies also emphasize that effective group discussions depend on teachers' facilitation skills in ensuring comfortable learning environment, meaningful interaction and the continuous development of critical thinking [29]-[31].

The findings of this study demonstrate that during the implementation of Focus Group Discussion, students exhibited critical thinking abilities as reflected in the fulfillment of Bernstein and Isaac's indicators, including identifying problems, asking clarifying questions, constructing logical arguments, using reliable evidence, and synthesizing ideas in context [32]. It also relevant with the statement by Paul and Elder [5] that critical thinking as the process of analyzing and evaluating one's own thinking to improve it, encompassing the ability to formulate clear questions, interpret relevant information, consider alternative perspectives, and communicate conclusions effectively, which were also developed through Focus Group Discussion activities. The alignment between students' perceptions and these theoretical frameworks suggests that Focus Group Discussion provides a learning environment conducive to fostering critical thinking as conceptualized in the literature.

In summary, the findings affirm that critical thinking is effectively integrated and supported within the Focus Group Discussion class, though certain challenges related to topic familiarity, confidence, and information literacy persist. Together, these results highlight the importance of carefully designed instructional strategies, meaningful content selection, and emotional scaffolding to optimize the development of critical thinking in higher education discussion settings.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that students of English education program had positive perceptions toward the integration of critical thinking into the Focus Group Discussion class. The combination of structured activities, relevant topics, and supportive lecturer guidance can foster analytical reasoning, evaluation, synthesis, and evidence-based argumentation effectively. Students reported that Focus Group Discussion encourages deeper engagement through peer interaction and exposure to diverse viewpoints. However, challenges such as unfamiliar topics, limited confidence, and difficulty analyzing complex information indicate the need for additional scaffolding. Overall, Focus Group Discussion serves as a valuable method for enhancing both English communication and critical thinking, demonstrating its relevance for competency-based language instruction.

Future studies may extend this research by examining the implementation of specific scaffolding strategies with Focus Group Discussion to address the identified challenges and by exploring the effectiveness of Focus Group Discussion in developing students' critical thinking skills through longitudinal quantitative or experimental designs. In addition, further research may focus on the development and evaluation of instructional strategies that can optimize the use of Focus Group Discussion to foster critical thinking more effectively in EFL classrooms.

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