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Entitled

EXPLORING CRITICAL READING EXPERIENCE IN ENGLISH OF EMIRATI 11th GRADE STUDENTS

by

Maryam Ali Salem AlSereidi

Faculty Advisor

Dr. Negmeldin Omer Alsheikh, Curriculum and Methods of Instruction

College of Education

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Abstract

This study aimed at exploring the critical reading experiences of Emirati 11th grade students in public high schools. A sequential explanatory mixed method design was used to answer the five research questions posed in this study. In this study, data was collected in two consecutive phases and used different instruments including a questionnaire, classroom observation, and a semi-structured interview. In the first phase of the study a total number of 11th grade students ($n=645$) participated by filling a questionnaire about their critical reading experiences. The second phase of the study featured an in-depth investigation of the teachers' and students' views about critical reading practices by means of interview ($n=10$) and classroom observations. The results of this study revealed that there is a consistency among students' self-reporting, students' views and classroom observations. The two phases of the study provided evidence that the students use basic critical reading skills and they do not use higher order critical reading skills. The results also showed that English teachers used different reading strategies and activities, the majority of these practices engaged lower order thinking skills that only required knowledge recognition and identification of factual details. Both teachers and students' views corroborated that the English curriculum used is not flexible and lack a fundamental English literature component and the curriculum assessment is based on teaching to the test. Finally, several challenges hinder the use of critical reading were expressed by teachers and students alike. These included lack of time, lack of resources, low language competency, low motivation level, lack of curriculum choices and the teachers were constrained by the curriculum. The study recommends a general reconceptualization of English curriculum contents, curriculum assessment, and teaching strategies with regard to critical reading.

Keywords: critical theory, critical thinking, higher-order-thinking, critical reading, Bloom's Taxonomy.