Students' Perceptions of Learning Critical Thinking in College English Reading Courses Through Traditional Classroom Lectures

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Abstract
This qualitative study investigates college English reading students' opinions of traditional classroom lectures, paying particular attention to how these lectures affect the growth of critical thinking. Six college students participated in semi-structured interviews for this study, which looks at their opinions on the general benefits and drawbacks of traditional lecture-based instruction. The results show that although students value the methodical information transfer and professional direction offered by traditional lectures, they also point out important disadvantages including passive learning and a lack of engagement, which impede the development of critical thinking. Based on their learning preferences, educational experiences, and course requirements, students' perceptions range significantly, according to the study. These insights enhance our knowledge of the ways in which traditional lecture techniques affect critical thinking in English reading courses and point out areas in which pedagogical innovation is needed to better support the development of critical thinking abilities. There includes a discussion of suggestions for future research directions and teaching practices.
Keywords: Traditional Classroom Lectures, College English Reading, Critical Thinking, Teaching Methods

Introduction
Developing critical thinking abilities is a primary goal of higher education in the modern educational environment, especially in college English reading classes where textual analysis and interpretation are essential. Traditional classroom lectures, characterized by systematic knowledge transmission and teacher-led instruction, remain prevalent in many institutions. However, their efficacy in promoting critical thinking among students warrants closer examination. This qualitative study aims to explore students' perceptions of traditional classroom lectures in college English reading courses and their relationship to critical thinking development. Understanding students' views on traditional lecture-based teaching methods

is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it provides insights into the strengths and limitations of this widely used pedagogical approach. Secondly, it highlights areas where traditional methods may fall short in promoting critical thinking, informing potential pedagogical adjustments. Lastly, by giving voice to students' experiences and preferences, the study contributes to a more student-centered approach to teaching, essential for enhancing educational outcomes and student satisfaction.

Literature Review
Critical Thinking and College English Reading Courses
Critical thinking is regarded as a core skill set in college English reading classes that is necessary for students to properly navigate and grasp complicated textual sources. Through critical thinking, students are encouraged to go beyond simple comprehension and to analyze, evaluate, and interpret literary works with nuance and knowledge. Students get a deeper knowledge of the subtleties and complexity found in English literature by using critical thinking to challenge presumptions, recognize biases, and participate in rigorous textual analysis (Wilson, 2016).

Teachers seek to develop students' critical reading skills by including critical thinking into college English reading classes. These texts can be non-fiction, fiction, poetry, or theater. Students gain the ability to identify underlying themes, assess the reliability of sources, and present well-supported interpretations through attentive reading and critical analysis. Additionally, critical thinking develops students' intellectual curiosity and pushes them to consider many viewpoints, which deepens their understanding of the range and depth of English literature (Yuan et al., 2022).

Students not only improve their academic performance but also gain transferable skills that are crucial in many parts of their personal and professional lives as they hone their critical thinking abilities in the setting of college English reading classes. Critical thinking skills set students up for success in the classroom and beyond by facilitating effective communication, innovative problem-solving, and informed decision-making (Buzduga & Rodrigues, 2021). Critical thinking is therefore a fundamental component of college English reading courses, enabling learners to develop into perceptive readers, deliberate interpreters, and active participants in the literary community.

Teaching Methods and Critical Thinking Development
The way that teaching approaches are chosen has a significant impact on how students develop their critical thinking abilities. Although traditional lecture-based methods have been used historically, active learning and collaborative instructional strategies are becoming more and more popular as effective ways to promote critical thinking (Cáceres et al., 2020). The effectiveness of interactive approaches in promoting deeper involvement and higher-order thinking skills has been highlighted by comparative research (Yuan et al., 2022).

Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that active learning techniques like problem-based learning, group discussions, case studies, and experiential learning foster critical thinking by giving students the chance to apply abstract ideas to actual situations, participate in peer discussion, and consider various viewpoints (Barta et al., 2022; Jiang, 2022; Seki et al., 2023). These instructional strategies support the development of critical thinking abilities

necessary for both academic performance and lifetime learning by encouraging students to think critically, assess the evidence, and formulate well-reasoned arguments (Chen et al., 2024; Ivlev et al., 2021; Moeiniasl et al., 2022).

Traditional Classroom Lectures

There is a wide range of opinions among students on traditional classroom lectures. Some students value lectures because they are well-organized and provide authoritative advice, whereas others find them to be inert and have limited opportunities for involvement (Sarker et al., 2023; Dzobo, 2023). Understanding and identifying these many points of view is essential to developing effective teaching strategies for college-level English reading courses.

Additionally, research has demonstrated the complex ways in which students see traditional lectures, bringing to light subtle factors including cultural backgrounds, individual learning preferences, and past educational experiences (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004). These differing viewpoints highlight how crucial it is to implement a student-centered strategy that recognizes and takes into account the wide range of learning requirements and preferences present in the classroom.

Furthermore, investigating the fundamental elements influencing how students view conventional lectures—such as methods of instruction, methods of engagement, and classroom dynamics—provides insightful information for improving the efficacy of teaching strategies in college English reading courses (Ng, 2023; Kozanitis & Nenciovici, 2023; Gumartifa et al.,2023). Teachers can modify their teaching strategies to produce more effective and interesting learning experiences that meet the different needs of their students by taking into account the subtle differences in students' attitudes toward standard lectures.

In a summary, the current landscape of research extensively investigates the influence of teaching methodologies on critical thinking development. However, there exists a notable gap in the literature regarding the examination of student perceptions of traditional lectures in relation to critical thinking development. This study endeavors to bridge this gap by delving into student perspectives, thereby facilitating the formulation of more effective pedagogical strategies that align with the needs and preferences of college English reading students. Moreover, while existing studies have explored the efficacy of various teaching methods in fostering critical thinking skills, few have specifically focused on understanding how students perceive traditional lectures in the context of critical thinking development. By addressing this gap in the literature, the present study aims to provide valuable insights into the role of traditional lectures in promoting critical thinking among college English reading students. Furthermore, investigating the factors that shape student perceptions of traditional lectures, including instructional delivery, classroom dynamics, and student engagement, can offer valuable insights for enhancing the effectiveness of teaching practices in college English reading courses. By shedding light on the nuances of student attitudes towards traditional lectures, educators can tailor their instructional approaches to create more engaging and impactful learning experiences conducive to critical thinking development.

Methodology

In this section, the methodology employed to conduct the qualitative study on exploring students' perceptions of traditional classroom lectures in college English reading courses and

their relation to critical thinking development is delineated. The study adopts a qualitative research design, aiming to delve deeply into students' perspectives on traditional classroom lectures and their impact on critical thinking development. Grounded theory serves as the overarching theoretical framework, facilitating the emergence of themes and patterns from the data without predetermined hypotheses. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of students' experiences and viewpoints regarding traditional lectures in the context of critical thinking.

Research Objectives and Research Questions
The research objectives and questions that guided the qualitative study investigating students' perceptions of traditional classroom lectures in college English reading courses and their relationship to critical thinking development.

Research Objectives
RO1: To explore students' perceptions of traditional classroom lectures in college English reading courses.

RO2: To understand how traditional classroom lectures influence the development of critical thinking skills among college students.

RO3: To identify the strengths and weaknesses of traditional classroom lectures from the perspective of critical thinking development.

RO4: To examine the diversity in students' opinions and preferences regarding traditional classroom lectures and their impact on critical thinking.

Research Questions
RQ1: What are students' overall perceptions of traditional classroom lectures in college English reading courses?

RQ2: How do traditional classroom lectures contribute to the development of critical thinking skills among college students?

RQ3: What are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of traditional classroom lectures in fostering critical thinking development?

RQ4: How do students' opinions and preferences vary concerning traditional classroom lectures, and what factors contribute to these differences?

Informants
Participants were selected based on specific criteria to ensure relevance to the research objectives, encompassing students enrolled in college-level English reading courses with diverse academic backgrounds, English proficiency levels, and learning preferences. They were required to have experienced traditional classroom lectures as part of their course curriculum. Recruitment involved collaboration with instructors and departmental coordinators, with information about the study disseminated to potential participants. Interested students volunteered to participate, providing informed consent before their involvement. The sample size was determined based on data saturation principles, ensuring adequate representation of diverse perspectives and experiences. Informants comprised college students from various disciplines and academic levels, reflecting diversity in age, gender, cultural background, and English language proficiency. Efforts were made to include students with different levels of familiarity and comfort with traditional classroom lecture formats.

Table 1
Informants' Profile

Participant ID	Age	Gender	Academic Background	English Proficiency	Learning Preferences	Experience with Traditional Lectures
A	21	Female	Business Administration	Advanced	Visual Learner	Moderate
B	19	Female	Social Sciences	Intermediate	Reading/Writing Learner	Limited
C	20	Male	Literature	Intermediate	Multimodal Learner	Moderate
D	23	Male	Engineering	Advanced	Auditory Learner	Extensive
E	20	Female	Social Sciences	Beginner	Kinesthetic Learner	Limited
F	22	Male	Humanities	Advanced	Multimodal Learner	Extensive

Data Collection Methods

Data is primarily collected through semi-structured interviews, which afford flexibility for open-ended questioning and probing to elicit rich narratives from participants. This method ensures that participants have the freedom to express their thoughts and experiences fully, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of their perceptions.

Data Analysis Procedures

Thematic analysis serves as the primary method for analyzing the interview transcripts, involving a systematic approach to identify, code, and categorize themes and patterns within the data. This process begins with familiarization with the data, followed by the generation of initial codes to capture meaningful segments of text related to students' perceptions of traditional classroom lectures and critical thinking development. An iterative process is then employed, where codes are continually compared and refined, and themes are identified through constant comparison across the dataset. This iterative approach ensures the depth and richness of the analysis, enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Additionally, the use of thematic analysis allows for flexibility in capturing both anticipated and emergent themes, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the data and facilitating a nuanced understanding of students' perspectives.

Research Result and Discussion

The themes and sub-themes identified during the study, shedding light on the nuances of students' perspectives on traditional lectures and their relationship with critical thinking development. The table 2 provides a clear overview of the main themes and sub-themes derived from the research findings.

Table 2
Themes and Sub-themes of the Finding

Themes	Sub-themes
Overall Perspectives on Traditional Classroom Lectures	● Positive Evaluation ● Negative Evaluation
Advantages of Traditional Classroom Lectures	● Systematic Knowledge Transmission ● Expert Guidance from Teachers ● Efficient Time Management
Disadvantages of Traditional Classroom Lectures	● Lack of Interactivity ● Passive Learning Experience ● Inadequate Individualized Learning
Student Preferences	● Differences in Learning Styles ● Varied Academic Backgrounds ● Course-specific Requirements

Overall Perspectives on Traditional Classroom Lectures

Students have expressed various viewpoints regarding traditional classroom lectures in college English reading courses. Some students positively evaluated these lectures, emphasizing the systematic transmission of knowledge and detailed guidance provided by instructors. One student remarked, "Traditional classroom lectures have allowed me to systematically understand various techniques and strategies for English reading. The teacher's explanations are very detailed and helpful." Conversely, others negatively evaluated traditional lectures, highlighting the lack of interaction and the passive learning experience. A student stated, "In traditional classrooms, I feel like I'm mostly passively receiving knowledge, lacking interaction with the teacher and classmates, making the learning process somewhat dull." Additionally, another student noted, "In traditional classrooms, I feel like I'm mostly listening to lectures rather than actively thinking and analyzing problems." These differing perspectives underscore the varied experiences students have with traditional classroom lectures, highlighting the need for further exploration of their effectiveness in cultivating critical thinking skills.

Advantages of Traditional Classroom Lectures

One of the sub-themes under the theme "Advantages of Traditional Classroom Lectures" is "Systematic Knowledge Transmission." This sub-theme is characterized by the systematic delivery of information during lectures, facilitating structured learning experiences for students. Participants expressed appreciation for the organized manner in which content was presented, highlighting its effectiveness in aiding their comprehension of complex reading techniques and strategies. For instance, one student remarked, "The systematic approach of traditional lectures helped me understand complex reading techniques and strategies more effectively." Another participant emphasized, "The structured delivery of information in lectures enabled me to build a solid foundation of knowledge in English reading."

In traditional classroom lectures, students benefit from the expertise and personalized guidance provided by their teachers. The teachers' extensive knowledge and experience enrich students' understanding of complex reading materials. As one participant noted, "The expertise and experience of our teachers have been invaluable in guiding us through complex

reading materials. Their insights and explanations have greatly enriched my understanding of English texts." Additionally, the personalized instruction tailored to individual learning needs ensures that students receive targeted support. This personalized approach not only enhances critical thinking skills but also fosters a deeper appreciation for literature, as expressed by another participant: "The personalized instruction provided by our teachers has been instrumental in addressing our individual learning needs. Their guidance has not only enhanced my critical thinking skills but also fostered a deeper appreciation for literature."

Traditional classroom lectures offer efficient time management, allowing for the dissemination of a large amount of content within a limited timeframe. One participant highlighted this efficiency, stating, "The structured nature of traditional lectures allows teachers to cover a vast amount of content efficiently. This has been particularly beneficial in our English reading courses, where we need to grasp various concepts and strategies." Moreover, the organized delivery of information during lectures optimizes students' learning experiences by maximizing the use of available class time. Another student emphasized this point, saying, "I appreciate how traditional lectures optimize our learning time by delivering information in an organized manner. This ensures that we make the most out of our class sessions and stay on track with the course curriculum."

Disadvantages of Traditional Classroom Lectures

Traditional classroom lectures often suffer from a lack of interactivity, which can impede student engagement and participation. One student remarked, "In traditional lectures, there is minimal interaction between the teacher and students. This makes the class feel more like a one-way communication rather than a dynamic learning environment." Additionally, the absence of interactive elements can lead to a monotonous and less stimulating learning experience. Another student expressed this sentiment, saying, "The lack of interaction in traditional lectures makes the sessions monotonous. Without opportunities to discuss or ask questions, it becomes difficult to stay engaged and fully grasp the material."

Traditional classroom lectures often result in a passive learning experience, where students are primarily receivers of information rather than active participants in the learning process. One student commented, "In traditional lectures, I feel like I'm just absorbing information without really engaging with it. There's little opportunity to discuss or apply what we're learning in real-time." This passive approach can hinder the development of critical thinking skills, as students are not encouraged to question or analyze the material presented. Another student noted, "The lecture format makes it hard to think critically. We just listen and take notes, but we don't really get to explore the concepts deeply or challenge our understanding."

Traditional classroom lectures often fall short in providing individualized learning experiences, leaving students with diverse needs unaddressed. One student remarked, "The lectures are designed for a general audience, so sometimes my specific questions or difficulties are not covered. I often feel lost when the pace doesn't match my understanding." This one-size-fits-all approach fails to cater to the varied learning paces and styles of different students. Another student shared, "I wish the lectures could be more tailored to different learning speeds. Some parts are too fast for me, while others are too slow, making it hard to stay focused and engaged."

Student Preferences

Students exhibit diverse learning styles, which significantly influence their preferences for instructional methods. One student noted, "I learn best through interactive discussions and hands-on activities, but traditional lectures don't cater to this style. I find it hard to stay engaged just listening to a lecture." This highlights the mismatch between some students' active learning preferences and the passive nature of traditional lectures. Another student stated, "I prefer structured and detailed explanations that I can review at my own pace, which traditional lectures provide. However, I know some of my classmates struggle with this format and prefer more dynamic learning environments." This comment underscores the need for varied teaching approaches to accommodate different learning styles within the same classroom.

Students' academic backgrounds play a crucial role in shaping their preferences for learning methods. One student mentioned, "Coming from a strong language background, I find traditional lectures helpful for reinforcing my existing knowledge and diving deeper into complex topics." This comment illustrates how students with a solid academic foundation in the subject may benefit from the structured delivery of traditional lectures. Another student remarked, "My previous education didn't emphasize critical thinking as much, so I struggle to keep up with the pace of traditional lectures. I need more interactive and supportive teaching methods to build my skills." This highlights the challenges faced by students with less robust academic backgrounds, indicating a preference for more engaging and supportive instructional approaches.

Students' preferences for teaching methods can vary significantly based on the specific requirements of their courses. One student explained, "In a course focused heavily on theoretical concepts, traditional lectures provide the necessary depth and comprehensive coverage I need to grasp the material thoroughly." This statement underscores the suitability of traditional lectures for courses that demand extensive coverage of theoretical knowledge. Another student expressed, "For courses that emphasize practical application and skill development, I prefer interactive and hands-on learning methods over traditional lectures, which seem too rigid and disconnected from real-world practice." This highlights how the nature of the course content can drive a preference for more dynamic and applied learning approaches.

Conclusion and Enlightenment

The aim of this study was to explore students' perceptions of traditional classroom lectures in college English reading courses, particularly in relation to the development of critical thinking skills. The findings provide valuable insights into how students view traditional lectures and their impact on learning outcomes.

Conclusion of the Finding

Overall Perceptions of Traditional Classroom Lectures: Many students appreciate the structured delivery and systematic knowledge transmission offered by traditional lectures. They value the expert guidance from teachers, which helps them understand complex concepts and improve their reading skills. Conversely, some students criticize traditional lectures for their passive nature and lack of interactivity. These students feel that the one-way communication limits their engagement and critical thinking development.

Advantages of Traditional Classroom Lectures: Traditional lectures are praised for their ability to deliver content in a clear, organized manner, which aids in the comprehensive understanding of course material. Students highly value the expertise and experience of their instructors, which they believe enhances their learning. Additionally, traditional lectures are seen as an efficient way to cover a large amount of material within a limited time.

Disadvantages of Traditional Classroom Lectures: Many students feel that traditional lectures do not provide enough opportunities for interaction, which hinders their active participation and critical thinking development. The passive nature of traditional lectures can lead to a lack of active engagement, which is essential for critical thinking. Additionally, some students feel that traditional lectures do not cater to their individual learning needs, making it difficult for them to keep up or stay interested.

Analysis of Student Perspectives and Preferences: Students have diverse learning styles, and their preferences for teaching methods vary accordingly. Some prefer lectures for their clear and structured delivery, while others find them boring and prefer more interactive sessions. Students' academic backgrounds also influence their perceptions of traditional lectures; those with a strong foundation in English find them useful because they build on their existing knowledge, whereas those with a weaker background struggle to keep up with the pace. Additionally, the nature of the course content drives students' preferences for teaching methods; traditional lectures are favored for theoretical courses, while hands-on learning methods are preferred for practical subjects.

Enlightenment

The qualitative finding shows that students have mixed perceptions of traditional classroom lectures. Many appreciate the structured delivery and systematic knowledge transmission, valuing the expert guidance from teachers that aids in understanding complex concepts and improving reading skills. Traditional lectures are praised for delivering content clearly and efficiently, leveraging instructors' expertise. However, criticisms include their passive nature and lack of interactivity, which limit student engagement and critical thinking development. Additionally, traditional lectures may not cater to individual learning needs, leading to difficulties in keeping up and maintaining interest. Preferences for teaching methods vary among students, influenced by their learning styles, academic backgrounds, and the nature of the course content. While some prefer the clarity and structure of lectures, others find them boring and favor more interactive sessions. Theoretical courses benefit more from traditional lectures, whereas practical subjects require hands-on learning methods.

The findings of this study highlight the need for a balanced approach to teaching that incorporates both traditional lectures and interactive methods. Here are some recommendations for educators:

Blend Teaching Methods: To maximize student engagement and promote the development of critical thinking skills, it is beneficial to combine traditional lectures with interactive and collaborative activities. Traditional lectures can provide a structured delivery of foundational knowledge and expert guidance from teachers, while interactive methods such as group discussions, peer teaching, and hands-on projects can foster active participation and deeper understanding. This blended approach caters to diverse learning styles and preferences, ensuring that students who thrive in a structured environment can

benefit from lectures, while those who prefer more dynamic and interactive learning experiences can engage more fully. For instance, a lecture on reading strategies can be followed by small group discussions where students apply these strategies to different texts, encouraging critical analysis and peer feedback. By integrating various teaching methods, educators can create a more inclusive and stimulating learning environment that supports the holistic development of all students.

Encourage Active Participation: Introducing opportunities for discussion, questions, and interactive exercises within traditional lectures can significantly enhance student engagement and the development of critical thinking skills. Traditional lectures often involve one-way communication, which can lead to passive learning experiences. To counter this, teachers can incorporate moments of interaction throughout their lectures. For example, after explaining a complex concept, the lecturer can pause to ask open-ended questions that prompt students to reflect on the material and apply their understanding. This not only keeps students actively involved but also encourages them to think critically about the content.

Personalize Learning: Providing additional resources and support tailored to individual student needs can help address the limitations of traditional lectures and ensure that all students benefit equally. Traditional lectures often adopt a one-size-fits-all approach, which may not accommodate the diverse learning styles and varying academic backgrounds of students. To mitigate this, instructors can implement personalized learning strategies that cater to the unique needs of each student.

Adapt to Course Requirements: Tailoring the teaching methods to the specific requirements of the course content can maximize their effectiveness. For theoretical subjects, structured lectures may be appropriate, while practical courses might benefit from more hands-on and interactive approaches. Recognizing the unique demands and objectives of each course allows instructors to design instructional strategies that align closely with the learning outcomes.

In conclusion, while traditional classroom lectures have their merits, incorporating more dynamic and interactive elements can better support the development of critical thinking skills in college English reading courses. This study's insights can inform future pedagogical strategies, making them more responsive to student needs and learning preferences.

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