

Critical Thinking in Context: Practice at an American Liberal Arts University in Egypt

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For the degree of: PhD

Department: School of Education

Date: September, 2013.

Abstract

The American University in Cairo (AUC) considers critical thinking (CT) essential for academic success, global employability, and effective citizenship. Nevertheless, CT remains a highly contested notion, with insufficient evidence that universities succeed in developing it. This study explores how CT develops in practice for diverse AUC students. After exploring different understandings of CT, I synthesize a working definition, then draw on interview evidence from students' perceptions of AUC experiences that contributed to their CT, illuminated further by faculty and administrator interviews, and relevant AUC documentation and research.

Students' incoming CT levels differed according to high school experience, parental attitudes, and interaction with diverse others. Key factors fostering CT were found to be: liberal arts education, rhetoric and composition courses, opportunities for learning situated in authentic contexts, and intercultural learning. The thesis explores how student backgrounds and the institutional structure result in inequalities in students' access to, and capacity to participate in, those beneficial AUC experiences, and shows the limited notion of criticality developed through most of these experiences - findings that are applicable to other university contexts. I conclude that AUC needs a critical contextual approach to curriculum development and implementation: an approach that encourages stakeholders to continually question the values behind learning experiences, recognize power struggles within the learning environment, address ways of supporting students with diverse capabilities and privileges in order to develop their capacity for CT, and question what it means to be critical in Egypt's changing, uncertain context.

Egypt's struggle for democracy after years of oppression and corruption needs a conception of critical citizenship that involves both a social dimension focusing on empathy, and a critical action dimension promoting a constructive social justice orientation. While the study addresses AUC stakeholders, it has relevance for all educational institutions aiming to develop CT in bi/multicultural contexts. Such institutions include Western-style universities located in Arab/Muslim countries, Western universities with large numbers of international students, and universities with local but diverse students and staff.

Acknowledgements

Although the PhD is portrayed as a lonely journey, I could not have completed this work without the support of others.

My gratitude goes first to those who have mentored me and supervised my thesis at the University of Sheffield, first professor Jon Nixon, and then Dr. Alan Skelton. I would also like to thank my former M.Ed. tutor, Dr. Nicholas Bowskill, whose faith in me has helped me get to where I am today.

I am also thankful to a great number of people at AUC, those who generously participated in this study directly and indirectly. Special thanks to Dr. Aziza Ellozy and Dr. Pandeli Glavanis for helpful critical feedback and encouragement throughout the thesis, and for always pushing me towards completion. Also thanks to my colleagues at CLT with whom critical discussions helped me develop my thinking, especially Ahmad, Amal, Azza, Caroline, Gihan, Hoda, and Sandy. Discussions with my colleagues at Soliya and Nahdet el-Mahrousa NGOs have also influenced my thinking.

I owe AUC library an enormous debt. Jayme Spencer for giving me access at the toughest times, Hoda Elridi and her document delivery team for bringing me works I would otherwise have not had access to, Steve Urgola from archiving for helping me get difficult sources related to AUC, and Lamia El Nakib and Fatma Abdel Meguid who helped me in so many ways beyond the call of duty. A special thank you to the late Lesley Tweddle, whose presence in my life brought light and energy at a time where I needed it most. I miss her every day.

A special thank you to my colleagues at the Graduate School of Education at AUC, especially Aleya Kerdany who has been a mentor and critical friend, and Dr. Russanne Hozayin, with whom every single conversation is a learning journey! And to the person who first taught me educational psychology, my professor, Hala Abdel Hak, who also inspired me to start graduate studies in the UK.

I also wish to thank Dr. Tim Sullivan (former AUC provost) for his support for this research from beginning to end (and especially near the very end!) and David Wheeler from Al-Fanar, who helped and encouraged me to disseminate my first journalistic article related to this research.

Thanks to Sanaa Khabbar and Soraya Altorki for helping me find other theses previously written about AUC.

I also thank everyone who has been my student. Every teaching moment is a learning experience for me, and much of the thinking that went into this thesis comes from reflections on my teaching and with my students.

I cannot possibly name every individual, but I hope some people will recognize themselves in this: thanks to everyone who has helped me complete this thesis in any way, be it by reading drafts of my work, discussing parts of it with me, just being an inspiration or even just by encouraging me to finish! Including the facebook and Twitter communities! And everyone who has had faith in me. I hope I have not disappointed you.

And again, I cannot thank my mother and late father enough for encouraging me to make this dream come true.

Dedication

For my parents, without whom this would have been impossible; for Hoda, for whom I would do the impossible; for Fouad, who tolerated the impossible. And for Egypt - anything is possible.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
Dedication.....	5
Table of Contents.....	6
Part I: Context.....	16
1 Social and Institutional Context.....	17
1.1 AUC and the Promise of Critical Thinking.....	17
1.1.1 Significance of this Study.....	17
1.1.2 Importance of CT for Egypt and the Region.....	18
1.1.3 Higher Education in Egypt.....	21
1.2 AUC and its Role in Egypt.....	21
1.2.1 AUC Student Population.....	23
1.2.2 How AUC Claims to Develop CT.....	25
1.2.3 Is AUC the Ideal Place to Develop Critical Thinking for Egyptians?.....	28
1.3 Conclusion.....	30
2 The Field of Critical Thinking.....	31
2.1 Overview.....	31
2.2 What is CT?.....	31
2.2.1 Developmental Models.....	32
2.2.2 Understanding CT.....	35
2.2.3 Traditional Conceptions.....	39
2.2.4 Some Alternative Conceptions.....	41
2.2.4.1 Brookfield: CT as more than logic.....	41
2.2.4.2 Barnett's Critical Being.....	42
2.2.4.3 Critical Pedagogy.....	43
2.3 Key Debates on CT.....	46
2.3.1 Is CT Subject-Specific?.....	47
2.3.1.1 Curricular Approaches to Developing CT.....	49

2.3.2	Is CT Biased?.....	52
2.3.2.1	Cultural Bias	52
2.3.2.2	Gender Bias	55
2.3.3	Summary of CT Debates.....	58
2.4	Research Focus.....	58
2.5	Conclusion.....	60
3	Curriculum Approaches	61
3.1	Overview	61
3.2	Four Basic Curriculum Approaches	62
3.2.1	Curriculum as Content	62
3.2.2	Curriculum as Product.....	63
3.2.3	Curriculum as Process	66
3.2.4	Curriculum as Praxis.....	68
3.2.4.1	The Hidden Curriculum	70
3.2.4.2	Reflecting on Dialogue/Discussion as a Pedagogy for Developing CT	72
3.3	University-Based Curriculum Approaches	74
3.3.1	Liberal Arts Curriculum	74
3.3.2	Curriculum as engagement.....	74
3.3.3	Socially Critical Vocationalism.....	77
3.4	Conclusion: How Curriculum Approaches Are Used Throughout the Thesis.....	78
3.5	Part I Conclusion	80
Part II:	Methodology	81
4	Research Methodology	82
4.1	Overview	82
4.2	Objectives and Research Questions.....	82
4.3	Educational Research Paradigms	83
4.3.1	Positivist	84
4.3.1.1	Criticisms	85
4.3.2	Interpretive	87
4.3.2.1	Criticisms	89

4.3.3	Critical/Emancipatory	90
4.3.3.1	Criticisms.....	91
4.3.4	Positioning myself in relation to these paradigms.....	92
4.4	My Research Approach	96
4.5	Positioning This Study within CT Empirical Studies	101
4.6	Judging Quality.....	105
4.6.1	Researcher Lens	107
4.6.2	Participant Lens.....	109
4.6.3	External Reviewer Lens	112
4.7	Introducing my Research Design	113
4.7.1	Interviewing as a Research Method.....	114
4.7.2	Defining CT for the Purpose of this Research	117
4.8	Research Design and Implementation	121
4.8.1	Phase I.....	121
4.8.1.1	Description	121
4.8.1.2	Methodological Issues and Positionality.....	125
4.8.1.3	Ethical Issues	126
4.8.1.4	Implementation	127
4.8.2	Phase II.....	128
4.8.2.1	Description	128
4.8.2.2	Methodological Issues and Positionality.....	128
4.8.2.3	Ethical Issues	129
4.8.2.4	Implementation	129
4.8.2.4.1	Pilot Interviews	129
4.8.2.5	Student Interviews.....	130
4.8.3	Phase III.....	130
4.8.3.1	Description	131
4.8.3.2	Methodological Issues and Positionality.....	131
4.8.3.3	Ethical Issues	132
4.8.3.4	Implementation	133

4.9	Methodological Challenges.....	135
4.9.1	Changes to Personal Circumstances	135
4.9.2	Changes to AUC Context	138
4.10	Conclusion.....	139
Part III: Understanding CT at AUC.....		140
5	Contextual Factors Affecting CT.....	141
5.1	Introduction	141
5.2	Introducing the Students	142
5.3	Factors outside AUC.....	144
5.3.1	High school.....	146
5.3.1.1	General Encouragement/Discouragement of Critical Thinking	146
5.3.1.2	Practice in Critical Reading and Writing, In-class Discussion	148
5.3.1.3	General Outlook on School versus AUC	149
5.3.2	Family and friends.....	150
5.4	Extra-curricular factors in/out of AUC	151
5.4.1	Intercultural Interaction.....	151
5.4.2	Experiential Learning Situated in Authentic Contexts (in/out of AUC).....	153
5.5	Academic/Curricular Factors within AUC.....	153
5.6	Conclusion.....	155
6	Liberal Arts Education	156
6.1	Chapter Introduction	156
6.2	What is a LAE?.....	157
6.2.1	Emphasis on Content: Specific Content and Content Variety	160
6.2.2	Emphasis on Teaching Methods	162
6.3	Vocational/Professional versus Liberal Education.....	163
6.4	Defending Elitism: Nussbaum’s “Cultivating Humanity”	165
6.5	AUC as a Liberal Arts Institution	168
6.5.1	Approach to this Section.....	168
6.5.2	Situating AUC within the Liberal Arts Continuum.....	168
6.5.3	Learning Outcomes Emphasized at AUC.....	169

6.5.4	Liberal Arts Content and Content Variety: AUC’s Core Curriculum	171
6.5.5	Teaching at AUC.....	172
6.5.6	Case Studies of LAE at AUC	175
6.5.6.1	Case study 1: Successful but Painful Adjustment: Noha.....	175
6.5.6.2	Case Study 2: How Liberal Can Professional Disciplines Get?	178
6.5.6.3	Case study 3: In-depth - Scientific Thinking as a Liberal Arts Course.....	181
6.6	Discussion.....	185
6.6.1	Inequalities among Students	185
6.6.2	Tension between Professional and Liberal Arts Disciplines.....	188
6.6.3	Teaching Quality	189
6.6.4	Whose Knowledge Is It?.....	194
6.6.5	AUC Meeting its Goals: Where’s the Action?	199
6.6.5.1	Where is the Action?.....	200
6.6.5.2	AUC’s Response to January 25 2011	202
6.7	Conclusion.....	203
7	Developing CT through Writing	204
7.1	Chapter Overview	204
7.2	Teaching CT through Academic Writing.....	204
7.3	Writing at AUC	206
7.3.1	Rhetoric and Composition: Curriculum and Pedagogy	206
7.3.2	Student, Faculty and Administrator views on CT Development in RHET.....	210
7.3.2.1	Questioning.....	210
7.3.2.2	Evaluating Sources of Information.....	211
7.3.2.3	Making One’s Own Argument.....	212
7.3.2.4	Metacognition.....	213
7.3.2.5	Dispositions	214
7.3.2.6	Critical Action	214
7.3.2.7	Summary	214
7.4	Discussion.....	215
7.4.1	What kind of CT?.....	216

7.4.2	Problems of Transfer?	219
7.4.2.1	CT Taught Out of Context?.....	221
7.4.2.2	RHET Marginalized?	222
7.4.3	Challenges and cultural issues of teaching thinking through writing to non-native speakers	223
7.4.3.1	Differences in Linguistic Abilities within the Same Class	224
7.4.3.2	Persistent Linguistic Weaknesses Affecting CT	225
7.4.3.3	Cultural Aversion to Conflict in Discussions.....	226
7.5	Conclusion.....	228
8	Experiential Learning in Authentic Contexts.....	229
8.1	Overview	229
8.2	Authentic Learning and CT.....	230
8.2.1	Extracurricular Activities and CT	230
8.2.2	Work Experience and CT	231
8.2.3	Developing CT via Authentic Learning	232
8.3	Authentic Experiences outside the Official Curriculum	234
8.3.1	Developing Social Awareness via Extracurricular Activities in General	235
8.3.1.1	Comparing Kamal’s Experience with Other Students’	237
8.3.1.2	Students Who Avoided Extracurricular Activities	238
8.3.2	Developing Political Awareness via Model United Nations.....	240
8.3.2.1	Effect of MUN on Osman’s CT.....	241
8.3.2.2	MUN at School but Not Beyond.....	243
8.3.3	Developing CT in the World of Work via Internships.....	244
8.3.3.1	Student Experiences with Internships	245
8.3.3.2	How AUC’s CAPS Office Helps	247
8.3.4	Summary of Extracurricular and Internship Experiences	249
8.4	Classroom-Based Authentic Experiences.....	250
8.4.1	Social Awareness via CBL in RHET	251
8.4.2	Political Awareness via role play and case studies in Political Science.....	252
8.4.3	Awareness of World of Work via Field Trips and Case Studies in Engineering.....	254

8.4.4	Summary of Authentic Learning in Courses.....	256
8.5	Discussion.....	257
8.5.1	Quality of Experience – how authentic is the learning?	257
8.5.2	Numbing or Encouraging Transformative Action?.....	258
8.5.3	Community Service as a Prerequisite to Full-fledged Political Civic Engagement ..	260
8.5.3.1	Where is the Critical Action? (revisited)	260
8.5.3.2	What the Research Says.....	261
8.5.3.3	What about AUC?	262
8.5.3.4	Sensitivity of AUC’s Position	264
8.6	Conclusion.....	265
9	Intercultural Learning	267
9.1	Overview	267
9.2	Intercultural Learning, Multiculturalism, Globalization and Internationalization.....	268
9.2.1	Globalization, internationalization – drivers for intercultural learning.....	268
9.2.2	Different Conceptions of Multicultural and Intercultural Learning?	270
9.3	CT and Intercultural Learning.....	275
9.4	Intercultural Learning at AUC	280
9.5	Academic Intercultural Experiences: Soliya, Comparative Religion and International Exchange	283
9.5.1	Soliya	283
9.5.1.1	Discussion of the Veil	286
9.5.1.2	Discussion of Homosexuality	287
9.5.1.3	Misunderstanding by Facilitator	288
9.5.1.4	Quiet Student.....	289
9.5.1.5	Discussion: Issues with Soliya	289
9.5.2	Comparative Religion.....	292
9.5.3	International Exchange	295
9.6	Non-Academic Intercultural Experiences	297
9.6.1	Noha & International Internship.....	297
9.6.2	Interaction with Diverse and International Students: Rare at AUC.....	299

9.6.2.1	The Problem.....	300
9.7	Discussion and Conclusion.....	303
Part IV:	Discussion, Conclusion and Reflection.....	307
10	Discussion.....	308
10.1	Chapter Overview	308
10.2	A Broad Discussion of AUC's Curriculum	308
10.2.1	Asking Critical Curriculum Questions.....	308
10.2.2	Western Knowledge, Postcolonial Context.....	310
10.2.3	Reproducing Inequality	313
10.2.4	Addressing Cultural Relevance.....	316
10.2.5	Addressing Fragmented Efforts	317
10.2.6	Glimmers of Hope	319
10.3	Concluding Remarks.....	321
11	Conclusion.....	322
11.1	Chapter Overview	322
11.2	Summary of Findings.....	322
11.2.1	Introduction	322
11.2.2	Whose Responsibility Is It?	324
11.2.3	My Recommendation.....	326
11.3	Key Contribution to the Field Revisiting CT	327
11.3.1	So How Do I View CT Now?.....	328
11.3.1.1	What is CT for? Critical Citizenship	328
11.3.1.2	A Conception of CT.....	329
11.4	Reflections on Methodology.....	331
11.4.1	Challenge of the Changing Egyptian Context.....	331
11.4.2	Ethical Struggles	334
11.4.2.1	Access to Confidential Information.....	334
11.4.2.2	Biting the Hand that Feeds?.....	335
11.4.3	Limitations of Research.....	336
11.4.3.1	Definition of CT	336

11.4.3.2	Students Excluded from the Research	339
11.4.3.3	A Self-Critique	340
11.4.3.4	Over-Representing RHET?.....	342
11.4.3.5	Where is the Philosophy?	344
11.4.3.5.1	A side note on philosophy	345
11.5	Personal Growth	346
11.5.1	Growth as a Researcher	346
11.5.2	Growth as a Teacher	348
11.6	Recommendations for Further Research.....	351
11.6.1	For AUC	351
11.6.2	Beyond AUC	353
11.7	Chapter and Thesis Conclusion	354
11.8	Epilogue.....	354
	References	356
	Appendices.....	388
	Appendix A: Primary Research Documents	388
1	Pre-Interview Questionnaire.....	388
2	Interview Guide for Semi-Structured Student Interviews	389
3	Interview Guide for Faculty Loosely-Structured Interviews	397
	Appendix B: List of Instructors/Administrators interviewed	398
	Appendix C: Student Interview Results by Question	400
1.	Questioning: authority/media	400
2.	Recognizing alternative viewpoints (Perry – progresses through Multiplicity, Relativism, Contextualism)	400
3.	Evaluating sources of information/evidence (evaluation with sub-skills assessing claims & assessing arguments)	401
4.	Synthesis/Justifying own claims logically to self and others of various audiences (Facione 1990).....	401
5.	Metacognition/reflection (in critical pedagogy but also Facione, 1990: self-regulation with sub-skills self-examination & self-correction.....	401
6.	Ability to take critical action in the larger socio-political sphere.....	401

7. Some Critical Dispositions.....	402
8. Perception: Does CT ability vary according to discipline – do individuals think they will use it differently in disciplines other than their own?	402
Appendix D: Different Definitions of LAE.....	403
Emphasis on Intent	403
Emphasis on Consequence	404
Appendix E: Critique of Nussbaum's Model of LAE	406
Appendix F: AUC’s Core Curriculum Design.....	408
1 Evolution of the Core Curriculum: Comparison of Three Versions of the Core Curriculum ...	408
2 Examples of Courses for Various Requirements.....	411
3 AUC vs. Aspects of Liberal Arts in Literature.....	416
4 Comparison of Major Requirements	419
5 Number of general electives by major for some major:.....	420

Part I: Context

This part sets the background for the research. Chapter one describes the social and institutional context of the study, highlighting the unique aspects of studying an American university located in Egypt. Chapter two explores the widely contested field of critical thinking, comparing different conceptions of criticality in Western literature, and highlighting some key debates in the field. Chapter three introduces key curriculum approaches as a framework for analysis in the thesis.

1 Social and Institutional Context

1.1 AUC and the Promise of Critical Thinking

“Better thinkers, better futures” is the slogan of the American University in Cairo (AUC), but could easily be that of many other universities in the world. The slogan implies that AUC, in some way, develops all of its students’ thinking, and that this somehow guarantees they will have better futures. Critical Thinking (CT) is the ideal to which AUC strives¹, and it is believed that better critical thinking will help its graduates do better in their careers, and contribute better to their country’s development. But does AUC succeed in achieving this goal? This is a question asked of many American universities that make such a claim. This thesis is about exploring how CT develops in practice at AUC for its diverse student body.

Despite the plethora of literature on the matter, CT remains a contested notion, and whether universities actually promote it sufficiently remains questionable (Barnett, 1997; Davies, 2011; Hagedorn, Pascarella, Edison, Braxton, Nora, & Terenzini, 1999). Chapter two explores divergent conceptions of CT and their relevance to AUC. But first, this chapter will outline the significance of this study and discuss the growing importance of CT in the world and for Egypt today. I will also introduce the context of AUC, describing its key goals, curriculum structure, and describe the student body, giving a glimpse of the kind of experience they have at AUC, and compare that to Egypt’s (and the region’s) educational arena and then ask whether AUC is really the right institution Egypt should turn to for developing critical thinkers.

1.1.1 Significance of this Study

Critical thinking is widely seen as one of the main goals of (Western) higher education (Norris, 1995; Barnett, 1997), as it is considered necessary for active citizen participation in a democracy (Brookfield, 1987; ten Dam & Volman, 2004; Johnson & Morris, 2010). In an increasingly interconnected world, CT is necessary for global citizenship. As Egypt's oldest Western-style university, AUC aims to develop CT, and this research will investigate how this works in practice for AUC's majority non-Western students.

¹ It is one of the broad learning outcomes of AUC (AUC Mission and Learning Outcomes undated)

The output of this study directly addresses AUC stakeholders, as well as others involved in education in Egypt and similar Arab or developing countries. It would also benefit Western institutions that cater to large bodies of international students.

By highlighting experiences that succeed at developing CT, while also exploring issues of privilege and access to these experiences, the study will provide AUC administrators and instructors with insight into successful practices at AUC, as well as observations on how AUC structures can be modified to improve students' access to, and benefit from, experiences that promote criticality for these particular students in this context, at this time in Egypt's history. Other universities and instructors would benefit from adapting some of these findings to their own contexts, particularly if they provide Western education to non-Western students.

The main contributions of this study lie in two things: first, the exploration of an American university trying to develop CT in an Arab/Muslim country. Much research has been conducted on Asian students, but institution-wide research on CT development in this context is new. Second, much CT research is either institution-wide and correlational, or in-depth case studies of one instructor's or department's practice. This institution-wide study provides more depth than the former, and more breadth than the latter, integrating contextual factors within AUC itself, and the wider Egyptian and global sociopolitical environment to understand how different students develop CT.

1.1.2 Importance of CT for Egypt and the Region

It isn't knowledge as a product or commodity that we need; nor is it a matter of remedying the situation by having bigger libraries, a greater number of terminals, computers and so forth, but **a qualitatively different knowledge based on understanding rather than on authority, uncritical repetition, mechanical reproduction**. It is not facts, but how facts are connected to other facts, how they are constructed, whether they relate to hypothesis or theory, how one is to judge the relationship between truth and interest, how to understand reality as history. These are only some of the critical issues we face, which can be summed up in the phrase/question, **how to think?** (Edward Said, quoted in UNDP, 2003, p.35. Emphasis added)

The North American Critical Thinking movement gathered momentum by the end of the 1980s (Facione, 1990, p. 1). Critical thinking should not be something limited to college classrooms and academia, but something that all adults need as they reflect on media, work and even personal relationships, but more importantly, as they become citizens (Brookfield, 1987). Reece (2002)

argues that the “Critical Thinking Movement” arose out of the concern that American students were unable to transfer skills they learned in education to their everyday lives. She mentions agreement among several proponents of the movement (including Paul, 1993; Ennis, 1987; Nickerson, 1987) that CT is important because (p.3-4):

1. Shifting economic patterns require individuals to solve more complex problems in the workplace
2. Critical thinking skills are required for citizens (e.g. voting and jury duty) in a democracy
3. Human behaviour can often be irrational and self-delusional
4. Critical thinking does not develop automatically as individuals grow, although they see mastery of critical thinking as necessary for maturity of thought as human beings

These reasons are as valid today as they were when the Movement started, and they are as relevant to Egypt as they have been to America. But there are additional reasons why CT has become more important to Egypt today. In an increasingly global world, Egyptian youth are exposed to local, Arab and international media through their televisions, satellites, and internet; they are exposed to different cultures and people of those cultures, and they need to be able to deal with all of this exposure critically. Egyptian education continues to emphasize memorization and produce uncritical graduates (Aboulghar, 2006); even though Egypt received 10 percent of the world’s financial aid in 1991, it does not have the results to show for it (Sayed, 2006). A country working towards democracy, freedom of expression and social and economic development, cannot achieve any of this if its citizens are not themselves critical thinkers. Researchers have long criticized educational curricula in the region for seeming to “encourage submission, obedience, subordination and compliance, rather than free critical thinking” (UNDP, 2003, p. IV), and these criticisms remain. The UNDP’s 2003 Arab Human Development Report recommends

Developing... [a] model that encourages cognitive learning, critical thinking, problem solving and creativity while promoting the Arabic language, cultural diversity and openness to other cultures. (UNDP, 2003, p. IV)

Although Egypt's educational system has yet to promote CT, the January 25 revolution brought Egypt a step closer to democracy, and the need for critical citizens has become more urgent. The January 25 uprising which resulted in the ousting of the long-standing Mubarak regime met with much elation in Egypt, followed by widespread disappointment in terms of the slowness of

political change after the revolution's success in toppling Egypt's oppressive regime. More recently, there has been growing anger and frustration at a country that seems not to have had any revolution at all, as patterns from the old regime were repeated and in some case, made uglier, by the elected Islamist regime, which was then ousted with military support after mass demonstrations June 30, 2013. However, it is clear that activists and protesters have been unable to effect large-scale political reform in any way, have been unable to influence the masses to vote for their parties, to understand their political choices. Beyond ousting political regimes and replacing them, there have as yet been no concrete solutions to Egypt's problems, nor has there been enough clarity of direction or strategy. Although Egyptians managed to develop criticality *despite* an oppressive state and educational system, the lack of significant reform today, two years after the revolution, implies that the ability to criticize as a form of protest, from the perspective of opposition, is qualitatively different from the ability to take critical constructive action to create reform (Beinin, 2013).

On the simplest level, criticality is needed to deal with all the conspiracy theories that overwhelm the Egyptian situation. Due to lack of transparency, there is very little evidence one could use to evaluate the truth of these claims. One could only build upon historical context and understanding of Egyptian culture. People who decide to take action, if it is critical and reflective, rather than mere activism, need to assess the potential risk, not only to themselves, but also to others. Beyond this, Egyptians need to become critical citizens, not in the Western sense of "making choices and knowing why you are making that choice, respecting the choices and opinions of others, communicating about these, thereby forming your own opinion, and making it known" (ten Dam & Volman, 2004 p. 360). This is not enough for Egyptians who need to **construct** their own alternative choices almost from scratch, not just make decisions among existing choices, and not just borrow ready-made solutions.

I will return to the relevance of the January 25 uprising in the conclusion chapter. Although my research was conducted 2007-2010, I reflect on the relevance of the 2011 revolution where appropriate, and reflect on its influence on this research in the conclusion chapter.

For now, I maintain that higher education is widely considered to be the arena for developing CT in the West, and so I describe the higher education system in Egypt before differentiating AUC and describing its structure and how it aims to develop CT.

1.1.3 Higher Education in Egypt

The door for human development and improving competitiveness is education ... The core of tolerance and democracy is education. This is the most important way to change the life of this country. Hossam Badrawy (Education committee chair of Egypt's former ruling party) quoted in Gauch (2006)

The 1952 revolution freed Egypt from its monarch and from indirect British rule, and part of its socialist ideals was free public education for all (from primary to university), and guaranteed government employment for university graduates (Russell, 2002; Richards, 1992), overloading the education system at all levels (Russell, 2002). Growing enrolment in the university system in the 1970s and 1980 resulted in overcrowded classes competing for scarce resources, being taught by poorly-paid professors (Richards, 1992), and so the educational opportunities for all concept has not found an appropriate philosophy of education to implement it (Radwan, 1951, p. 1, cited in Cook, 2000 p. 480). Consequently, the Egyptian higher education system suffers from poor quality instruction and learning materials, with many students paying for private tutors to help them succeed at exams that test rote memorization, and do not test higher order thinking or problem-solving skills (Richards, 1992). As a result, graduates of Egyptian universities are notorious for their inability to think, question, critique or be creative (Aboulghar, 2006).

To combat the issue of scarce resources, government legislation in 1992 allowed private institutions to open, and public universities started paid-for sections that promised smaller classes and better teaching. This, of course, further widened the gap between those who can afford private education and those who cannot. In the midst of all this, AUC is considered Egypt's elite university, and holds an important position in Egypt, which will be explained below, as I also clarify the institutional context.

1.2 AUC and its Role in Egypt

AUC is a non-profit American liberal arts university founded in 1919 in Cairo, Egypt. Originally founded by American protestant missionaries dedicated to education in the region (Richards,

1992; AUC, 2005a), AUC became officially recognized as a legitimate private provider of higher education in Egypt in 1962 (Observatory, 2004). AUC considers itself “well positioned as the leading university in the region” (Institutional Research [IR], 2008 p. 93).

AUC is Egypt’s oldest private higher education institution and is still considered the most prestigious of Egypt’s universities, despite the recent explosion of private institutions in Egypt and the region (Observatory, 2002). It has competed regionally mainly with the American University of Beirut, but further regional competition is increasing as more private and internationally-connected universities have been established in several other Arab countries, such as Qatar and Kuwait (Observatory, 2002). Egypt legalized other private institutions in 1992 (Observatory, 2004) and since then, a growing number of universities have been established, some of which have connections with Western institutions, and all of which are located in Greater Cairo and Alexandria, Egypt’s two main cities. AUC is the only truly non-profit independent university of these – the rest are often commercial in nature (Aboulghar, 2006). This commercialization of higher education reinforces the concept of student as “customer”, which dangerously compromises the quality and purposes of education (Burwood, 1999, Giroux & Giroux, 2006).

In contrast to AUC’s established prestige and its accreditation², newer private universities in Egypt were initially negatively perceived as “selling” degrees (ICEHEFAP, undated; Buckner, 2013), especially since the universities were established too quickly with insufficient regulation (El-Nahhas, 2002). Despite this seemingly obvious difference in quality of education, AUC has been working on strengthening its image and reputation among these growing universities that are attracting potential students with easier entrance requirements and lower fees, coupled with alliances to international universities.

AUC’s educational goals are clear in its slogan “better thinkers, better futures”. Through its liberal arts education, AUC claims to develop better thinkers, who, in turn, will have better individual futures (careers) as well as participate in the development of their own country. As the AUC mission statement claims:

² AUC’s degrees are all accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (<http://www.aucegypt.edu/about/accreditation.html>); Additional professional bodies have accredited its Engineering (since 1992, according to <http://www.aucegypt.edu/academic/ceng/overview.html>), Computer Science and Business Administration degrees (more recently).

The university advances the ideals of American liberal arts and professional education and of life-long learning. As freedom of academic expression is fundamental to this effort, AUC encourages the free exchange of ideas and promotes open and on-going interaction with scholarly institutions throughout Egypt and other parts of the world. (AUC, 2005b)

Although AUC attracts students from the Arab region and exchange students from the US and around the world, the majority (81% in 2007) of undergraduate students are Egyptian (IR, 2008).

In its recent self-study (IR, 2008), AUC asserts that it “provides an English language environment designed to advance proficient use of the tools of learning as well as students’ critical thinking capabilities, language and personal skills.” (p. v). CT is one of AUC's five broad learning outcomes, and the majority (94.2%) of full-time AUC faculty³ consider it important that students develop the “ability to apply strong quantitative, analytical, and critical thinking skills to analyze and synthesize complex information to solve problems” (IR, 2009 p. 22). AUC's other broad learning outcomes are: professional skills, advanced communication skills, cultural competence and effective citizenship (AUC Mission and Learning Outcomes, undated).

But how does AUC attempt to develop CT? Instructors and institutions need to understand their student body well in order to successfully develop their critical thinking (Nussbaum, 1997), and so I begin with a background on AUC students before delving into how AUC attempts to develop CT.

1.2.1 AUC Student Population

Thinking cannot be considered a luxury for the few if we would be a democracy. And, if thinking is related to moral responsibility and public life, how can we confine it to courses for the advanced or for the few who can afford schools with small classes?(Minnich ,2003, p. 24)

Unfortunately, AUC is the most expensive private university in Egypt, and although it offers a variety of scholarships, the majority of incoming students are among Egypt’s higher socio-economic classes. But some are not, and there is even variability among those from the elite classes. One recently introduced scholarship that increased the number of non-elite students at AUC is the LEAD program, which is a full scholarship awarded to 54 students, one boy and one girl from government schools from each governorate in Egypt (LEAD, 2011). One might expect such students, and others who come from public schools, to have less privileged backgrounds than the majority of AUCians.

³ I use the term "faculty" here in the US sense, where a "faculty" member is a university instructor/teacher/academic.

I recognize that AUC as an institution reproduces inequality in Egyptian society, as do most private universities in the region that cater mostly to the elites who can afford to pay their high tuition fees (Buckner, 2013), receiving an education which then privileges them further in their employability in the labour market. For this study which is confined to AUC, I emphasize the importance of AUC understanding the differences among its own students and catering to the needs of its diverse student body, such that social inequalities do not continue to be reproduced *within* it.

As mentioned earlier, Egyptians constitute the majority of AUC undergraduates. Most Egyptian undergraduates study full-time, and their tuition is most often completely paid by their parents or guardians, unless they secure a scholarship. The majority of undergraduates still live with their families, unless their parents live outside Cairo or abroad. Even then, they often live with other close relatives in Cairo, while living in a dormitory or apartment is a last resort. Some AUCians search for internships during their summer breaks, and some take on part-time jobs at the university such as “teaching assistant” (TA) for undergraduate courses⁴, or helping out at various departments at AUC. A minority take on free-lance or part-time work during their last year of university.

According to AUC’s faculty handbook (undated), students choose AUC for several reasons, including

a good student-to-faculty ratio, individual attention from professors, their parents or other relatives are alumni, the use of English as the medium of instruction, the American system of education i.e. liberal arts education, and a variety of social activities (p. 57).

Important characteristics of AUC’s incoming Egyptian students are that they are (according to AUC Faculty Handbook, undated) among the top 10 percent of achievers of Egyptian high schools each year; are grade-oriented; and about 70% come from so-called “language schools” (schools that teach some additional instruction in languages and study some subjects in English, French, German or Italian, and the rest in Arabic but most follow a similar curriculum to public schools),

⁴ I use the word “course” throughout the thesis in the US sense, where students at AUC take 4-6 courses per semester, each course on a different subject with a different teacher, meeting 2-3 times each week - what in the UK might be termed “module”

and only a few come from truly international schools (those that follow a completely American, British, German or French education system) or from Arabic-only public or private schools.

It is worth noting that students who come from language schools often have several options for how to obtain their high school degree. They can either follow the Egyptian secondary school system called “Thanaweyya Amma” (“general secondary”), or they can pay extra fees and receive an international qualification such as the IB (International Baccalaureate), British IGCSE/A’levels, the American high school diploma, the German Abitur, or the French Baccalaureate, depending on which type of school they attend. International curricula sometimes apply similar pedagogies to Western schooling, but are more often taught with Egyptian-ized (Egyptian adapted) methods, making them only slightly different from the local education system⁵.

Throughout the thesis (particularly chapters 5-7), I discuss how subtle differences between education systems in Egypt affects students' capacity to develop critical thinking, as Thanweyya Amma is known to emphasize rote memorization, terminal examination without course work, and little discussion with teachers or other authorities (AUC Faculty Handbook; Abu Youssef, 2005). I also discuss how linguistic capital (in the sense of variation in English language fluency) affects students' capacity to develop critical thinking (especially chapter seven).

The coming section describes AUC's curricular approach to developing CT.

1.2.2 How AUC Claims to Develop CT

A good liberal arts education⁶ is generally considered to promote critical thinking (Facione, 1990; McPeck, 1990). AUC considers itself a liberal arts institution, and its “core curriculum” is introduced as:

The Core Curriculum is a body of courses designed to provide a broad liberal arts base to students’ education at AUC. It aims to develop basic academic and intellectual traits, familiarize them with certain bodies of knowledge and intellectual traditions, and to show how this diversity can be integrated. It covers a wide spectrum of human experience and knowledge, **with special emphasis on the Arab World**. It assists students in understanding their place in the world — socially, culturally, intellectually and historically. Whatever

⁵ In theory, the adaptation should be a good thing. It actually helps the students succeed and even excel. However, it also often results in pedagogical shifts emphasizing memorization and exam technique instead of critical thinking, so that students have a Western degree but have not learned any of the positive Western pedagogies

⁶ although it is contested whether claims to offer liberal arts education succeed (see chapter six)

students' majors are, they need to understand science, social science, and the humanities **in order to be thoughtful human beings and citizens**. The Core also aims to enhance students' writing skills (and thereby their **ability to reason and construct an argument**) in both English and Arabic. (AUC Catalog, 2005, p.84, emphasis added)

AUC Catalog also mentions that some of the key objectives of the core curriculum are to ensure that all students “encounter ... the patterns of rational thought and argumentation that underpin the world’s great intellectual traditions” and “experience the ways in which the Liberal Arts enrich their ability to understand and appreciate the world” (p. 84). Both of these objectives show an emphasis on CT.

Figure 1.1: AUC's Core Curriculum Requirements⁷



The structure of the core curriculum (shown in figure 1.1) includes mandatory courses that emphasize CT: the “fundamental intellectual skills requirement” category, which includes: “Scientific Thinking” and “Philosophical Thinking”. The former course “emphasizes the unifying

⁷ Copied from <http://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/undergrad/core/Pages/default.aspx>, used with permission.

aspects of the scientific approach to the study of nature and human behaviour. About one-third of the course is devoted to a discussion of the nature of scientific inquiry and investigation” (AUC Catalog, 2005, p. 89). Even though the latter course, recently seesawed between the names “philosophical thinking” and “critical thinking” claims its purpose is to “... develop the capacity for critical thinking” (p. 89), the philosophy instructors who teach it repeatedly tell me that it does not directly teach critical thinking or informal logic. Different instructors place different emphasis on the critical thinking components of these two courses. Additionally, the Rhetoric and Composition requirement (1-3 courses per student) claims to focus on CT in the process of research and writing. Another requirement is a non-credit course in “Information literacy”, in which students “learn to recognize and access a variety of information sources, to evaluate, use and cite these sources effectively, and **to think critically throughout the entire research process**” (p. 87, emphasis added).

Chapter six discusses AUC's liberal arts curriculum in-depth. Other elements that provide a positive environment for CT development include the good student: faculty ratio (8.5:1 in Fall 2005) and small size of classes (maximum of 15 in Rhetoric and Composition courses discussed in chapter seven; maximum of 40 in most others) which allow students more space for dialogue with instructors and fellow students during class time; and the numerous extracurricular activities that help students develop a range of skills (discussed in chapter eight).

Of AUC full-time faculty (i.e. teaching staff), 59.5% are Egyptian, many of whom have received their PhDs from the North America or Europe or have had teaching experience in the West; 32.4% are American, and the rest are from other nationalities (AUC Catalog, 2006). The diversity of nationality and gender differs by department.

No educational institution expects all of its students to develop in the same way or to the same extent. Unlike some universities where students studying a discipline go through certain courses (i.e. modules) in a certain pre-defined order, AUC's structure offers much student choice: of major/minor discipline, teachers, elective courses and timing of required courses. Extra-curricular choices include participation in activities and interacting with others on campus, resulting in widely different university experiences among students.

The degree to which CT is taught in various courses is questionable as there is no sustained effort to ensure faculty are able to teach it, although they are constantly encouraged to do so (e.g. optional professional development activities by the Center for Learning and Teaching), and are implicitly assumed to be capable of doing so. This is discussed further throughout part III. In what follows, I question whether AUC is ideal for developing CT in Egypt.

1.2.3 Is AUC the Ideal Place to Develop Critical Thinking for Egyptians?

The imposition and lingering influence of Western secularist approaches to education has been vehemently criticized by contemporary Islamic scholarship as doing immeasurable damage to the moral, spiritual and ethical values of Islamic culture and heritage. (quoting Cook, 1999, p. 341 who cites Ali, 1984, p. 51)

There is much scepticism in Egypt towards foreign-influenced development and aid in education (Sayed, 2006; Essam El-Din, 2003), particularly where it relates to changing social and cultural values. AUC could be suspected for aiming to develop students' (critical) thinking into a form that is pro-US and anti-Arab culture. Although AUC claims to "foster students' appreciation of their own culture and heritage and their responsibilities to society" (IR, 2008, p. v) via courses with "special emphasis on the Arab world" (AUC Catalog, 2005 p. 84), some outsiders might consider critically studying these courses an attack on students' culture or a reinforcement of orientalist thinking. Imposing American ideals upon students can be seen as further indoctrinating them as a form of cultural imperialism. Even when instructors are not American, they are often Western-educated and could themselves have been indoctrinated with Western ideals.

Many consider critical thinking a Western-influenced educational ideal opposing Arab and Muslim cultural values (Cook, 1999). For example, critical thinking and liberal education encourage a degree of relativism, urging people to accommodate various perspectives and several truths as equally viable; although Islam is tolerant of different perspectives, it does not consider them all to be equally valid and does claim that there is a universal truth (Cook, 1999). However, Edward Said (2004) and Nurullah (2006), among others, claim that the concept of "ijtihad" (which applies critical and creative thinking to new situations in Islamic law) is a fundamental one in interpreting Islam and applying Islamic law (shariaa), and it often results in multiple divergent but valid interpretations. However, I suggest that the process of "ijtihad" is not applied as much these days because of lack of critical thinking in both Islamic scholars and the masses who are their

audiences. Nurullah (2006) considers the current trend towards “taqlid” (or blind emulation) and the move away from Ijtihad one of the major reasons for the backwardness in the Muslim world, despite encouragement for critical reflection and creative thinking in the Quran and Sunnah (Islam’s primary sources), where rationality is encouraged and scientific study is even considered a form of worship.

Although I will discuss the issue of cultural bias in CT in chapter two, for now, I have shown that critical thinking is not an exclusively Western concept and can be compatible with Arab/Muslim culture. The next question would be: how do we learn it? Are Americans really the “ideal” critical thinking developers? Do they produce the best critical thinkers? When a US President makes fallacious statements such as “You are either with us, or you’re with the terrorists” (this is the “fallacy of the false dilemma” as mentioned by Haskins undated), and makes such broad generalizations as using the label “terrorist” to represent an impossible variety of individuals and organizations, then build entire strategies based on that (Amin, 2006); even though there is a lot of dissent among Americans, there still exist a large number (especially outside academia) who have no problems with this way of thinking. Giroux (2004) criticizes the Bush administration for supporting educational reform that works towards “stripping young people of the capacity to think critically” (p. 215) by emphasizing testing and a culture of punishment. There are many more examples of this trend away from critical thinking in the United States, and it is hard to decide whether the American conception of critical thinking is at fault, or whether there is simply a problem in teaching it at schools and universities.

But criticizing the American version of critical thinking as “ideal” does not mean critical thinking is not needed, nor that the current situation of very little critical thinking in Egypt is anywhere near ideal either. In fact, Egyptians have long needed to be more critical in order to break the chains of previous British colonialism, current government oppression and incoming cultural imperialism from the US, not to mention foreign attempts to influence local policy. And increasing freedom of expression and debate in Egypt requires critical audiences to evaluate the claims being thrown left and right with little or no backing. As previously noted, Egypt needs to move beyond a “procedural democracy” of voting, and a change in outward appearance of leadership, but with little change in actual policy or behaviour, and almost no reform to speak of.

The kinds of decisions Egyptians need to make are different from Americans: they do not need to choose between a Republican and a Democratic candidate - they need to be able to create their own alternatives – a failure the first presidential elections in 2012 and the 2013 rebellion showed. They do not need to just choose the best newspaper or TV channel to follow – they need to create new media that is independent, evidence-based and less sensationalist.

In a 2007 public lecture held at AUC, the lecturer quoted an anonymous Egyptian official for saying “We should reform our education system, even though the Americans tell us we should”. This research acknowledges the importance of critical thinking, but does not claim that the American (and thus AUC’s) conception of Critical Thinking is the ideal, nor the appropriate form of thinking that Egyptians need to develop in order to enhance their futures and their country’s future - but that criticality is needed. AUC is of special interest to me, as my employer and alma mater. I take AUC to be the best Egyptian example of a university that aims to improve students’ thinking, and this research assesses whether and how it helps different students’ CT to develop.

1.3 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the importance of developing CT in the midst of Egypt's current social and political turbulence. Given the background of Egyptian education that discourages CT, AUC is in a unique position to promote CT, which is one of its main educational goals; however, it must meet the challenges of doing so for a diverse student body with varying incoming familiarity with CT and Western pedagogy. I have provided broad highlights of how AUC claims to develop CT, but these will be further elaborated in light of findings discussed in Part III of the thesis. The next chapter will review the scholarship on CT.

2 The Field of Critical Thinking

2.1 Overview

The previous chapter described the context of AUC, its claim to develop CT, and the importance and urgency of developing CT at this time in Egypt's history. In this chapter I elaborate on conceptions of CT in educational literature, starting with developmental models of cognitive development relevant to CT, and moving onto traditional and alternative conceptions of CT in higher education. I discuss two important debates among scholars: First, Is CT discipline specific? Second, Is CT biased against non-Westerners and women? I should emphasize that my coverage of this topic has been influenced and shaped by the particular context within which my study has been conducted, i.e. American higher education provided in Egypt. Chapter four will outline the conception of CT used throughout this study. Throughout part III, I draw upon literature that discusses CT development within the theme of each chapter. The discussion chapter will revisit how my conception of CT has evolved over the course of conducting my research, analysis and further reading. The conclusion chapter reflects on how defining CT this way may have influenced the research results, and how future research at AUC may define CT differently.

2.2 What is CT?

After years of striving to develop CT, not only is there no agreed upon definition, but philosophers, educators, cognitive scientists and psychologists tend to differ upon fundamental issues related to CT's definition, which also affect the ways in which it could be developed, taught and assessed. Moreover, it remains questionable whether universities succeed in developing it (Pithers and Soden, 2000; Davies, 2011).

The next sections tackle the diversity of scholarship on CT. The diversity in conceptions of CT can be confusing and frustrating for researchers attempting to identify and evaluate it; and for teachers/practitioners attempting to develop it. One could consider this "ambiguity evidence of tension between practitioners with different social interests" (Gieve, 1998, p. 124). One could also attribute it to the contextual nature of understanding CT, either because it is a culturally-specific social practice

(Atkinson, 1997) or because of different discipline-specific (McPeck, 1990; Moore, 2011) or contextual (Bailin, 1998) understandings of criticality. Two broadly different conceptions of CT (according to Vandermensbrugge, 2004) are the North American CT movement, which focuses on reasoning and logic, and which is most traditionally used by universities (Brodin, 2007), sometimes referred to as "first wave" CT (Walters, 1994b); and the second approach inspired by Marxism which focuses on challenging and changing the social order (scholars such as Brookfield and Benesch). Alternative conceptions of CT that are more inclusive of feminist and Marxist perspectives have also been called "second wave" CT (Walters, 1994b).

Most traditional approaches to critical thinking do not directly address the issue of students' initial levels of critical thinking or their stage of intellectual growth (Moon, 2005), whereas there is a direction in psychology towards understanding cognitive/intellectual growth as a developmental process. Because my research focuses on the *development* of CT during the college years, I will start by describing some of the relevant developmental models before delving into understandings of CT. According to these models, students do not recognize the need for CT until they progress to later stages of intellectual development.

2.2.1 Developmental Models

Barnett (1997, p. 71)⁸ contends that:

We are in the presence of critical thinking when a student comes to recognize the essential contestability of all knowledge claims. When that state of mind has been reached, the student understands not just that what she encounters in books and elsewhere, including the views of her lecturers, is contestable, but that her own ideas are contestable, too.

The above understanding implies that students do not *initially* recognize the contestability of knowledge, but that developing this awareness is a goal of education. As individuals start to recognize the contestability of knowledge, the need for critical thinking, for finding processes or criteria for judging such claims, becomes important. Models of cognitive/intellectual development attempt to describe intellectual development from initial acceptance of knowledge claims as fixed, external truths, to questioning them in increasingly complex ways. These models have some overlap and influence on

⁸ Barnett later clarifies that what he is describing here is *not* equivalent to Perry's position of "relativism"; however, the quote is relevant here as an introduction to developmental models as such, because it describes CT as a dynamic process as the student becomes more aware of the need for it

CT research (Moon, 2005). Perry's (1981) model especially, as used in higher education, has influenced other developmental models such as King and Kitchener's (1994) and Baxter Magolda's (1992) models (cited in Love & Guthrie, 1999e). These models emerged out of interviews conducted to gain insight into how individuals construct knowledge (Baxter Magolda, 2004).

Here I highlight the most important aspects as relevant to understanding CT. Perry's seminal work was originally developed as an extension of Piaget's developmental model into the college years, driven by the "need to comprehend how students came to understand the modern world through multiple frames of reference" in a society that was increasingly relativistic and diverse (Love and Guthrie 1999e p. 6). In general, all of the models based on Perry's, name different positions that students go through as they mature intellectually: from a lower level "dualistic" belief that knowledge is certain and lies with authorities, into an intermediate level of recognizing that knowledge is uncertain, a set of positions Perry calls "multiplicity", where "anything goes", and reach higher levels of recognizing how to evaluate information and justify decisions according to context, what is called "contextual relativism" (Love and Guthrie 1999e). King and Kitchener (undated) call these broad three positions stages of pre-reflective, quasi-reflective, and reflective thinking. The most advanced positions of Perry's model deal with commitment to universal principles, which the individual can later continue to revise in context. They move from simplistic to more complex approaches to knowledge, going through transitions between stages, with possibilities of regressing before moving forward (Perry, 1981). In King and Kitchener's model, a person has a "developmental range", where they usually operate at a certain level, and cannot go beyond the highest (called "optimal") level they have achieved, but operate within a range of levels (cited in Love & Guthrie, 1999c). A supporting environment is needed to encourage a person to operate at their "optimal level" (Love & Guthrie, 1999c).

Two important critiques of Perry's model echo debates in the field of CT. First, the model was criticized for focusing the study on male students from privileged backgrounds, therefore providing a biased view of intellectual development. CT has also been criticized for possible sex, culture and class biases. Second, some have claimed that Perry's latter stages of development constitute a moral, rather than a cognitive, maturity. This might be because the study of logic in philosophy is usually separate from the study of ethics (Durant, 1926/2010), but Perry (1981) is aware of this, as he calls it a model of cognitive *and* ethical development. In the coming sections, I will show that traditional conceptions of CT have

had a cognitive focus, while some alternative approaches to CT have an ideological, social justice focus (Johnson & Morris, 2010), in some ways mirroring the ethical orientation of Perry's advanced stages.

Table 2.1. Perry's Scheme of Cognitive and Ethical Development (edited from Perry 1981 p. 79-94)

Position/Transition	Description (in Perry's words p. 79)
Position 1: Basic Duality	Authorities know, and if we work hard, read every word, learn Right Answers, all will be well
Transition 1	But what about those Others I hear about? And different opinions? And Uncertainties? Some of our own Authorities disagree with each other or don't see mto know, and some give us problems instead of Answers.
Position 2: Multiplicity prelegitimate	True Authorities must be Right, the others are frauds. We remain Right. Others must be different and Wrong. Good Authorities give us problems so we can learn to find the Right Answer by our own independent thought.
Transition 2	But even Good Authorities admit they don't know all the answers <i>yet!</i>
Position 3: Multiplicity Legitimate but Subordinate	Then some uncertainties and different opinions are real and legitimate <i>temporarily</i> even for Authorities. They're working on them to get to the Truth
Transition	But there are <i>so many things</i> they don't know the Answers to! And they won't for a long time
Position 4a: Multiplicity (diversity and uncertainty)	Where authorities don't know the Right Answers, everyone has a right to his own opinions; no one is wrong!
Transition (and/or)	But some of my friends ask me to support my opinions with facts and reasons
Transition	Then what right have They to grade us? About what?
Position 4b: Relativism subordinate	In certain courses Authorities are not asking the Right Answer; They want us to <i>think</i> about things in a certain way, <i>supporting</i> opinion with data. That's what they grade us on
Transition	But this "way" seems to <i>work</i> in most courses, and even outside them
Position 5: (Contextual) relativism	Then <i>all</i> thinking must be like this, even for Them. Everything is relative, but not equally valid. You have to understand how each context works. Theories are not Truth but metaphors to interpret data with. You have to think about your thinking.
Transition	But if everything is relative, am I relative too? How can I know I'm making the Right Choice?
Position 6: Commitment foreseen	I see I'm going to have to make my own decisions in an uncertain world with no one to tell me I'm Right.
Transition	I'm lost if I don't. When I decide on my career (or marriage or values) everything will straighten out.
Position 7: Evolving commitments	Well, I've made my first Commitment!
Transition	Why didn't that settle everything?
Position 8: Evolving commitments	I've made several commitments. I've got to balance them - how many, how deep? How certain, how tentative?
Transition	Things are getting contradictory, I can't make logical sense of life's dilemmas.
Position 9: Evolving commitments	This is how life will be. I must be wholehearted while tentative, fight for my values yet respect others, believe my deepest values right yet be ready to learn. I see that I shall be retracting this whole journey over and over - but, I hope, more wisely.

Perry's model has been used as the basis of other developmental models, often conducted with a broader, more inclusive base of students. Some of these models (e.g. King & Kitchener, 1981; Baxter Magolda, 1992, cited in Love & Guthrie, 1999a, described in section 2.3.2.2 here) have found that college students do not necessarily reach the highest levels of cognitive development, but the developmental models at least allow us to recognize some degree of improvement in their thinking.

Having briefly described developmental models which have influenced (traditional) understanding of CT, I now turn to literature that directly tackles CT.

2.2.2 Understanding CT

There is no agreed upon definition of CT, despite how old and widespread the concept is. Some consider Socrates the “father of critical thinking”, since “Socratic questioning” is considered one of the best strategies for promoting CT (Paul, Elder & Bartell, 1997, Nussbaum, 1997, Carroll, 2005), but Burbules (2000) compares it to other modes of dialogue and finds it not the most critical of them. I believe it is slightly overrated as an ideal mode of dialogue. I have argued in chapter one for the relevance of the CT Movement (in America) to other cultures, including Egypt. CT has been around for a long time and probably exists in all cultures in slightly different ways under different terminologies (Nussbaum, 1997), albeit not necessarily understood and valued in the same way in different cultures (Egege & Kutieleh, 2004). For example, in Islamic scholarship, the concept of *Ijtihad* - literally translated as “exerting effort” (Nurullah, 2006) and literally understood to be the Islamic version of hermeneutics (Smock, 2004) - is considered very similar to the American notion of CT (Nurullah, 2006, Said, 2004, Syed, undated), since it involves both reasoning and interpretation (Masmoudi, 2004) of either religious laws (sharia’a) or life in general (Nurullah, 2006).

This thesis focuses on the *practice* of developing critical thinking through university. Therefore, for the purpose of interviewing students and faculty, and later for addressing the results of this thesis to an audience of learners and teachers, I draw upon contemporary literature/scholarship about CT in higher education, rather than conceptions of CT in the field of philosophy for example. This means that the traditional conceptions (North American, informal logic movement) of CT are given precedence, as these are the dominant and pervasive conceptions used by universities (Brodin, 2007), especially American universities such as AUC. AUC's official statement of CT as a learning outcome shows the

influence of the North American conception of CT, focusing on enabling students to "analyze and synthesize complex information to solve problems" (AUC Mission and Learning Outcomes, undated). While this traditional conception of CT is my starting point, I expanded my literature selection to include writings by Brookfield and Barnett whose work extends the alternative understandings of CT but also addresses and is used by, higher education practitioners. I also discuss similarities and differences with critical pedagogy.

The debates covered in this chapter are therefore informed by the literature that has been covered, and informed by the focus of this thesis on development of CT at AUC. The literature selection was thus intended to maintain clarity of focus, and relevance to the research conducted. The first debate regarding whether CT is subject-specific occurs within the traditional CT movement and has direct implications for curricular implementations for developing CT. The second debate on whether CT is culturally or gender biased has importance for the context of AUC, because concerns about cultural bias inherent in CT would imply that Egyptian students would face issues dealing with an American conception of CT; the gender bias question would imply that AUCians (students or instructors) with a preference for female ways of knowing (e.g. intuition, imagination, emotion) would struggle with developing CT differently from those who prefer the dominant male ways of knowing.

The following discussion of different conceptions of CT compares traditional and alternative conceptions. CT has been categorized in various ways by different scholars (see table 2.2) below. All authors agree that the traditional conception of CT, based on the North American CT movement, emphasizes informal logic, logical reasoning and CT as a set of skills. Some consider a different category of CT as one that is developmental-reflective: within this category, Brodin (2007) places Brookfield's work (as does Blakey, 2011), and King and Kitchener's developmental model; Moon (2005) places Baxter Magolda's developmental model. Another breakdown (by Walters 1994b) considers informal logic as first-wave CT, with a second wave that incorporates elements of creativity, intuition, and female ways of thinking into CT. McLaren (1994) extends these to a third wave of CT influenced by critical pedagogy that incorporates elements of emancipation and postmodernism.

Vandermensbrugge (2004) uses two categories: traditional CT (logic) versus CT that emphasizes challenging the social order, as conceived by Benesch and Brookfield. Non-traditional conceptions of CT are generally more relativistic than traditional conceptions, and they tend to be explicitly ideological, concerned with social justice either via inclusion of minority preferences in thinking (e.g. the feminist

work of Belenky et al, Baxter Magolda, Thayer) or with social justice and social change as an ends (Brookfield, Benesch, Giroux), often inspired by Marxism and the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory. Another way of differentiating conceptions of CT is the extent to which thinking is tied to action and reflection. Traditional forms of CT focus on cognitive aspects, sometimes referring to its utility for problem-solving, whereas alternative forms of CT often centralize critical reflection (e.g. Brookfield, Barnett) and praxis/critical action (Giroux, Barnett). Traditional conceptions of CT tend to be more individualistic and abstract whereas alternative conceptions tend to be collective and contextual (Johnson & Morris, 2010). Even though most understandings of CT have the end goal of developing critical citizens, what "critical citizenship" means depends upon one's perspective of what CT constitutes (Johnson & Morris, 2010). First, I discuss variations within the traditional conceptions of CT. Next, I discuss two alternative conceptions by Brookfield and Barnett, followed by clarification of the distinctions between the critical pedagogy and critical thinking fields. I then move onto two debates in the field of CT, the first of which regards subject-specificity of CT, and occurs within those traditional holding traditional conceptions of CT; the second of which regards cultural and gender bias, and comes from those with alternative conceptions of CT.

Chapter 2: Exploring the Field of Critical Thinking

Table 2.2: Different categorizations of CT

Different Categorisations of CT	Categories		
This thesis	Traditional (Ennis, Paul, McPeck, Halpern)	Alternative: either with elements of emancipation (Brookfield, Benesch) or more contextual understandings of CT (e.g. Baxter Magolda), or more inclusive of different understandings of CT (e.g. Barnett).	
Vandermensbrugge 2004	Logical reasoning	Challenging the social order (Brookfield, Benesch)	
Walters 1994b, McLaren 1994	First Wave: traditional conceptions of CT as informal logic, skills and abilities	Second Wave: alternative conceptions of CT as contextual, as including e.g. creativity (Elbow), empathy/imagination (Gallo), women's ways of knowing (Belenkey et al). Paul (1994) considered a mediating figure on some debates (Harotounian-Gordon 1998)	Third Wave (McLaren): critical pedagogy; sociopolitical action; elements of postmodernism (Giroux)
Brodin 2007 thesis	Cognitive perspective: Skills (Halpern); informal Logic (Siegel)	Developmental-Reflective (King & Kitchener developmental model; Brookfield)	Feminist Perspective (Thayer-Bacon)
Moon 2005	Logic, process, skills, abilities;	Epistemological development (Baxter Magolda)	Disposition of whole person towards knowledge and action (Barnett)
Blakey 2011 thesis	Skills, abilities (Halpern); attitude (Paul, Facione); Logic and reasoning (Paul)	Reflection (Brookfield); (also aspects of Ennis)	Critical being (Barnett)

2.2.3 Traditional Conceptions

Traditional conceptions of CT regard it as a cognitive process, consisting of a set of skills, abilities and dispositions to be used to inform decision-making. However, there are some differences in emphasis among proponents of this traditional notion of CT.

John Dewey, influential progressive US educator, defined CT as “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends” (Dewey, 1933, p. 118 quoted by Reece, 2002).

Contemporary understandings of CT include “reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do” (Ennis, 1989, p. 4), and most people would agree on CT's ability to improve people’s reasoning about everyday problems (McPeck, 1990). It is commonly believed that CT skills “involve the ability to make reasonable decisions in complex situations, such as those found in a rapidly changing and complex society” (Reece, 2002, p.4). It has also been defined as “the analysis of good reasons for belief, understanding the various kinds of reason involves understanding complex meanings of field-dependent concepts and evidence” (McPeck, 1981, p. 24 quoted in Reece, 2002). The critical thinker is a person who “is *appropriately moved by reasons*: she has propensity or disposition to believe and act in accordance with reasons” (Siegel, 1988, p. 23, quoted in Brodin, p. 139). CT is often referred to as “reasoning”, “rationality”, “reasoned argument”, “reasoned judgment”, “everyday reasoning”, and “rhetoric”, although some scholars criticize the meshing of those terms as if they all meant the same thing (McPeck, 1990, McCarthy, 1994).

There is often confusion between CT and other, closely-related terms. CT is not simply “criticism”; it can be used to critique viewpoints as well as support them; it is merely not taking everything “as is”. It should also not be considered analogous to problem-solving. Although problem-solving often does require CT – e.g. in assessing the alternatives, in weighing the relative merit of resources available, in choosing the better course of action - problem-solving is only one application that requires CT, and there are cases of simple problem-solving that do not require CT at all (e.g. in following a learned formula or procedure to solve a physics problem). However, definitions outside the mainstream North American CT movement do include problem-solving (e.g. Barnett, 1997 considers it an instrumental form of action).

CT is not the same as IQ, or intelligence. McPeck (1994), however, sees that those who define and assess it as a general ability, then also correlating achievement in IQ with achievement in CT assessments seems to reduce it to something similar to intelligence - but since CT is generally understood as a learned ability, it should be achievable by individuals of varying IQ (McPeck, 1994).

At the time of writing my PhD proposal, I thought that I had found the “perfect” and “authoritative” definition of CT. In 1990, what is known as the “Delphi Report” on CT was produced (Facione, 1990). The document is based on the expert consensus of over 40 experts on CT, including some of the most well-known authors on the subject from philosophy (such as Richard Paul), and education (such as Robert Ennis and Stephen Norris) as well as a variety of faculty from different disciplines. This report produced the agreed-upon definition of CT, for the purposes of instruction and assessment, and I share it as a detailed example of the American CT Movement's understanding of CT:

We understand critical thinking to be purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based. (Facione, 1990, p. 2)

Having thus mentioned the skills involved in thinking critically, the report defines each and breaks them down to sub-skills, then goes on to outline the “dispositions” critical thinkers should possess:

The ideal critical thinker is habitually inquisitive, well-informed, trustful of reason, open-minded, flexible, fair-minded in evaluation, honest in facing personal biases, prudent in making judgments, willing to reconsider, clear about issues, orderly in complex matters, diligent in seeking relevant information, reasonable in the selection of criteria, focused in inquiry, and persistent in seeking results which are as precise as the subject and the circumstances of inquiry permit⁹. (Facione, 1990, p.2).

However, despite this supposed consensus, confusion and debates on the nature of CT still continue (Atkinson, 1997, Davies, 2011). For example, McPeck (1990) finds the “notion of ‘general critical thinking skills’ ... largely meaningless”, which contradicts the expert consensus reached in Facione (1990).

Scriven and Paul (1987, quoted in Critical Thinking Community, 2013) define CT as

⁹ The last part of this definition implies adherence to modes of inquiry pre-specified in epistemologies of disciplines, something which other scholars suggest should be questioned rather than accepted as given (discussed later)

... the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skilfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on **universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions**: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness. (Emphasis added)

In some of Paul's earlier work (1990, 1994), he also distinguishes among weak and strong-sense CT, defining it as (Paul, 1990, p. 4):

...disciplined, self-directed thinking which exemplifies the perfections of thinking **appropriate to a particular mode or domain of thought**. It comes in two forms. If disciplined to serve the interests of a particular individual or group, to the exclusion of other relevant persons and groups, it is sophistic or weak sense critical thinking. If disciplined to take into account the interests of diverse persons or groups, it is fair-minded or strong sense critical thinking. (Emphasis added)

Note that in the above two definitions, the added emphasis shows how Paul in the first case refers to CT as transcending subject matter divisions, whereas in the latter refers considers it to differ by mode or domain of thought. The debate on subject-specificity of CT will be shared in the section 3.1.

The previously described conceptions of CT have been named "rationalist" and accused of "absolutization of performativity and outcomes" (Papastephanou & Angeli, 2007, p. 604). There are well-known CT scholars who eschew the skills-based definition of CT altogether, such as Barnett and Brookfield. I next discuss their alternative conceptions, as well as the distinction between CT and Critical Pedagogy.

2.2.4 Some Alternative Conceptions

2.2.4.1 Brookfield: CT as more than logic

Brookfield¹⁰ (1987) emphasizes how CT does and should go beyond the "logical analysis" taught in academia, and into domains of relationships, work and politics for adults. He understands CT as "calling into question the assumptions underlying our customary, habitual ways of thinking and acting and then being ready to think and act differently on the basis of this critical questioning" (p.1). As such, his conception seems to encompass elements of self-reflection and action in the personal, career and

¹⁰ Even though Brookfield's 1987 book focuses on adult learners, I would argue that this work is relevant to college students as well. Since university students are almost-adults, or at least we are preparing them to be adults, then the kind of CT adults need is the kind we need to foster in college students. See also Halx (2010)

political domains. Identifying and challenging one's own assumptions is central, as is the ability to "imagine and explore alternatives" (p. 8), leading to "reflective scepticism" (p. 9). Brookfield understands CT as a process rather than an outcome, and emphasizes its contextuality. Despite criticisms of CT as rational and non-emotive, Brookfield emphasizes the centrality of emotion in CT, recognizing how questioning one's own assumptions can induce anxiety, and that successful transformative effects of CT can produce excitement.

2.2.4.2 Barnett's Critical Being

Barnett (1997) finds skills-based definitions of CT narrow and finds that they tend towards instrumental conceptions of CT. Instead of asking what CT is, Barnett asks "*what is it for?*" (p. 65). His model of CT, the culmination of which is "Critical Being", involves criticality across the three domains of knowledge, self, and the world. Within each domain, one can be critical at various levels of engagement, starting from instrumental criticality, up to transformative critique¹¹. I consider his model "inclusive" because it includes the traditional CT movement understanding of CT as skills (as the lowest level of criticism about knowledge), and because the model incorporates criticality in the domains of reflection and action (similar to critical pedagogy discussed below). The diagram below (table 2.3) summarizes Barnett's model. He calls for "the attainment of a durable self through a critical disposition *integrated* across all three domains" (p. 105, emphasis added), as opposed to the three current academic models he mentions which focus on either formal knowledge alone in an academic setting, or action on a performative/instrumental level e.g. vocationalism, or unite action with reflection but downplay knowledge e.g. reflective practice (Barnett, 1997). The important characteristic of the advanced levels of his model is that they involve an escape from pre-given parameters, be they the parameters of disciplinary epistemology or unsaid rules of the professional life, such that critical persons work collectively to challenge the status quo, whether in the domain of knowledge, self or the world.

Two notions in both Barnett's and Brookfield's conceptions of CT involve CT's potential for transformative action, which is also central to the field of critical pedagogy, discussed next.

¹¹ This is not a developmental model like Perry's, in that Barnett does not claim one moves naturally from one stage to the other

Table 2.3 Levels of Criticality across Domains: Reconstructed from Barnett (1997, p. 103)

<i>Levels of criticality</i>	<i>Domains</i>		
	Knowledge	Self	World
4. Transformatory critique	Knowledge critique	Reconstruction of self	Critique-in-action (collective reconstruction of the world)
3. Refashioning of traditions	Critical thought (malleable traditions of thought)	Development of self within traditions	Mutual understanding and development of traditions
2. Reflexivity	Critical thinking (reflection on one's understanding)	Self-reflection (reflection on one's own projects)	Reflective practice ('metacompetence', 'adaptability', 'flexibility')
1. Critical skills	Discipline-specific critical thinking skills	Self-monitoring to given standards and norms	Problem-solving (means-end instrumentalism)
<i>Forms of criticality</i>	<i>Critical Reason</i>	<i>Critical self-reflection</i>	<i>Critical Action</i>

2.2.4.3 Critical Pedagogy

One understanding of criticality is as "critically transitive consciousness" which is:

...characterized by depth in the interpretation of problems; by the substitution of causal principles for magical explanations; by the testing of one's 'findings' and by openness to revision; by the attempt to avoid distortion when perceiving problems and to avoid preconceived notions when analyzing them; by refusing to transfer responsibility; by rejecting passive positions; by soundness of argumentation; by the practice of dialogue rather than polemics; by receptivity to the new for reasons beyond mere novelty and by the good sense not to reject the old just because it is old – by accepting what is valid in both old and new. (Freire, 1973, p. 18)

This is the view from Critical Pedagogy (CP). Although the above quote seems to suggest similarity with CT as traditionally understood, the major differences between CT and CP are that while CT has an individual, abstract, cognitive focus, and is assumed to be neutral/context-free, CP is instead highly context-driven ideological, and concerned with promoting social justice and praxis, combining collective action with reflection (Johnson & Morris, 2010). The two fields are largely separate on the academic front, but there are some individual scholars whose conceptions of CT diverge from the skills-based instrumental understanding of CT (Burbules & Berk, 1999 refer to Paul as a mediating figure) and lean towards an emancipatory understanding building on Marxism and the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, similar to CP (Vandermensbrugge, 2004 refers to Brookfield and Benesch).

A closer look at the North American movement tends to relate critical thinking more to solving everyday problems and making everyday decisions (e.g. McPeck, 1990) and preparing citizens for a democratic society. According to the Expert Consensus:

Critical thinking is a liberating force in education and a powerful resource in one's personal and civic life... Thus, educating good critical thinkers means working toward this ideal. It combines developing CT skills with nurturing those dispositions which consistently yield useful insights and which are the basis of a rational and democratic society. (Facione, 1990, p. 2)

On the other hand, the CP movement seems more focused on connections to the wider social sphere while emancipating the individual, even (or especially) when society is not democratic. It has its roots in the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory (Johnson & Morris, 2010).

Giroux and Giroux (2006) suggest that the purpose of education is not merely to raise critical consciousness, it is also “about imagining different futures and politics as a form of intervention in public life” (p. 29), and that education should help citizens make connections between the private and public spheres, to be able to reflect upon their own experiences in their struggle for a “better world” (p. 30). Education then goes beyond critical thinking, and encompasses “social engagement” as well (p. 31).

Both CT and CP value dialogue, but the differences in their orientation results in different kinds of dialogue. While critical pedagogy addresses the needs of the oppressed, helping them *collectively* create alternatives for themselves and get out of the indoctrination that has been imposed upon them, traditional critical thinking aims to open up an *individual's* mind (this person is not assumed to have been oppressed, but possibly to have become biased by social norms) to critically evaluate options. However, this ignores the kind of indoctrination that even those in democratic societies face by the media and even noted academics. Within the regular classroom, university professors often encourage critical thinking, but only within the boundaries of the discipline and its existing, agreed-upon epistemology. This automatically reinforces the unavoidable power relationship in the classroom, where students are at the mercy of the teacher. For a deeper criticality to take place, students should be partners in understanding and questioning this epistemology, not mere recipients of the rules they are then forced to apply uncritically (Burwood, 1999; Barnett, 1997).

Although Burbules and Berk (1999) note that the two movements do not seem to talk about or talk to one another, Barnett's model includes both conceptions, and there are also articles by Giroux, Kaplan and Paul directly addressing this in "Rethinking Reason" (edited by Walters, 1994c). For example, Paul (1994) differentiates between "weak sense" critical thinking that breaks a problem down in order to solve it, without looking at the "big picture" and taking account of the "worldview", and the impact on diverse individuals, which is done in "strong sense" critical thinking.

While CT has been criticized for culture/gender bias, CP has also been considered paternalistic, and criticized of only keeping in mind socio-economic oppression to the exclusion of other forms, despite its relation to feminism and post-colonialism (Burbules & Berk, 1999). Most authors in both fields are male and many are Western, but that can be said of many academic fields.

The works of Ellsworth, Gore, Jones and bell hooks are prominent female voices in the CP movement, and some of their work dissents from the more theoretical accounts of the known male authors by problematizing the complexities of implementing CP in practice (Ellsworth, 1989; Gore, 1993).

CT is meant to be unbiased but is criticized sometimes for being biased towards liberalism. Kaplan (1994) mentions the fact that most critical thinking textbooks seem to critique "Republican/Conservative" notions while advocating more "Liberal/Democratic" notions.

Critical pedagogues accuse CT of producing citizens capable of making choices between existing alternatives (e.g. to vote Democrat or Republican) rather than capable of creating new alternatives and is thus inferior to the critical pedagogy movement with its emancipatory aims (Burbules & Berk, 1999).

One of the criticisms of CP is that even though it is supposed to remove indoctrination, it can itself be indoctrinating people to think in the "critical pedagogy" way – something that appals its proponents (Burbules & Berk, 1999). Giroux and Giroux (2006) explicitly state that calling for critical pedagogy does not advocate any one political ideology about education, but that it reflects a vision about the purpose and role of education in preparing students to participate in the social and political sphere; that education's purpose is not mere preparation for passing tests and entering the job market. The issue of bias in CT will be tackled in more detail in section 3.2. But first, I introduce the debate on subject-specificity of CT.

2.3 Key Debates on CT

There is no reason to believe that CT is the perfect education ideal. There have been criticisms of the CT movement as a whole, that it has been exclusive of certain groups, e.g. that the “rationality” ideal is a “masculine” ideal, and excludes female thinking; that it is not suitable to the needs of non-whites; that it is dispassionate and assumes people have no feelings (Burbules & Berk 1999; Atkinson 1997). There is also debate on whether CT will always lead individuals to make the “morally good” choice (Facione 1990), although this criticism presumes there is one morally good choice that applies to various contexts, an absurdly uncritical idea.

The majority of writing on CT debates is North American, but also Australian (van Gelder, Moore and Davies); UK voices such as Barnett (1997) are rarely included in the US literature on CT. Although one can find research studies on teaching and assessing CT from all over the world, the majority of works discussing its conception is Anglo-Saxon in origin (Cypriot Papastephanou & Angeli, 2007 is a notable exception).

Haroutunian-Gordon (1998) identifies some key debates on CT which she considers to have been resolved by updated writings on North American CT. These include whether CT consists of dispositions as well as skills (resolved by the inclusion of dispositions in the Expert Consensus, Facione, 1990). There are other debates that she considers “red herrings” or “dead horses”. For example, she finds examples of some authors from the North American CT movement who do not discount the importance of the roles of emotion and empathy in CT, and she finds the debate on subject-specificity a “red herring”. However, her perception of resolutions do not necessarily find their way into debates amongst scholars, and some of these debates continue today. I choose to discuss some of these debates as they are relevant to the AUC context. The main debates that I will explore are:

1. Is CT generalizable or context-specific?
2. Does CT have cultural and gender biases?

I tackle these debates for the following reasons: the first has direct curricular and pedagogical implications for an institution aiming to develop CT; the second is particularly important for the case of the American University in Cairo because the majority of students are from a non-Western culture.

2.3.1 Is CT Subject-Specific?

This seems to have been the biggest debate in the field of CT (during the eighties and nineties). McPeck (1990) is well-known for advancing the view that there are no “generalizable” CT skills (also supported by Moore, 2004, 2011; Bailin, 1998; Battersby & Bailin, 2011), that such a view is “positivist” and that there are only domain-specific skills that can be taught by immersion in an academic discipline. On the other hand, there are Siegel, Ennis and Paul (and in fact, everyone who contributed to the expert consensus report Facione (1990) or designed a CT standardized test) that see CT as a set of general skills and dispositions that can be applied to any domain.

The general writings of Ennis (1989, 1990), Paul (1990), and Davies (2008) argue that CT is a general ability and that CT skills, once learned, can be applied to various domains; this leads to the belief that CT is developed by teaching it directly in separate, abstracted, CT courses. Others (McPeck, 1990; Moore, 2004) posit that one can only think critically within a particular domain, because epistemologies vary across domains and knowledge of the context is essential to thinking critically (Bailin, 1998). Granted, a skill of “evaluating claims” sounds universal, but is applied in different ways in economics than in philosophy or history (e.g. empirical research by Moore, 2011), let alone a hard science like physics or professional discipline such as management. McPeck thus suggests that a good liberal arts education is the best way to teach CT.

Siegel, Norris and Paul (as well as Ennis 1989, 1990 and McPeck 1990) each contributed articles to McPeck’s book (1990). Norris proposed that this debate should be resolved empirically; however, Norris’ suggestion for resolving it empirically via brain research was well countered by McPeck – the relationship between biological thinking processes and outward thinking processes that we recognize in our behaviour is too distant to help in this matter. Much of the empirical literature trying to prove Ennis’s perspective compare standardized CT test results for those who have received direct instruction on CT and those who do not. Obviously, even when those who had received direct instruction fared better, it is clear to see that “teaching to the test” has likely occurred, whether consciously or unconsciously. Students who are trained to respond to situations similar to those on the test are likely to fare better than those untrained to do so, but the situations in the tests are unlikely to reflect the complexity of real life situations or important discipline-specific issues.

However, Ennis (1990) makes a good point when noting that many “everyday” problems require individuals to demonstrate CT, but do not fall neatly into any one “subject” or “discipline”, and will thus not be taught in school or university. He also counters McPeck’s (1990) view that all the generic CT skills are trivial, showing that some are obviously not so.

Differing contexts (especially disciplinary contexts) come with different criteria for judging or evaluating claims, and hence thinking critically in these different areas requires knowledge of these criteria (Bailin’s, 1998), which, in a discipline (or even within each paradigm within a discipline), would be its epistemology. Instead of focusing on transferability, one could focus on what additional “intellectual resources” are needed to support the pursuit of CT (Bailin, 1998). Certain dispositions such as open-mindedness would be valued across most contexts (Bailin, 1998); however, the meaning of the term “interpretation” would vary across disciplines. This goes beyond Ennis’ (1989) concession that different fields would count different things as good reasons, because the nature of inquiry itself (not just the evaluation of reasons as “good”) differs across contexts.

Smith (2002) looks at the CT debate from a different perspective, taking lessons from cognitive science. He concludes that thinking skills in general, can have elements of domain-specificity and elements of generality; some skills can be relevant to real-life applications and would thus be worth teaching, while others may be reliant on particular disciplinary knowledge, but be transferable to other disciplines (e.g. regression analysis as a statistical tool used in many disciplines outside statistics). He argues that “domains of thought and practice inevitably exhibit both differences and commonalities” (p. 218) and suggests that thinking skills that have wide applicability can and should be taught in separate courses to ensure students learn them and recognize their wide applicability.

Why is this debate important? At first it seems that this debate is a philosophical high-level discussion, until one realizes that the conclusion would affect the way in which CT is taught and assessed. If one commits to a subject-specific perspective, then one would not teach CT skills in a separate course (what is called “direct” teaching of CT, Ennis, 1989), and would not use standardized tests to measure CT, because these tests assume general de-contextualized skills that can be tested on generic content. If one commits to a subject-specific view, the above methods of teaching/testing CT would be fruitless, and CT would instead be taught by immersion in the discipline, without any direct instruction. The impact of this debate on curricular approaches to developing CT is discussed next.

2.3.1.1 Curricular Approaches to Developing CT

The major approaches for developing CT in the American CT movement are direct, infusion, immersion, or a mixed-mode approach, depending upon one's view on whether CT is a general or subject-specific skill (see table 2.4 for a summary comparing approaches). Briefly, the four approaches described by Ennis (1989) are:

Table 2.4 Comparison of curricular approaches to CT

Approach	Entails	Pedagogy
Direct (described in Ennis 1989)	Teaching CT in separate courses	Instruction in formal and informal logic, fallacies, skills of analyzing arguments
Infusion (described in Ennis 1989)	Teaching CT within existing subjects	Explicit teaching of CT skills within existing courses
Immersion (described in Ennis 1989)	Students learn CT indirectly via immersion in disciplines	No explicit teaching of CT
Mixed-mode (described in Ennis 1989)	Combination of above approaches	Combination of above approaches
Critical Inquiry (Bailin 1998)	Teaching CT in context	Taking account of disciplinary and knowledge context
Questioning epistemologies (Burwood 1999, Barnett 1997)	Encourage students to question disciplinary epistemologies; critical interdisciplinarity can help expose students to diverse perspectives	Goes beyond infusion and immersion: makes epistemologies explicit, then encourages questioning them

First, the direct approach: separate courses that explicitly teach CT skills. This approach emphasis building the skills of argument and detecting logical fallacies, which is criticized for decontextualizing the skills of argument and teaching them in a didactic way, although proponents believe that to develop critical thinking, “students should be given reasons for doing things a certain way, rather than being dogmatically told how to do them” (Facione, 1990, p. 17).

Second, the infusion approach: explicitly teaching CT within existing subject areas. This approach promotes transfer by explicitly teaching CT and helping students find possibilities for transfer (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). Infusion also addresses the criticisms of "decontextualization" of the direct approach above. Some liberal arts colleges require a course on a topic such as moral

reasoning and teach CT in that context (Nussbaum, 1997). Others recommend doing so by teaching CT in writing courses (Paul, 1990, Elbow, 1994).

Third, Immersion: that students will learn CT by virtue of being “immersed” in the subject matters they are studying (and according to McPeck, within a good liberal arts education), without being directly taught any skills or rules. Proponents of this approach (led by McPeck but including others like Moore 2011) find the skills and rules taught in the direct approach to be either ones not worth teaching, or to be similar in name but not in application across different domains. They claim that once a student has learned to think critically within their own domain, they will transfer some of these skills to other domains, especially if they have had exposure to different domains via a good liberal arts education. However, cognitive science suggests that for transfer to occur for more students, one needs to make explicit to students the possible alternatives for transfer (Bransford et al, 1999). Also, depending on how strong the “liberal arts education”, one does not often delve deeply enough into various disciplines to understand their epistemologies deeply simply via immersion; immersion would occur more readily in one's own discipline, but not in random courses outside one's discipline. Barnett (1997) suggests that although interdisciplinarity can promote CT as one learns to see different perspectives, superficial encounters with different disciplines can backfire. Nussbaum (1997) points out that critical (Socratic) reasoning can conceivably be taught in any humanities or social science discipline. However, doing so in scientific and professional disciplines is more complex (Barnett, 1997; McPeck, 1990). This implies support for the discipline-specific view, since the kind of CT *traditionally* taught in the latter disciplines does not prepare students for social criticism.

Fourth, Mixed-mode: would be to combine the above approaches. Ennis (1989) supports direct with infusion approaches, while McPeck (1990) supports immersion with infusion. Although the “mixed-mode” approach sounds reconciliatory, there are several issues with it. If McPeck’s claim that there are no “general” CT skills is true, then it is futile to teach direct CT; infusion would only be helpful when making explicit the discipline's own epistemology. But if you subscribe to the “generalizability” approach, then it is more “efficient” (cost-wise and time-wise, in my view) to have philosophers teaching CT courses – it is their domain – than to make sure you “train” all other instructors on how to teach CT whether via infusion or immersion. But if an institution decided to use the infusion approach, why would it need to spend time and money on a separate “direct” CT course? Harotounian-Gordon (1998) suggests that this debate should be resolved by researching what actually works to develop CT

in practice for each context. But as previously mentioned, supporters of a general notion use standardized CT tests as evidence, which is problematic.

One approach that claims to go beyond the generalizability/subject-specificity debate is Bailin's (1998) conceptualization of CT as inseparable from context (also Brookfield 1987), and as such, can be taught neither directly nor by immersion. Instead, Battersby and Bailin (2011) suggest teaching CT as "critical inquiry" which they consider contextual by including the following elements (p. 243):

(1) knowledge of the dialectical context (the debate around an issue, both current and historical); (2) an understanding of the current state of practice and belief surrounding an issue; (3) an understanding of the intellectual, political, historical and social contexts in which an issue is embedded; (4) knowledge of the relevant disciplinary context; (5) information about the sources of an argument; (6) awareness of one's own beliefs and biases.

Finding that both the general and subject-specific views had merit on the philosophical front, I tested these views on myself by taking a graduate course entitled "Women & the Quran" (cross-listed as Islamic Studies and Gender Studies¹²). I found that while it took me a while to get acquainted with the traditions of the discipline, my background knowledge (albeit not from the critical standpoint of academia) on the "Quran" as a Muslim who reads it regularly, and popular knowledge of gender issues, both helped me exercise CT in the course. My background in social science prepared me to begin thinking critically in this new area, but with minimal support and modelling from teacher and colleagues regarding disciplinary traditions, none of which was done explicitly.

Other scholars support the explicit teaching of disciplinary epistemologies (e.g. Burwood, 1999; Moon, 2005), which sounds similar to "infusion", but go beyond that into empowering students by encouraging them to question the ways knowledge is constructed in their discipline, rather than accepting it as given (Burwood, 1999; Barnett, 1997) - otherwise, CT would be used a means to "control" students (Barnett, 1997, p. 21).

¹² These were two disciplines I had never studied before. My undergraduate degree was in computer science, and within my liberal arts courses, I never studied either gender or Islam. Since then, I have only been studying education. So neither gender nor Islamic studies were familiar to me

The latter suggestions to question epistemology may be influenced by Foucault (as interpreted by Marshall, 1989; Usher & Edwards, 1994) in showing the dual-meaning of the word “discipline” as both subject-matter and means of social control. Foucault would suggest that simply teaching students disciplinary discourses is a means of normalizing individuals into these existing discourses, and that simply fitting students into existing epistemologies is to exert a certain power-knowledge. However, Foucault would probably then question the kind of power-knowledge that takes place in questioning discourses, and would question any pedagogy’s benevolent claim to be “liberalizing”, since “liberation” is a grand narrative, and any new formation would create a new form of power-knowledge. One must also recognize the limitations to the instructor’s own agency and resistance resulting from his/her normalization into the discipline previously in order to gain a degree, publish and remain employed within an institution’s structure. Even where the instructor encourages questioning of epistemology, s/he retains some power over student assessment, and the institution retains power over granting degrees to students and retaining instructors.

Having discussed the subject-specificity debate, I now turn to the question of bias in CT.

2.3.2 Is CT Biased?

CT has been accused by some scholars (most prominently Atkinson 1997; Norris 1995; Fox 1994) of being culturally biased, with responses by other scholars (e.g. Benesch, 1999; Zamel, 1997; Ennis, 1989). Others take a feminist view and consider CT biased against feminine ways of thinking (Clinchy, 1994, 1996; Gallo, 1994; Phelan & Garrison, 1994, Belenkey, et al., 1986 cited in Love & Guthrie, 1999). I will tackle the cultural critique separately from the feminist critique.

2.3.2.1 Cultural Bias

There are those of the view that considering critical reasoning distant from non-Anglo cultures displays misunderstandings (Ennis, 1998) or even ignorance and condescension of non-Western people and their capacities for logical thinking (Nussbaum, 1997). Portraying CT as a Western ideal not available in other cultures can be seen as reductionist and deficit oriented rather than culturally-sensitive (Zamel, 1997). As I mentioned earlier, there are often ideals in different cultures that are stated differently, but are in essence very similar to CT (e.g. Ijtihad in Islamic scholarship). Empirical evidence, however, points to difficulties of teaching CT to international students studying in Anglo universities, especially those of Asian origin (e.g. Vandermensbrugghe, 2004; Egege & Kutieleh, 2004), although this can be attributed

to linguistic rather than cultural differences (Floyd, 2011) or pedagogical biases rather than biases with CT itself (Ennis, 1998). Even when CT is valued across cultures, it is manifested in different ways and valued differently in various cultures (Egege & Kutieleh, 2004). It is important, for example, to recognize that in certain oppressive cultures, taking any kind of critical stance against authority or power is a risk most people are unwilling to take (Asgharzadeh, 2008). However, lack of CT in some cultural contexts does not mean it does not exist at all (Davidson, 1998) - for example, it may be rare in academia but common in everyday discussions of politics (Fox, 1994). And so the question of whether CT is culturally biased needs to be examined more closely.

Atkinson's critique of CT as culturally biased rests on four premises (Atkinson, 1997, p. 71):

- (a) Critical thinking may be more on the order of a non-overt social practice than a well-defined and teachable pedagogical set of behaviours;
- (b) critical thinking can be and has been criticized for its exclusive and reductive character;
- (c) teaching thinking to nonnative speakers may be fraught with cultural problems; and,
- (d) once having been taught, thinking skills do not appear to transfer effectively beyond their narrow contexts of instruction.

Atkinson cites Fox's (1994) book, which exposes cultural issues in academic writing, but incorrectly generalizes problems with writing automatically to problems with CT (Gieve, 1999). One can consider the issue of cultural bias of CT a pedagogical one: the ways in which CT is expressed or taught might be culturally biased, especially when teaching linear modes of writing (Ennis, 1998).

While I can relate to Atkinson's first point about CT being a social practice, at least to some extent, his reason for stating this, that experts disagree on a definition, has been criticized by Gieve (1998) and Benesch (1999). They both believe Atkinson was discussing monologic CT, whereas they prefer to advance what they call "dialogic" CT which is influenced by the Frankfurt school and Marxism: a CT which examines taken-for-granted assumptions (Gieve, 1998) and encourages questioning the status quo, dissenting, and prioritizing social justice as a goal, and is thus beneficial to people from all cultural backgrounds (Benesch, 1999). Interestingly, this point further widens the difference in understandings of CT, as this is a very different conception than that held by the traditional American CT movement.

Moreover, the difficulty of creating behavioural outcomes does not in itself render a concept unteachable (Gieve, 1999); In fact, some (I would argue, most) valuable goals of learning are difficult to

articulate in clear and measurable ways - breaking such goals down to measurable components can lose their essence (Kelly, 2009).

Atkinson's final argument which suggests difficulties in transfer of CT implies cultural bias is strange. I cannot see how it would necessarily be attributed to cultural bias, as a multitude of other viable explanations exist: For example, the lack of clear definition and measurement of CT make researching transfer difficult altogether (Reece, 2002). Moreover, if CT were proven to be discipline-specific (see section above), then teaching it in a direct way is unlikely to encourage transfer (McPeck, 1990). A discipline-specific view of CT may even explain the different definitions, as empirical evidence shows that academics from different disciplines tend to focus on different aspects of CT specifically (Moore, 2011) and thinking generally (Donaldson, 2002). On the other hand, CT may be taught in implicit ways, whereas students may need to be taught in a more explicit way in order to transfer (e.g. Bransford et al., 1999). Transfer issues for international students might be stronger than for L1 students because of any combination of reasons, other than CT being culturally specific, such as linguistic issues (Floyd, 2011).

A common argument amongst those responding to CT's cultural bias, is that whatever its origin, the use of CT has the potential to empower individuals (Benesch, 1999) - even if they are non-dominant people in the dominant culture (Ennis, 1998).

However, the main aspect of Atkinson's argument which I find most acceptable and important is the first one, regarding CT as a social practice. I do not think CT is "only" a social practice, but it does have aspects of "social practice", in that in some cultures, it is promoted and valued implicitly not only in educational practice, but also beyond it in media and politics and every day interactions. As Ennis (1998) points out, even Americans will not use CT in every single context for every single situation. However, individual students who are brought up *immersed* in a culture that values CT in the way it is taught in American universities, are likely to have accumulated *cultural capital* of familiarity with CT which students from minority or international backgrounds do not have. This advantages some students over others in the teaching of CT. However, it does not devalue the importance of teaching CT to all (Benesch 1999); it merely makes educators aware of these differences so that they may be cognizant of them when teaching classes of mixed abilities.

Regarding Atkinsons' second point about the reductive and exclusive nature of CT, I dedicate the next section specifically to discussing gender bias of CT.

2.3.2.2 Gender Bias

Rational argument has operated in ways that set up as its opposite an irrational Other, which has been understood historically as the province of women and other exotic Others. In schools, rational deliberation, reflection, and consideration of all viewpoints has become a vehicle for regulating conflict and the power to speak, for transforming "conflict into rational argument by means of universalized capacities for language and reason" (Ellsworth 1989 p. 301, section in quotes citing Walkerdine 1985 p. 205).

In discussing gender bias in CT, I include non-dominant, non-masculine approaches to knowledge, other than rationality. These include emotion, intuition, imagination and creativity. The field of philosophy in the US is dominated by White males (Burbules, 1998), and the traditional North American scholarship on CT is dominated by males (e.g. the majority of authors in Facione's 1990 Expert Consensus). One of the criticisms of CT is that it promotes a certain kind of thinking that is male-oriented to the exclusion of the way most females are disposed to think, as though CT is the universal ideal while other forms of thinking are of less value (Wheary & Ennis, 1995, cited in Thayer-Bacon, 1998, admit to such gender bias in CT). This is particularly when CT is conceived of as "rule-oriented inferential procedures" as is often done when CT is equated with informal logic (Walters, 1994a, p. 66); however this "vulcanized thinking is not rational thinking" (Walters, 1994a, p. 69). Criticality can be furthered by integrating imagination and intuition (Walters, 1994a; Gallo, 1994) which does not necessarily entail "follow[ing] a consistent and premeditated chain of reasoning" (Walters, 1994a, p. 73).

However, two responses can be given to this: First, there is scholarship by proponents of CT that values the integration of creative thinking. Paul and Elder write about the "inseparability" of critical and creative thinking (2006, p.35). They claim that "CT without creative thinking reduces to mere scepticism and negativity" (p.35), whereas "creative thinking without critical thinking reduces to mere novelty" (p. 35). They also attest that reasoning is itself a "creative act" (Elder & Paul, 2007, p.36) because it involves the creation of ideas. Moreover, Elbow (1994) emphasizes the necessity of utilizing both creative and critical thinking when one writes, intertwining both processes repeatedly in order to complete a piece of writing. He criticizes those who defend one form of thinking while attacking another, whereas their relationship is more of a "mutual reinforcement" (p. 31). Also, conceiving of CT in broader ways, particularly as "dialogic thinking" (Gieve, 1998; Benesch, 1999 see previous section)

resolves this problem as CT is not conceived at all as the technical following of rules or steps, but as a critique of the status quo, similar to critical pedagogy.

Ellsworth's (1989) feminist poststructural critique goes beyond critical pedagogy, and posits that marginalized people's words should *not* be "subjected... to rationalist debates about their validity" (p. 302). She argues that in a truly critical classroom, both instructor and student narratives should be accepted as "partial", both in the sense of being incomplete, and in the sense of being biased for one view over others, rather than following the dominant rationalist ways of thinking. She argues that "empowerment" should not be "dependent on rationalism" (p. 306). One well-known critique of CT as conflicting with "Women's Ways of Knowing" is found in the book by that title based on research by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986, cited in Love & Guthrie 1999f). Two studies conducted on women in the eighties have produced results implying this conclusion, although Clinchy (1994) suggests the results may apply to other categories of minorities, not only women. Clinchy (1994) states that most women are not as comfortable with CT as they are with "connected knowing". Clinchy compares "separate knowing" which is based on detachment and scepticism, with "connected knowing" which she says women seem to prefer. In "connected knowing", the listener/reader first tries to imagine herself in the position of the speaker/writer, trying to understand where they are coming from, biasing herself towards the speaker/writer and empathizing with both emotion and reason.

The connected knower believes that in order to understand what a person is saying she must adopt the person's own terms and refrain from judgment (p. 39)

She considers that this is "in a sense, uncritical", but that it is not "unthinking", that it is merely a different form of thinking that also involves feeling and a personal approach.¹³

Thayer-Bacon's (1998) "constructive thinking" builds upon *Women's Ways of Knowing*, and suggests a "dialectical relationship between social beings and ideas that is dynamic, flexible, and reciprocal", while also "addressing cultural influences and political power in theories about thinking" (p. 143). Thayer-Bacon's concept stresses the contextuality of CT, something which contradicts the CT movement's more abstract notions of CT.

¹³ In chapter six, I suggest this understanding of criticality intersects with Edward Said's philological humanism, and with Martha Nussbaum's "Narrative imagination".

One model which attempts to reconcile models of cognitive development (particularly Perry's model) and women's ways of knowing is Baxter Magolda's (1992) model (cited in Love & Guthrie, 1999a and Moon, 2005) which is based on research with males and females¹⁴ (as opposed to Perry's which is based only on males) and describes gendered approaches to different cognitive processes or patterns of reasoning. Rather than viewing a cognitive process as opposing women's preferred ways of thinking, it shows how women sometimes approach reasoning differently from men, but there are more similarities than differences (Love & Guthrie, 1999a) as they progress from absolute knowing to contextual knowing (levels similar to moving from Perry's Dualism to Relativism, passing through Multiplicity). The implication is not that each gender always thinks in certain way, but that certain approaches within each cognitive process are most often valued by one gender. The general female pattern values community and learning from peers in a non-confrontational manner, whereas the male pattern values debate and questioning, aligning oneself more closely to authority and prioritizing one's own voice and learning needs over those of others (summarizing Love & Guthrie, 1999a).

The highest level found by Baxter Magolda is called "Contextual Knowing" where "knowledge is seen as constructed, and is understood in relation to the effective deployment of evidence that best fits a given context"¹⁵ (cited in Moon, 2005, p. 9). It is also important to note that individuals move fluidly between different levels in different contexts (Baxter Magolda, 1992, but stressed more so by Welte, 1997 - both cited in Love & Guthrie, 1999a). However, higher education strives towards moving students from using mostly absolutism and closer to using mostly contextual knowing (Moon, 2005).

Baxter Magolda's research implies that one can progress through stages of cognitive development using two equally viable paths: a "connected" and a "separate" knowing path. However, I think that to be a good critical thinker, one must often need some level of connected knowing, because of the importance of openness to diverse perspectives (Gallo, 1994) and inclusion of different worldviews (Paul, 1994). In order to really understand another's argument, one must try to "receive" it and understand it from their point of view. Otherwise, one would be critiquing something one does not fully understand and therefore the critique would be based on inappropriate premises. This is most obvious in intercultural dialogue and conflict resolution, where differences may be stark, and refusing to see the

¹⁴ However, Baxter Magolda's model consisted mainly for White people, so may also be missing a cultural dimension.

¹⁵ She found this level rarely developed by undergraduate students, and mainly developed via postgraduate education or a person confronting work or real life situation that require independent decision making (Moon 2005).

other side often hinders communication. In fact, Edward Said's "philological humanism" (as described by Nixon, 2006, p. 34) is very similar to connected knowing in that it requires "receiving" a text/work as intended by its creator, and understanding its creator's context, as prerequisites to any serious form of critique. Whereas I personally agree with Said on the importance of such "receiving" as an integral part of criticality, Nussbaum's (1997) proposed concept of "Narrative Imagination" is treated as separate from, but equally important to, "Critical Reasoning" as aims of a liberal arts education. In all cases, I do not believe that the idea of connected knowing is absent from CT as conceived by white male academics; it is, however, rarely articulated clearly, and possibly not given sufficient priority or attention.

2.3.3 Summary of CT Debates

None of the above debates has been resolved. Recent research has provided empirical evidence for the subject-specific view (Moore, 2011), and also questioned its validity (Robinson, 2011). The cultural and gender bias of CT can and should remain open to question, as well as its implications for practice in an increasing age of internationalized education. The relevance of these debates to AUC will be explained in the next section as I explicate my research focus.

2.4 Research Focus

The various understandings and debates on CT are important to keep in mind for the context of AUC, since they could affect the complexities of developing an American conception of CT (as a pillar of a Western education) to Egyptian students who come from a culture that may not conceive of it in the same way. In fact, within AUC, those who teach CT come from different cultural, pedagogical, and disciplinary backgrounds, all of which are likely to affect their (probably tacit) conceptualization of CT and how they teach it (or not).

As stated earlier, I find different conceptualizations of CT reflect the differences in scholars' driving interests, disciplinary backgrounds, and cultures. I do believe, however, that there is some overlap among scholars about the general idea of criticality, regardless of its component parts. Common aspects are related to understandings of intellectual development: questioning rather than accepting knowledge claims "as is": the general-skills proponents would break this down into specific component parts, whereas the subject-specific proponents would emphasize how the details of this would differ by

discipline, and the Marxist-oriented proponents would focus on questioning hegemonic and oppressive social practices, and Barnett would go beyond the "contextual relativism" of Perry's model into questioning knowledge construction; both Marxist-influenced scholars and Barnett would not stop at questioning, but would wish to use the resulting self-awareness into critical action that improves the status quo. I expect there is little disagreement on the general concept of dispositions such as open-mindedness and inquisitiveness, although they may disagree on how "far" one can go (e.g. does open-mindedness stop before questioning a discipline's epistemology, or beyond? Does open-mindedness include giving the oppressor's views equal time in the classroom as dissenting views, or do we use value-judgments?). I suggest that AUC's position on these issues will emerge as I scrutinize its curriculum and practices in the results analysis. Also, conversations with individuals (e.g. instructors) about their pedagogical practice of CT will reveal their own understanding of them. Few people, however, would dispute the importance of such dispositions to CT.

Since I have already stated that the general idea of CT exists in Islamic scholarship, and informally in the streets in Egypt, my own opinion is not that CT does not exist in my culture and that of AUC students. However, it is important to note that:

1. Egyptian schooling does not encourage questioning and CT, therefore practicing CT in academic contexts is unfamiliar to most students from this kind of background; however, it is more familiar to those who have had Western education. Students also come from diverse home backgrounds with varying degrees of open-mindedness and encouragement of criticality. This creates a cultural capital difference among AUC students, making teaching a class with a mixture of these students difficult (similar to the differences between L1 and L2 students mentioned by Atkinson, 1997). The same issues could be said for how deeply-seated the conceptions of CT are for Western, Western-educated Arab¹⁶, and Arab faculty.
2. The general Egyptian context with fluctuating degrees of freedom of expression rendered practicing CT risky in some situations. For example, some political bloggers risk arrest.

¹⁶ I intentionally generalize from Egyptian to Arab here, and from American to Western, to encompass more faculty. Although there will be variability among Arab faculty's education for example, as a whole, their exposure to criticality is expected to be different from the US and other Western countries nevertheless.

3. Cultural or gender bias of CT, if it exists within the AUC context, would make some people less comfortable developing it than others. Of course, becoming critical is meant to be uncomfortable at first (Brookfield, 1987).

It is expected that providing a Western/American education implies AUC will focus on developing CT as understood traditionally in the US. This research will explore how it does so, whether other approaches to CT can be found in practice, and whether cultural issues emerge from there.

An abstract notion of criticality (as understood by Barnett, 1997; Benesch, 1999; Brookfield, 1987) which one can apply outside academic contexts is one to which all citizens should strive, and which every (at least Western) university should be expected to nurture.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored different understandings of CT, focusing on the North American CT movement, but also including key different voices such as Brookfield and Barnett. I discussed two major debates on whether CT is subject-specific, and whether it is culturally biased. I will continue to return to these debates and refine the understanding of CT in the results analysis chapters (part III), and revisit my understanding of CT (discussion chapter). The next chapter will introduce curriculum theory as a framework for analysis. Following that, Part II of the thesis will introduce my chosen research methodology, and clarify how I have defined CT in order to examine how AUC influences students CT development. The limitations of my definition of CT will be discussed in the conclusion chapter.

3 Curriculum Approaches

3.1 Overview

This chapter gives an overview of various approaches to curriculum, in order to provide a framework for analyzing AUC's curriculum provision for the goal of developing CT. Different approaches to curriculum would conceive of critical thinking in different ways (as suggested by Ford & Profetto-McGrath, 1994 and mentioned in Carr & Kemmis, 1986), thus influencing different conceptions of citizenship as a goal of education (Johnson & Morris, 2010). Although a liberal arts curriculum (such as that offered by AUC) can be conceived as a curriculum approach in its own right (e.g. Barnett & Coate, 2005), it has diverse implementations, which also intersect with other curricular approaches. As part III of the thesis (especially chapter six) will show, AUC's curriculum implementation implies philosophical influences of various curricular approaches on instructors and curriculum planners.

One short definition of curriculum is “All the learning which is *planned and guided* by the school, whether it is carried on in groups or individually, *inside or outside the school*” (Kerr, 1986 p. 16, cited in Kelly, 2009, p. 12, italics mine). This definition encompasses learning that occurs outside as well as inside school, but it emphasizes planned curriculum versus what actually takes place in school; it also fails to cover intended and unintended consequences of the implementation of curriculum (Kelly, 2009). I also find that it emphasizes learning and the school without focusing on students and teachers themselves, and does so without questioning educational values behind such curriculum choices.

I first introduce the four basic approaches to curriculum: content, product, process and praxis (Smith 2000) and highlight some key issues with each approach. I then introduce some approaches that refer specifically to higher education: liberal arts, socially critical vocationalism, and Barnett and Coate's (2005) curriculum-in-action.

In other parts of the thesis, I will use these understandings of curriculum to analyze AUC's approach to various experiences that have influenced students' critical thinking.

3.2 Four Basic Curriculum Approaches

3.2.1 Curriculum as Content

Curriculum as Content, also sometimes referred to as “knowledge transmission” (Smith, 2000), is based on the belief in the intrinsic value of certain content that should be taught, often based on academic notions of “high culture” and tradition. This is one of the most traditional understandings of curriculum in schools: a syllabus consisting of a set of topics to be covered, without necessarily specifying the relative importance of topics, or how exactly such a curriculum is to be implemented in classrooms. Although some curriculum theorists (e.g. Cornbleth, 1990; Grundy, 1987) do not discuss this approach directly, content-related questions arise when discussing other curricular approaches, and so I include it here.

This approach raises political questions of who decides which content is valuable, whose knowledge ends up being taught to which students, and why is it taught that way to these particular students (Apple, 1990; Smith, 2000; Kelly, 2009). Decisions of which knowledge to include or exclude often serve to perpetuate the dominant culture or ideology (Apple, 1990) while negatively impacting marginalized individuals.

Knowledge choice exercises power in two different but related ways. First, it builds in students the belief that only the “included” knowledge is educationally worthy, thus further degrading the excluded knowledge of the marginalized (e.g. minorities, women). Second, it privileges students who come into university with more of the kind of knowledge, skills and attitudes valued in academia (because of “cultural capital” accumulated since childhood) over others who lack it, thus reproducing inequality in society. “Cultural capital” is the socially valued knowledge, discourse and culture perpetuated by educational institutions (Esposito, 2009) - normally, the knowledge of the middle or dominant classes in society.

Thus questioning content choices is significant whenever content is selected for a curriculum, because all teaching requires decisions about content. Questioning content choices in AUC's context has additional dimensions of complexity because it is a Western institution teaching primarily non-Western students in a majority Muslim postcolonial country. Is the knowledge chosen potentially colonizing and can it alienate students or further reproduce inequalities among

incoming students? A second layer of complexity lies when one tries to incorporate local knowledge - one must then question whether it is the knowledge of the dominant class in Egypt. A third issue is related to cultural capital, as AUC's Western education system values knowledge and pedagogy more familiar to certain (Western-educated, Western-raised) students over others.

Continuous questioning of how knowledge becomes part of the curriculum is necessary because knowledge is never "neutral, fixed, static [or] uncontested" (Barnett & Coate, 2005, p. 86), it is rather "influenced by human interests" and "reflects the power and social relationships within society" (Banks, 1993, p. 9). Academics need to continuously ask these questions, and encourage students to investigate the ways knowledge construction is affected by human interests, biases and assumptions as well as social context (Banks, 1993). Academics also need to reflect when students rebel against their chosen content (feedback students give often at AUC) and ask themselves whether the students' resistance merely stems from laziness (as Giroux, 1987 points out, some oppositional behaviour is not truly radical), or whether it might actually produce significant insight into deep-seated biases or cultural conflicts in curricular choices.

3.2.2 Curriculum as Product

The view of curriculum as "product" (Kelly, 2009) or "tangible product" (Cornbleth, 1988) or "outcome" (Barnett & Coate, 2005, p. 28) is currently the dominant approach to curriculum (Cornbleth, 1988; Smith, 2000) and can be connected to Habermas' knowledge-constitutive interest in prediction and control, a technical interest (Grundy, 1987). The approach is taken from theories of management (Smith, 2000), and is a response to globalization (Barnett & Coate, 2005), using labour markets as an indicator of success. There is an emphasis on standards, measurement and accountability to external bodies, which at the university level has occurred with the QAA in the UK and accreditation agencies in the US and internationally (Barnett & Coate, 2005).

Cornbleth (1988) describes it as follows: Learning objectives are predetermined, procedures or steps are designed to reach them, and achievement of desired objectives is assessed. The concern is with whether the ends have been achieved, and if not, the means are redesigned to better implement the planned curriculum.

This view of curriculum and the content view of curriculum face some similar criticisms: curriculum is designed separately from the actual teachers and students who will be implementing/enacting

it; it views curriculum design as separate from the actual learning in the classroom; it does not take account of student and teacher differences (Kelly, 2009; Cornbleth, 1988), and it decontextualizes education by ignoring both structural and external contexts (Cornbleth, 1988).

Most importantly, these approaches hide legitimate questions regarding the values behind chosen curriculum objectives and content, and whose interests they serve (Cornbleth, 1988). This instrumental/technical rationality is hegemonic by (falsely) assuming neutrality of content, institution, teacher and pedagogy (Apple, 1990). By focusing on measurability, curriculum is defined as a set of discrete, small steps to be taken with the assumption that the path is linear and the outcome is knowable and reachable by all learners (Cornbleth, 1990). Focusing on measurable sub-skills risks losing sight of the long-term big picture as well as missing valuable learning goals that are more difficult to specify and evaluate (Stenhouse, 1975; Kelly, 2009). It limits a teacher's capacity to benefit from spontaneous teachable moments that appear unplanned in the learning context (Stenhouse, 1975), and implies a passive view of humanity, prioritizing technological control over democratic processes (Giroux, 1997). It ignores questions of values, power and justice in education (Cornbleth, 1988, Giroux, 2011).

According to Barnett and Coate (2005), two kinds of instrumentalism are implied by such an approach to curriculum. It falsely assumes that aligning curricula in particular ways guarantees higher learning will be achieved. It also implies that exhibiting a skill implies capability, when it actually ignores the person's capacity to exercise "will" and "judgment" to use the skill appropriately in context. Further issues include lack of accounting for what Nussbaum calls "combined capability" (2011 p. 22), which is the ways in which the external environment can limit a person's capacity to apply a learned capability; and lack of accounting for collective functioning beyond individual development (Walker, 2003).

This approach to curriculum seems to follow some of the language of neoliberalism, the dominant grand narrative of our time (Bourdieu, 1998; Peters, 2004), in its emphasis on accountability and measurability (Apple, 2001; Giroux, 2002, 2011) and external assessment (Harris 2005, Peters 2004). Such a concern with measurability/accountability foregrounds political/policy interests, over actual educational concerns (Stenhouse, 1975). What Giroux (2011) calls a "neoliberal pedagogy" views education as a means to prepare students to compete for positions in global

corporations and knowledge is valued for its utility rather than its potential for emancipation (Harris, 2005; Peters 2004). Other aspects of neoliberalism include the branding of the university and marketization of degrees (Giroux, 2011) such that public image takes precedence over pedagogic matters (Apple, 2001) and decisions are made (e.g. which research to undertake, hiring part-time faculty) based on profitability rather than educational or social values (Giroux, 2002) – what Barnett and Coate (2005) call “curriculum as consumption”. Because the aim of neoliberalism is to produce employees within a global competitive marketplace, it suppresses criticality, citizenship and discussion of values; it treats certain marginal groups with disdain and silences talk of democracy inside and outside of education (Giroux, 2011). Apple (2001) calls this a 'thin' morality, focusing on individual interest and competition versus a 'thick' morality focusing on the collective good and social justice.

Focusing education on measurability and external assessment, can result in emphasizing “performativity” (Olssen & Peters, 2005; Harris, 2005), where knowledge is seen as product rather than process, and is valued for its practical usefulness (Barnett, Parry & Coate, 2001). Performativity also values the exhibition of a basic skill over reflective judgment, care or empathy in applying it (Barnett & Coate, 2005). Examples of shifts towards performativity in HE curricula include the way skills in the humanities are framed in terms of their benefits in the world of work rather than intrinsic value, and the way self-reflexivity in nursing is framed as a way to improve clinical practice (Barnett et al., 2001).

With regards to CT specifically, I believe the North American Expert Consensus on CT (Facione, 1990) as a set of discrete skills and dispositions, and the many multiple choice tests devised to measure critical thinking tend to reduce CT to a technical, instrumental definition and lose the essence of what CT becomes when all of these skills/dispositions work together in context (Barnett, 1997) - implying a technical curriculum approach.

Barnett and Coate (2005) call this management/engineering-inspired approach to curriculum a "mechanistic conception of curricula construction" p. 127, and suggest this can only produce machines. They suggest that the need for accountability and the search for means-end certainty in curriculum design reduces human beings' ability to thrive in a changing and challenging world, via

“occluding curricula... robbing them of their vitality and creativity” (p. 168). It is thus unsuitable for developing a complex and dynamic ability such as critical thinking.

Throughout part III, I will show ways in which neoliberalism and instrumental approaches to curriculum at AUC may limit the potential for CT development.

Carr and Kemmis (1986) critique the technical/postivist approach to education using the specific example of critical thinking as an educational end:

To say, for example, that 'critical thinking' is a desirable educational end, is to express a 'procedural principle' governing the kind of 'educational means' that are permissible. It is, in other words, to imply that rote-learning, memorization, passive instruction or any other teaching methods that impede critical thinking are inadequate as 'educational means'. This is not the same as saying they are ineffective. More accurately, it is to say that they are unacceptable because they do not accord with the values implicit in this end. (p. 78)

The idea of aligning pedagogies with the values implicit in an educational end is key to the next approach: curriculum as process.

3.2.3 Curriculum as Process

As several authors rightfully point out, curriculum implementation often diverges from pre-planned curriculum (Barnett & Coate, 2005; Cornbleth, 1988) – even if a teacher tries to implement a pre-designed curriculum, they cannot consistently predict students’ reactions, nor the impact of external and internal context on curriculum implementation; applying a technical rationality, interested in prediction and control is divorced from the "otherwise disorderly nature" of the educational process (Cornbleth, 1988, p. 86).

Viewing curriculum as process (Smith, 2000; Kelly, 2009) or “curriculum-in-action” (Barnett & Coate, 2005) is a focus on Habermas’ practical/communicative knowledge-constitutive interest (Grundy, 1987). This understands curriculum to be the actual set of interactions that take place between teacher and student, and that the curriculum is not something external to the learning context, but something that develops within it. There is no need for pre-defined content that is assumed to carry intrinsic value, but the content is chosen according to what will help promote learning in this particular context (Kelly, 2009; Stenhouse, 1975), and justified by moral, not just cognitive, criteria (Grundy, 1987). The teacher’s judgment is central:

Classrooms cannot be bettered except through the agency of teachers: teachers must be the critics of work in curriculum, not docile agents. (Stenhouse, 1975, p. 75)

In a process model there are no pre-defined objectives, but there are explicitly value-laden general principles which guide the learning process – in that learning activities are chosen by teacher with students, according to the teacher’s judgment, in ways that will help develop the students in the best possible ways, according to the most relevant theories of education and psychology (Stenhouse, 1975; Grundy, 1987; Kelly, 2009). It attempts to describe the processes of teaching and learning rather than pre-defining them, so that “the learning moment is its own end” (Grundy, 1987, p. 63).

This approach to curriculum overcomes most of the pitfalls of the previous two approaches by focusing on students and teachers’ actual context and daily interaction. While this view of curriculum is critiqued by those who prefer viewing curriculum as product because of the difficulties of measuring and standardizing learning, these are logistical and not philosophical objections (Kelly, 2009). Stenhouse's (1975) defence is:

The power and possibilities of the curriculum cannot be contained within objectives because it is founded on the idea that knowledge must be speculative and thus indeterminate as to student outcomes if it is to be worthwhile. (p. 92)

The problem with this view of curriculum is that while it privileges teachers’ judgment and is more student-centred, it still ignores underlying power relations taking place in the teaching/learning context itself, and those imposed upon it from external socioeconomic forces and the immediate context of the institution’s own structure. Asking such questions would lead to a “curriculum as praxis”.

Using such an approach to studying CT development at AUC would entail focusing on actual curriculum practices and how they develop CT in context, as understood subjectively by the key actors (students, teachers), rather than focusing on written goals and procedures, then measuring outcomes without scrutinizing the process of learning that occurs in between (as a technical approach would do). While this curriculum model corresponds to an interpretive approach to education, I believe for the purposes of this thesis, a closer look at a more critical approach to curriculum (that builds on and adds to this approach) would be more useful to discuss in depth. It would be naïve to assume teachers are completely “free agents” in their classrooms – they will

always be limited by institutional factors (e.g. classroom size, timetables, accreditation requirements) as well as sociopolitical and sociocultural factors (e.g. class, gender) and how their own identities and histories interact with those of their students (Ellsworth, 1989; Gore, 2003).

3.2.4 Curriculum as Praxis

A critical approach to curriculum or “curriculum as praxis” (Smith 2000), “curriculum as transformation” (Barnett & Coate 2005 p. 35) views curriculum from Habermas’ emancipatory knowledge-constitutive interest and is also based on Freirian pedagogy (Grundy, 1987). It has the following characteristics: learners are actively involved in decisions throughout the curriculum; the learning experience has relevance and meaning for students; and learning has a critical focus, where curriculum questions sociocultural constraints and inequalities (Grundy, 1987). The focus is on emancipatory classroom practices and teacher-student interactions (Barnett & Coate, 2005). Similar to the process model, this curriculum cannot be planned in advance – but it differs in that it must be situated in the specific struggles of the people at hand (Grundy, 1987; Giroux, 2011). It would also emphasize critical reflection which

...involves more than knowledge of one’s own values and understanding of one’s practice. It involves a dialectical criticism of one’s own values in a social and historical context in which the values of others are also crucial. (McTaggart & Garbutcheon-Singh, 1986, p. 44, quoted in Fraser & Bosanquet 2006, p. 281).

When learners are active participants, their learning experiences become intrinsically meaningful, rather than instrumental, as would occur in a product-oriented curriculum. Negotiation between students and teacher is essential but not sufficient for a curriculum to be considered emancipatory. It is not merely about situating the learning in the experiences of the learner, as in a “process curriculum” but goes beyond that by problematizing student and teacher experience through dialogue and negotiation (Grundy, 1987). It emphasizes a dialectical, reflexive relationship between action and reflection, occurring in authentic contexts and focuses on the “process of meaning-making” between students and teachers (Grundy, 1987 p. 105). Curriculum would have liberation as its focus, while continuing to question inequality in the world masked by hegemonic commonsense views (Grundy, 1987).

Barnett and Coate (2005) suggest “change” should be both the outcome and process of curriculum – but of course this process is constrained by structural limitations of the university and

willingness of academics to be agents of change. Cornbleth (1988, 1990) therefore recommends developing curriculum “in context” which moves beyond the more traditionally-understood critical curriculum in that it accounts for internal as well as external contextual influences. In this case, curriculum is constructed via the dynamic interaction between structural and sociocultural context and the principles, planning and implementation of curriculum. Structural constraints include those within the educational institution itself, which affect how strongly the institution is impacted by sociocultural constraints such as the social, cultural and political environment outside the institution but which directly impacts the institution, its teachers and its learners. I suggest that adopting a critical approach to curriculum in context is necessary, for example, in order to examine the interactions between the neoliberal influence with the implications of accreditation and how these impact upon classroom interactions in the professional disciplines and limit students’ capacity to benefit from a wider criticality afforded by a liberal arts education; it can help investigate the impact of how a liberal arts approach combines a potential for liberalization with a potentially colonizing curriculum on mostly Egyptian students taught by a combination of Arab and Western faculty; it can help question the ways social inequalities are enacted in the AUC classroom; it can continuously ask what it means for a Western instructor’s pedagogy in an American institution to raise the consciousness of a combination of Egyptian Westernized elite students and their less-Westernized counterparts in the classroom and the wider community.

Cornbleth’s (1988) conception of curriculum in context is “an ongoing social activity shaped by various contextual influences within and beyond the classroom and accomplished interactively, primarily by teachers and students... The actual day-to-day interactions of students, teachers, knowledge, and the milieu” (p. 89). It focuses on what is realized not intended or planned, what learning opportunities students have access to, how they take place, and the values behind them. It also explicitly and critically considers philosophical, political and social questions about curriculum rather than “merely celebrating practice” as in Stenhouse’s conception of a “process curriculum”. It recognizes how certain pedagogies, activities and ways of organizing learning impart values related to hierarchy, knowledge and success.

Advocates of a product-orientation would find difficulty in understanding the non-measurable goals involved in a praxis or process approach to curriculum. However, proponents of critical (e.g. Grundy, 1987) and process (e.g. Stenhouse, 1975) approaches do not find that their approaches

preclude the use of objectives/outcomes – they merely do not place these as the priority or centre of learning. Students can still be examined, but examinations would not have the importance emphasized in the product-orientation, nor would these exams be expected to demonstrate the full depth of students' learning (Stenhouse, 1975).

A critical approach to curriculum conceives of a criticality closer to the critical pedagogy understanding of it, which focuses on social justice and challenging the status quo, rather than the North American conception of CT which is more value-neutral.

As Cornbleth (1990) points out, viewing a curriculum in context would include analyzing the hidden curriculum as part of what actually does take place, and I discuss this next.

3.2.4.1 The Hidden Curriculum

The hidden curriculum can be understood as “the norms and values that are implicitly, but effectively, taught in schools and that are not usually talked about in teachers' statements of end or goals” (Apple, 1990, p. 84), although in actuality many of these practices are not really “hidden” – they are simply not officially acknowledged (Margolis, Soldatenko, Acker & Gair, 2001). In my view, “hidden curriculum” is not a separate approach to curriculum (as Barnett & Coate, 2005 categorize it when they call it “curriculum as reproduction”), nor is it really separate from any curriculum at all, but just one of the areas one would investigate and analyze in an existing curriculum if one was to take a critical approach to curriculum – analyzing it beyond the officially stated goals.

There are different conceptions of “hidden curriculum” from functionalist, to critical, to more complex and postmodern views of power conflicts (as summarized by Skelton, 1997 and Margolis et al., 2001). For example, the functionalist view considers the ways in which certain practices help socialize students into the workings of the world, e.g. teaching punctuality and deference to authority, and this is viewed in a positive light, rather than as an imposition of power. Marxist and Critical views focus on the reproductive aspects of curriculum – i.e. how schools serve to reproduce and perpetuate inequality in society.

Most relevant to this thesis is the concept of cultural reproduction based on Bourdieu's and Bernstein's work, which emphasizes how students' social origins and upbringing impact upon their

ability to succeed in education, since educational institutions value the “habitus” (social meanings, dispositions, and understandings) of a certain class of people who are dominant in the society – often white, middle class, and male (Margolis et al., 2001). As schools value this “habitus”, students from less privileged backgrounds struggle to succeed in school whereas students from privileged backgrounds come to school already equipped with the needed “cultural capital” to succeed (Giroux, 1983). A related notion is “social capital” which resides in social networks and relationships that can provide support to individuals who have it, such as giving an air of respectability to someone applying for political office (Bourdieu, 1973).

In the case of AUC, for example, this “habitus” could include the academic use of the English language, the use of liberal arts pedagogies such as in-class discussion, and the confidence to argue with university administration for one’s rights. While this view is often criticized for being overly deterministic (Apple, 1990, Skelton, 1997), and is opposed by resistance theorists for ignoring the agency of students and teachers (Giroux, 1983), I believe it is still useful for considering ways in which schooling does not offer equal opportunities, or ways in which students’ lack of “cultural capital” affects the kinds of choices they make, which can limit their capacity to benefit from educational opportunities (Walker, 2003, Nussbaum 2011), as well as their confidence in school (Apple, 1990, Walker, 2003). Resistance by teachers and students is always a possibility, since most educational situations do not constitute total and utter domination (Burbules, 1986), but aspects of reproduction need to be pointed out *in context* to highlight areas where educational institutions may be perpetuating inequality under the guise of neutrality – areas in which resistance should be encouraged.

As Nussbaum points out, good pedagogy “requires sensitivity to context, history, and cultural and economic circumstances” (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 157). When analyzing different learning experiences at AUC, I found different groups to be dominant in different contexts, and so I find a more post-modern Foucauldian micro-contestation of power in each separate context (as outlined by Skelton, 1997) to be more helpful in my own analysis. As I describe each learning experience afforded by AUC, I try to highlight the different conflicts of power involved, and how they privilege certain groups of students. Below is one example of using dialogue as a pedagogy at AUC.

3.2.4.2 Reflecting on Dialogue/Discussion as a Pedagogy for Developing CT

I have previously discussed whether CT is culturally biased, and established that while the notion exists in Muslim culture, the way it is done in US universities may be unfamiliar to students educated in Egyptian schooling, and that openness in classroom discussions may be threatening to traditional Arab/Muslim values, even if a form of criticality is common in the streets. This subsection briefly explores Ennis' (1998) suggestion, that the ways CT is taught may be biased, even if CT itself is inherently not. Pedagogy is not necessarily culturally neutral (Skelton, 2005), and this is something faculty teaching in a Western institution using Western pedagogy with non-Western students need to consider. Pedagogy can be seen with a lens of "diversimilarity" which avoids stereotyping the "other" culture while recognizing differences and similarities, and building upon them to promote student learning (Skelton, 2005).

Dialogue/discussion is an example of a pedagogical process often considered superior in higher education settings and which is often the chosen mode for teaching critical thinking, intercultural learning and radical pedagogies (Freire, 1970,; Brookfield, 1987; McPeck, 1990; Barnett, 1997; Benesch 2001; Nussbaum 1997):

Only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education. (Freire 1970 p. 92-93).

But dialogue is neither monolithic nor unproblematic, and conceptions of and goals for communication can influence the way one conducts dialogue (Burbules, 2000). Conceptions of what such a pedagogy constitutes may differ depending on the scholars' viewpoint (in theory), and from teachers' understanding and goals (in implementation/practice). It seems intuitive to use discussion for developing criticality, because learners need to reflect with critical others in order to start questioning their own assumptions and worldviews (Brookfield, 1987). For McPeck (1990), facilitators must be willing to give up some of their own authority, and questioning authority is central to Perry's scheme of intellectual development and to critical pedagogy. But what happens in a classroom where some students are less willing to participate in dialogue than others? Burbules (1986) shows that the power of authority that exists in the teaching relationship comes from both student and teacher:

To the extent that students enter the classroom with preexisting antipathy to, or ignorance of, consensual relations (based on their family experiences, friendships, or their socialization via the media), they often act in ways which interfere with even the best teacher intentions, thereby “justifying” [teacher] authoritarianism. (p. 109)

Bourdieu’s notion of cultural capital would suggest that those who are more familiar with the pedagogy of discussion and the language of debate due to previous experience in school or social circles will have an advantage over those who are completely unfamiliar with it. In a classroom of mixed backgrounds, some students will feel more confident in questioning the teacher’s authority than others.

But dialogue is not inherently empowering for students, unlike what is commonly expressed (Ellsworth, 1989). The teacher’s existence and power as the evaluator of the discussion does not disappear and remains in the students’ minds throughout. Moreover, in a free-flowing discussion, the more eloquent, louder student can take up more space and have more of a voice than others who are shy, unconfident, or minorities, who are now exposed to potential pressure of peer judgment instead of just the teacher’s (Reynolds & Treyhan, 2000). Moreover, silence, which is often interpreted by teachers as a problem to be remedied, can sometimes be intentional, sometimes a sign of resistance, an active withdrawal, or simply the result of attentive listening (Li, 2004).

Basically, a teacher who has emancipatory goals may wish to use dialogue, but in practice, this may privilege some students over others, serving to perpetuate rather than reduce inequality. Teachers need to account for students’ backgrounds and the social context, as well as power dynamics in the classroom before they can assume their use of dialogue could/would liberate the students.

In part III, I will focus on ways social reproduction and power imbalances appear in how AUC’s curriculum is designed and enacted, and how this results in unequal experiences for critical thinking development. Not only in terms of access to experiences but in terms of capacity to choose learning experiences and then to benefit from their potential. It is simply not enough for AUC to be offering learning experiences if students do not use them, or are unable to use them well.

3.3 University-Based Curriculum Approaches

Below are some approaches to curriculum that were developed specifically with universities in mind. Each of them does intersect with the approaches discussed previously, but because they are meant for universities, they more directly address issues related to university curricula.

3.3.1 Liberal Arts Curriculum

Barnett and Coate (2005) provide a separate category for liberal arts curriculum as historically implemented in US universities – and AUC calls itself such a university. They praise this approach for its focus on the whole human being rather than being market/employability-oriented, but in reality technical interests often take priority over liberal arts ideals (Nussbaum, 1997,1998) and different universities implement liberal arts to varying degrees.

I will discuss the liberal arts approach in detail in chapter six, but here I suggest it is not monolithic, nor a separate approach to curriculum but often contains elements of content-orientation in that it values the pure arts and sciences, in some cases valuing specific cultural content traditions; it may contain elements of process-orientation in that it focuses on pedagogies with high interaction among students and between students and teachers in small-sized classrooms. It also has elements of emancipation in that its stated goal is to liberate the individual (emphasizing almost always the promotion of CT as in Nussbaum 1997); however, this is insufficient for it to be considered a fully emancipatory/critical approach unless students have more of a say in their own learning, and learning has a critical focus (according to Grundy's 1987 criteria). It is also an individualistic focus (as in classical liberal thinking) whereas critical approaches emphasize collective thought and action.

3.3.2 Curriculum as engagement

Barnett and Coate's (2005) proposed approach to curriculum addresses some philosophical and practical questions about curriculum in HE without being prescriptive.

For them, universities need to focus on providing spaces, "arrangements for serendipitous encounters" (p. 129). They conceive of university education as:

an educational vehicle for the student's own journey of becoming, of the student coming into a certain kind of being, who has some chance of prospering in a world of simultaneous, unpredictable and contending challenges. (p. 55).

In the same way that Barnett (1997) conceives of critical thinking as involving three dimensions of knowledge, self and the world (as does Freire, but he focuses on action/reflection), Barnett and Coate's (2005) proposed "curriculum as engagement" involves three dimensions of knowing, being and acting.

1. **Knowing.** They propose that knowing, unlike "knowledge", is in a state of flux, occurring between people interacting. They agree with ideas such as social constructivism, problem-based learning, situated learning, reflective practice but they propose that knowing should go beyond that, emphasizing importance of students' personal engagement in knowing, regardless of the pedagogies that enable such engagement;
2. **Acting.** Here they do not restrict this to the kind of action that takes place outside the classroom (e.g. Community-Based Learning or political action) but any kind of task or assignment where students learn to "act as" such a specialist e.g. mathematician, historian, as that action helps one to "be". Students first see others in action (modelling), then it becomes their own authentic action, and they take on the identity. They emphasize the importance of engagement for students to commit, beyond just gaining skills; that students have agency in applying those skills, knowing when not to apply them, how context subtly changes their value. This contrasts with the more prevalent approach to skills in HE which are more akin to 'performativity'... Skills "shorn of reflection, due care and empathy" (p. 63) regarding context.
3. **Being.** This goes beyond knowing and acting, towards the development of the student's "inner self" in their process of "becoming" (p, 63). This would involve focusing on self-reliance, self-realization, capability, and transformation. Although academics do not commonly use the explicit language of developing students' "being", it is hidden in their tacit values, and evident in daily curricular practices.

They posit that their trio of knowing, acting and being goes beyond the more traditionally used “knowledge, skills and values” used in the “curriculum as product” view. They emphasize the student’s own continuous engagement in each of these three elements, as well as the interaction between all three in any one educational encounter, even if the emphasis will shift among them so that some learning activities and disciplines give more weight to one dimension over another¹⁷. They also recommend integrating them throughout curriculum rather than treating them separately. More so, Barnett (1997) understands CT as consisting of these three categories – and so developing it would logically entail a curriculum that addresses these three dimensions of the person.

They also stress that whereas little traditional HE discourse focuses on the “being” aspect, it is tacitly included in the language and thoughts of tutors/lecturers who have the student’s personal growth as a focus, and this has become more important to focus on as students from less privileged backgrounds attend university.

They stress the importance of asking value questions, as in, what are the aims of education, what kind of human being accomplishment is to be desired? How does it relate to context? What about global citizenship? The use of value questions and the centrality of student/tutor roles here echoes a process curriculum; they also emphasize tutors’ influence in supporting students’ positive self-regard and belief in their capacity to learn. Their approach shows elements of emancipation in their focus on students’ individual empowerment as well as collective engagement.

However, they give insufficient space to more critical aspects of curriculum. For example, while they recognize differences among students’ social capital depending on their background, and suggest lecturers need to continuously expend effort in helping students develop their sense of self, they do not directly address larger questions of inequality, access, discrimination, and how these interact with structural restrictions and power conflicts that affect both student and lecturer agency. They are clearly against a technical approach of curriculum that is designed separately from students, and one that responds only to the labour market, but it is unclear how actors are to overcome the dominant neoliberal/globalization discourse in order to implement a curriculum

¹⁷ For example, professional disciplines place more weight on action, whereas pure subjects such as humanities and sciences place more emphasis on knowledge; also, humanities involve the self more than the sciences (Barnett et al 2001)

that focuses on students “prospering in a world of simultaneous, unpredictable and contending challenges” (p. 55). Achieving such a curriculum requires analysis of external influences on the university, as well as awareness of structural inequalities within the institution and inequalities between students that need to be addressed. Peach (2010) addresses the tensions between professionalism and academia in his approach, described below.

3.3.3 Socially Critical Vocationalism

Peach’s (2010) Socially Critical Vocationalism (SCV) accepts the existing market instrumentalism in higher education, but proposes to challenge the academic/vocational dichotomy, and attempts to infuse a social justice focus into professional disciplines. The approach is based on two central tenets:

1. That education should be "about the 'public good' with a civic purpose to enable students to develop democratic virtues and practices and the capacity to reason about moral deliberations in order to become good citizens" p. 456
2. The critical role of HE in providing skilled professionals as the workforce driving a successful economy, benefiting society and the individuals educated in HE.

This approach combines Toohey's (1999) 'socially critical' approach and Young's 'critical vocationalism' (both cited in Peach 2010). The general orientation of the approach is similar to the pedagogy Shor and Freire (1987) describe in which marginalized students are taught the dominant discourse so that they can benefit from using it (e.g. to find employment and succeed) while maintaining a critical stance towards this knowledge and also recognizing and valuing students’ own non-dominant knowledge and values.

In practice, Peach’s suggested pedagogy would emphasize "experiential learning, problem solving, work based learning and authentic, applied and contextualised activities" (p. 458). Industry experience and volunteer work would be embedded in such a curriculum, and interdisciplinarity would be essential. This interdisciplinarity is what Barnett & Coate (2005) suggest an outcomes-based approach discourages as external standards make disciplinary boundaries more rigid, leaving little space for innovation. Peach (2010) recognizes implementation may be problematic, especially as vocationalism is not necessarily neutral and can be restrictive. However, he considers it a theoretical approach worth trying, given the current market instrumentalism in HE, which

cannot be dismissed. I suggest, however, that the pressures of external accreditation and the way things have traditionally been done in professional disciplines, may create resistance from faculty in the professional disciplines. Even those who are open to the idea may be unused to teaching in this way, may find that it detracts from what they consider the core content of their subject matter.

SCV sounds like a good ideal but is tough to implement, given the conflict of interest between the corporate employers and socially critical academics and advocates. It is not that socially critical professionals do not exist, they do. However, are they the more successful professionals, or is their subversiveness hindering their success in the corporate world? To succeed and to remain in a corporate environment requires one to comply and accept to a great extent, innovating within the company's interests but not against them. So will such an approach to curriculum help these students find employment, or will they be frustrated with employment in a multinational and search for other avenues, e.g. self-employment or work in a non-profit sector?

3.4 Conclusion: How Curriculum Approaches Are Used Throughout the Thesis

This chapter has surveyed the major curriculum approaches and raised some key issues in terms of curricula developing CT. As I discuss ways in which CT develops at AUC, I switch between analyzing and evaluating the curriculum from the various perspectives. Cornbleth (1990) shows how different approaches to curriculum would ask different questions (the below questions paraphrasing Cornbleth, 1990):

1. From a technical interest worldview, curriculum questions include those such as: To what extent is the written curriculum implemented? Cornbleth suggest those with a technical interest ask this question to check for inefficiencies and obstacles for curriculum implementation. This type of question is asked by looking at curriculum documents and using self-reports.
2. From an interpretivist/process perspective, curriculum questions are mostly: Trying to understand the processes of curriculum as it is implemented, as the interactions between individuals in a social setting.

3. From a critical perspective, curriculum questions focus on how the classroom, institutional and sociocultural context affect curriculum in terms of both curriculum planning and implementation (Cornbleth, 1990, p. 197, numbering mine):
 - a. Whose knowledge is given preference?
 - b. Who has access to which knowledge?
 - c. In what ways does the resulting curriculum benefit certain groups and disadvantage others?
 - d. What conditions (beyond the immediate situation) shape selection, organization, treatment and distribution of curriculum knowledge

Cornbleth critiques critical curriculum research for being too far removed from the reality of teachers, for recommending curriculum plans without being involved in implementing them (even sometimes just using curriculum documents in a similar way to positivists), for ignoring mediating factors between the larger and the structural context, and for sometimes focusing on certain aspects and ignoring others in interpretation (e.g. focusing on micro-level while ignoring sociocultural context OR focusing on racism issues while ignoring gender issues). My analyses attempt to overcome this by not using a rigid framework for understanding each experience developing CT, but looking at each one on its own and exploring it critically in light of interview data, as well as supplemental data I was able to get from university reports, to other research I conducted separately.

AUC's curriculum, like many other curricula, is not a pure implementation of any ONE approach, especially that individual instructors have their own teaching philosophies to bring into their teaching. There is also the question of who is responsible for the curriculum; to what extent are students responsible for their own curriculum (Barnett & Coate, 2005)? While students are ultimately responsible for how they navigate a curriculum, one cannot ignore the structural limitations imposed by the institution, as well as sociocultural factors that shape their choices (Walker 2003, Nussbaum 2011). In part III, I will introduce and examine learning experiences that students have found helpful to their critical thinking development. I will then explore micro and

macro factors that can limit certain students' capacity to benefit from these learning experiences, and ask curriculum questions from the major approaches outlined here.

3.5 Part I Conclusion

Part I has described the social and institutional context, highlighting the importance of developing CT for Egyptians today. I then mapped the field of CT, discussing different conceptions and key debates on CT. Finally, I introduced various curriculum approaches as a framework for analyzing AUC's provisions for CT development in future chapters. Part II will introduce my research methodology and design.

Part II: Methodology

This part consists of one long chapter on research methodology. This includes a discussion of my positionality, the research approach, and ethical struggles, as well as describing the research process, introducing the research design, and highlighting key issues in implementation.

4 Research Methodology

4.1 Overview

Part I discussed the context of this study and explored conceptions of critical thinking and curriculum theory. The first half of this chapter (sections 4.1-4.6) explores questions of research methodology and clarifies my positionality, in order to set the stage for the second half of the chapter which describes my three-phase research design and implementation. I end by reflecting on some methodological challenges.

4.2 Objectives and Research Questions

The objective of this study is to investigate the factors that influence the development of CT for AUC students, and how they work in practice. Since research as early as the 1960s indicates that university experiences usually result in CT development (Feldman & Newcomb, 1969 cited in Gelilin, 2003; Lehman, 1963), the expectation is that some of these experiences will be found at AUC (e.g. certain courses, instructors/ways of teaching, extracurricular activities, aspects of the educational environment as a whole) and some will be external to AUC (e.g. family, previous schooling, books read, lectures attended). However, the extent to which university study develops CT remains contested (Pithers & Soden, 2000; Davies, 2011; Baxter Magolda, 1982 cited in Love & Guthrie, 1999a), and so I do not take for granted that AUC *necessarily succeeds* in developing CT for all students. My expectation is that differences in student backgrounds, goals, and pathways, will impact on how experiences influence their CT development.

This thesis is concerned mainly with Egyptian students, meaning those who either have Egyptian nationality or are Arab and have been raised in Egypt (because they are difficult to distinguish outright, unlike non-Arabs) - these constitute the majority of AUC students, and other subsets are too diverse to provide a meaningful sample.

I will focus on answering the following questions for Egyptian undergraduate students:

1. What are the factors (internal and external to AUC) that aid/hinder the development of CT for (different categories of) AUC students? (see chapter five)
2. How do some of these factors (internal to AUC) work in practice, for the **diverse student body** coming in to AUC, taking **diverse pathways** during their university life, and graduating with **diverse goals**? (see chapters 6-9 for analysis of four themes)

These questions were explored using a three-phase research process involving AUC students, faculty and administrators, which will be explained starting section 4.7. However, I begin this chapter by clarifying my research philosophy, and positioning this research within other CT scholarship.

4.3 Educational Research Paradigms

This section highlights the main features of the major research paradigms in social sciences and discusses their criticisms, before clarifying my own stance towards educational research and this thesis. A paradigm, as defined by Kuhn (1970, p. 75), is "the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques shared by members of a given scientific community", and it provides a model and framework for scientific communities (cited in Usher, 1996, p. 14). In the social sciences, paradigms have not completely replaced each other, but exist in parallel, where researchers do not necessarily subscribe to one paradigm category, but create their own "style" after informed deliberation (Seale, 1999, p. 476). Distinguishing research paradigms as completely separate clarifies the key differences between them but can hide some complexities and nuances as well, particularly where there is some diversity within one paradigm (Sparkes, 1992).

All research makes epistemological and ontological assumptions, even if this is not made explicit (Sparkes, 1992), such that paradigms are distinguished by differences in these assumptions (Scott 1996a). Moreover, "every ontology and epistemology is itself culturally specific, historically located and value-laden" (Usher, 1996, p. 13). Conducting educational research without addressing the philosophy behind it, risks behaving like a technician, unable "to criticize the foundations and implications of [one's] work" (Morris, 1972, quoted in Carr, 1997, p. 203).

Ontology is understood as answering questions about "what exists, what is the nature of the world, what is reality" (Usher, 1996, p. 11). The two extreme ontological assumptions are that reality is external to individual understanding ("external-realist"/"realist"), or internal to it ("internal-idealist"/"nominalist") (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, cited in Sparkes, 1992; Cohen et al., 2000). Epistemology builds upon ontology and distinguishes what counts as knowledge from what does not (Usher, 1996). Epistemology may consider knowledge something external to be acquired (objectivist view) or something experienced by persons (subjectivist view) (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, cited in Sparkes, 1992).

Further distinctions among research paradigms relate to the views regarding the extent to which human beings' thoughts and behaviour are shaped/influenced by external factors. The two extremes are a deterministic view (people respond to external influences and have no control) and a voluntaristic view (people have complete control over their environment and their responses) (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, cited in Sparkes, 1992).

Combining the above assumptions influences the researcher's chosen data-gathering approach as well as their interpretation of the social world. The natural sciences are known to take a "nomothetic" approach, which focuses on hypothesis-testing, methodological rigor, and centrality of research instruments (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, cited in Sparkes, 1992). On the other hand, an "idiographic" approach foregrounds the importance of the insider view, the context and the history of the subject studied, focusing on the unique rather than the general or universal, and emphasizes "the relativistic nature of the social world" (Burrell & Morgan 1979, quoted in Cohen et al., 2000 p.7).

Looking at each paradigm in its extreme form is often done to clarify differences among them; however, we must recognize that this is a form of "caricature" (Sparkes, 1992, p. 17) and in reality, the paradigms are more complex, and researchers do not adhere to extreme interpretations of each paradigm, often working between them. The three major paradigms in social science research are discussed next.

4.3.1 Positivist

Positivism is "the central belief that there exists an objective reality and that 'facts' are independent of any individual's subjective experience and values" (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 26),

following an "external-realist" (also "naive realist" - Guba & Lincoln, 2005) ontology and an "objectivist" epistemology (Sparkes, 1992). It is the name used to describe the dominant scientific paradigm in the latter half of the nineteenth century in the West (Carr & Kemmis, 1986), originally used for natural sciences. It is based on an interest in prediction and control, i.e. Habermas' technical interest (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

Assumptions underlying positivism include:

1. The social world is like the natural world, and universal laws can be found (Usher, 1996), therefore the methods of natural science can be used to study social science to produce law-like generalizations (Giddens, 1975, cited in Cohen et al., 2000) that are not context bound (Popkewitz, 1984, cited in Sparkes, 1992);
2. Facts and values are separable, so one can study value-free knowledge via an objective/neutral researcher (Popkewitz, 1984) who does not "interfere" with the research (Usher, 1996);
3. Variables of interest can be separated and identified in advance, then studied independently to observe causal relationships (Guba, 1981);
4. Quantification reduces ambiguity and contradiction (Popkewitz, 1984);
5. Validity depends on adherence to rigorous methodological procedures (Usher, 1996).

Positivist educational researchers view themselves as experts, such that teachers and students would not participate in the decision-making process - just as in medicine nurses and patients are subordinate to the doctor's expertise (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Positivists typically (but not exclusively) prefer quantitative research methodologies such as controlled experiments and correlational research, using methods such as structured interviews and surveys (Scott, 1996a), usually focusing on observable human behaviour rather than meaning-making.

4.3.1.1 Criticisms

While positivism was deemed appropriate for the study of the natural sciences, it has been criticized as inappropriate for capturing the complexities of human experience studied in the social sciences, and even the elements of uncertainty in some forms of natural science such as meteorology (Swann & Pratt, 2003) and quantum mechanics (Kuhn, 1970, cited in Usher, 1996).

I start with the practical criticism of positivism. I consider this the most important critique, because influence on practice should be central in an applied field such as education. Findings of positivistic social research have often been found trivial and inconsequential to those who live the social experience such as teachers and social workers (Cohen et al., 2000) despite the appearance of sophistication (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). They "bear little resemblance to the complexities and continually changing nature of 'real life'" (Anzul, Evans & Tellier-Robinson, 2001, p. 236). Usher (1996) suggests two reasons why this occurs in educational research specifically: generalizations are either truisms, or too general to be practically useful; and it is questionable whether general principles and predictive knowledge are even *possible* in the complex and highly contextual field of education. The typical triviality of positivistic educational research may lie in the technicism with which positivism focuses studies on observable aspects, such as behaviour, when it is impossible to infer underlying causes from behaviour (Chomsky, 1959, and Habermas, 1972, cited in Cohen et al., 2000). It also tends to be overly deterministic, failing to address the role of human agency in reaction to external factors influencing their behaviour (Cohen et al., 2000). Positivism is based on modernist notions, viewing education as technical enterprise, having merely instrumental purposes, and this depoliticization results in "an endless stream of disconnected, fragmented and often contradictory 'findings'" that cannot influence important political questions about the relationship between education and society (Carr, 1996, p. 208).

The most important philosophical criticism of positivism is the mythical ideal of the neutral and objective researcher, when in reality, lack of explicit awareness of one's biases and political agendas do not imply neutrality or objectivity, but rather a lack of consciousness of them on the part of the researcher (Namenwirth, 1986, cited in Lather, 1986, p. 257). Educational research and decision-making are necessarily value-laden (Lather, 1986) and decisions about means are inseparable from questions of value (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Decisions about rules and methods to be followed in research cannot claim neutrality: they are themselves political as they exert power via impositions by researchers about inclusion/exclusion and criteria (Usher, 1996).

Positivism becomes particularly problematic when it resorts to "scientism", placing itself as the only universally acceptable way of viewing the world, when all questions of epistemology depend on historical and cultural context (Usher, 1996, p. 13), even in the natural sciences (Kuhn, 1970, cited in Usher, 1996). However, since positivism has historically dominated educational research,

other approaches are often compared to it, e.g. in terms of evaluating the quality of qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Seale, 1999). The next two sections describe the newer approaches to social research: interpretive and critical.

4.3.2 Interpretive

Until recently, the validity of social science research came by framing it outside of any specific context, a positivist approach (Usher, 1996). Interpretivism takes an opposing approach, believing that the techniques and assumptions appropriate for studying the natural sciences are inappropriate for the social sciences (Sparkes, 1992) where context is central to social practice (Usher 1996). It "assumes multiple subjective realities that consist of stories or meaning produced or constructed by individuals within their 'natural' settings" (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 26), using an "internal-idealist" ontology and a "subjectivist" epistemology (Sparkes, 1992). Rather than "generalisation, prediction and control" it is concerned with "interpretation, meaning and illumination" (Usher, 1996, p. 18), i.e. Habermas' practical knowledge-constitute interest (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

Interpretive research makes no claims of neutrality, but instead, knowledge is constructed between researcher and researched, and is acknowledged to be partial (Usher 1996). The researcher is "the research instrument" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, quoted in Sparkes, 1992 p. 29). The focus on meaning-making means the methods usually used by positivists are inappropriate for such deep probing (Usher, 1996). Since researchers' own biases and preconceptions are inseparable from the research itself (both researcher and researched are situated), researchers must make them explicit (Usher, 1996). Instead, the researcher's pre-understandings provide a starting place for gaining insight by reflecting on the ways these understandings are reinterpreted in the light of new knowledge developed via the research process (Gadamer, 1975, cited in Usher, 1996). Interpretive researchers rely mostly (but not exclusively) on qualitative, naturalistic inquiry, using methodologies such as ethnography and condensed case study, and methods such as semi-structured/unstructured interviews and participant observation (Scott, 1996a). The researcher attempts to understand the world from the point of view of participants in as natural a setting as possible (naturalistic research). There are a variety of traditions within interpretive research (Cohen et al., 2000), influenced by the humanistic

traditions of hermeneutics and phenomenology. Hermeneutics is the process of analyzing texts while focusing on "how prior understandings and prejudices shape the interpretive process" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 27), whereas phenomenology as an interpretive methodology prioritizes "actors' accounts of social reality" (Scott, 1996b, p. 64). The interpretive paradigm includes a variety of traditions/methodologies, including phenomenology, ethnography, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, and constructivism (Cohen et al., 2000; Sparkes, 1992).¹⁸ The research presented in this thesis, as I explain in my positionality and research approach, was not conducted within any particular interpretive tradition, but rather within a general framework of an interpretive approach to research using qualitative research methods. A commonly used metaphor that describes how interpretive researchers choose their methods is that of a quilt-maker or bricoleur (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), where the resulting work of bricolage is "a pieced-together set of representations that is fitted to the specifics of a complex situation" (p. 4). This entails using whichever tools and materials make sense at the time, not necessarily planned in advance, and drawing upon whatever is available and doable in the research setting in order to answer one's research question. The bricoleur recognizes how her own history, gender, ethnicity, etc. Interacts with the people in the setting studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Another metaphor is that of cinematic montage, which

...uses brief images to create a clearly defined sense of urgency and complexity. It invites viewers to construct interpretations that build on one another as a scene unfolds. These interpretations are based on associations among the contrasting images that blend into one another. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 5).

¹⁸ Phenomenology is complex and influenced by several scholars, including Husserl, Hiedegger, Satre and Schutz (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). Schutz's "existential phenomenology", based on Husserl's "transcendental phenomenology" (Cohen et al, 2000), suggests that social science should be concerned with how life is experienced by its members, and he cautions that "the safeguarding of [this] subjective point of view is the only but sufficient guarantee that the world of social reality will not be replaced by a fictional non-existing world constructed by the scientific observer" (Schutz 1970 p. 8 quoted in Holstein & Gubrium 2005 p. 485). Social scientists assume that they "intersubjectively share the same reality" with others, and on those terms produce understandings "sustained in and through the shared assumptions of interaction and recurrently sustained in processes of typification" (Holstein & Gubrium 2005, p. 486). Ethnomethodology is another interpretive tradition which is "concerned with how people make sense of their everyday world" and can be further categorised as either linguistic or situational (Cohen et al., 2000). Symbolic interactionism, another tradition that contains diverse approaches within it, focuses "on the world of subjective meanings and the symbols by which they are produced and represented" (Cohen et al., 2000 p. 25).

4.3.2.1 Criticisms

There are two main types of criticism of the interpretive paradigm: the first comes from the positivist perspective, critiquing the lack of neutrality and objectivity, lack of rigour in research methods, and difficulties in generalizability and judging validity. However, this positivist ontology/epistemology is incompatible with the worldview and goals of interpretive research, which in my view renders them inappropriate for judging interpretive research. It is generally accepted that any research undertaken, even if from a positivist standpoint, cannot claim complete neutrality or objectivity (Partlett & Hamilton, 1972; Lincoln & Guba, 1986/2007).

Interpretivism is sometimes criticised for its relativism that seems to imply that "anything goes", but this is inaccurate; it merely acknowledges the existence of multiple valid interpretations, and truth can only be judged depending on one's "framework, paradigm or point of view" (Sparkes, 1992, p. 34). Guba (1992) defends relativism as essential to the ontological and epistemological assumptions of constructivist research. He asserts that some subjectivity is inevitable, and that methodologically, constructivist approaches do not adopt an "anything goes" stance, but rather, the stance that there does not exist *one ideal* methodology, but several different ones that may help advance knowledge, and that researchers can adopt different methodologies depending on which would best serve their purposes at any point in time.

Other criticisms of the interpretive paradigm come from critical researchers who accept the subjectivity of social experience, but question whether interpretive research can really give a full view of reality, given how external factors influence individuals' social experiences and perceptions. Interpretivism "neglects questions about the origins, causes and results of actors adopting certain interpretations of their actions and social life, and neglects the crucial problems of social conflict and social change" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 95). By focusing on individual experience, it may display "macro blindness", ignoring how power structures influence social constructions of reality (Sparkes, 1992, p. 39). Moreover, individual interpretations may miss accounting for "unintended consequences" (Carr & Kemmis, p. 95); however, I believe that interpretive researchers who keep an open mind and open agenda may be able to recognize such unintended consequences if their research involves deep and prolonged immersion in the context of their study. Also, it would be naive to assume that participants necessarily allow (intentionally or unintentionally) the researcher to see/hear the full picture of their social context and

interactions. By focusing on individuals' own understandings of their own lived experiences, interpretivism ignores areas influencing them but that are outside of individual consciousness and control (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

Other paradigms of research that use mostly qualitative methods of inquiry, but have different orientations to that of interpretivism, are critical and postmodern paradigms, which "examine how social life is produced and the privileges given to those in power, with a goal to emancipate and to expose social justice" (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 26). Although some texts separate postmodern (Usher 1996) and feminist/poststructural (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) paradigms from critical paradigms, for my purposes, I will include them under the wider umbrella of "critical" research, given similarity in goals and questioning of power, as well as methodologies. In some ways, all postpositivist¹⁹ era research displays postmodern tendencies in ontology and epistemology (e.g. in the acceptance of multiple constructed realities; in the way quality is understood in qualitative research - see Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

4.3.3 Critical/Emancipatory

Critical approaches critique both positivist and interpretive modes of research (Usher, 1996), although they are commensurable with constructivism/interpretivism (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Emancipatory/praxis-oriented research "increases awareness of the contradictions hidden or distorted by everyday understandings, and in doing so it directs attention to the possibilities for social transformation inherent in the present configuration of social processes" (Lather, 1986, p. 259). Carr and Kemmis (1986) distinguish critical social science from critical theory in that it aims to transform practice in the world, rather than just transform consciousness; it therefore "goes beyond critique to critical praxis" (p. 144). The term "praxis" involves the dialectical relationship between thought and action which is "always guided by a moral disposition to act truly and justly" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 33). Critical researchers share the subjectivist-interactive epistemology of interpretive researchers (Sparkes, 1992), but may have either an external-realist or internal-idealist ontology (Sparkes, 1992), and tend to use dialogic/dialectical methodologies. Unlike the previous two paradigms, critical research is interested in changing the status quo for a more socially just world, and is therefore influenced by Habermas' emancipatory interest.

¹⁹ I say postpositivist era, because Denzin & Lincoln 2005 use the term postpositivism to imply a slightly modified positivism which has a critical realist (recognizes reality can only be approximated) rather than naive realist ontology

This involves ideology critique, "the unmasking of ideologies that maintain the status quo by restricting the access of groups to the means of gaining knowledge and the raising of consciousness or awareness about the material conditions that oppress or restrict them", in order to empower people to take action to overcome these oppressive conditions (Usher 1996 p. 13). Critical research may follow specific influences such as feminist, ethnic, Marxist, cultural studies and queer theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

According to Harvey (1990, cited in Sparkes, 1992, p. 41), critical researchers may use methodologies associated with the interpretive paradigm, such as ethnography, but take a critical approach on one of three levels (from weakest to strongest):

1. Consider the broader social context in analysis and interpretation
2. Examine how the wider structural context mediates social processes
3. Conduct a "dialectical analysis" (Sparkes, 1992, p. 41) where social processes are understood in relation to social structures. This final approach foregrounds the structural relationships before undertaking the ethnography, whereas the first two conduct the study then situate it within a critical framework.

For some authors, it is important for the subjects of inquiry to be participants in the study itself, if the end is to empower them (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Lather, 1986). However, participatory approaches and critical approaches to research are not synonymous (Guba & Lincoln, 2005), meaning that some emancipatory research is not participatory, and vice versa. Not all action research is the same, either. Whereas Lather (1986) suggests praxis-oriented research uses *a priori* theory-building, Carr and Kemmis (1986) suggest critical research should be grounded in the practice of teachers/educators. These are not opposing views, but differences in emphasis, since Lather's conception of critical research involves the participants fully in the research process, and Carr and Kemmis would not deny the impact of theory on the researcher's stance.

4.3.3.1 Criticisms

The major criticism of critical approaches comes from postmodernists²⁰, especially work influenced by Foucault, and from poststructuralist feminism (e.g. Ellsworth, 1989; Gore, 1993)

²⁰ Some scholars consider postmodernism a fourth research paradigm. One of the concepts of postmodernity is "scepticism about the grand narratives of the European enlightenment" (Lyotard quote in Usher 1996 p. 24). Usher

which highlight how the practice of emancipation may in itself create new conditions and relationships of oppression and repression (Usher, 1996). Moreover, emancipation is not an automatic outcome of action research or ideology critique; it is something which needs to be empirically tested rather than logically concluded (Morrison, 1995a cited in Cohen et al., 2000). Another important issue discussed extensively by Lather (1986) is the risk of the researcher imposing his/her theories on the subject, rather than gathering it from evidence. Moreover, attempting to overcome this via dialectical theory-building and involving participants can result in problems of "false consciousness". These issues are complicated to deal with, but in section 4.6, I discuss how scholars have proposed to address these criticisms in order to judge the quality of their research.

4.3.4 Positioning myself in relation to these paradigms

When I started conducting this research, I aligned myself to an interpretive approach to educational research, as I had an affinity with qualitative approaches. I gradually started leaning towards a critical research approach. In what follows, I outline my positionality, and how my views of educational research evolved. I then clarify my research paradigm before moving on to describe my research approach.

(1996) describes the postmodern research paradigm as one that embraces uncertainty and awareness of complexity, and foregrounds the importance of self-reflexivity in science. It challenges epistemology and discourse of positivist and interpretivist research, and calls for questioning and challenging all kinds of dominant epistemological discourse. It eschews any set of fixed validity criteria, and any fixed traditions (its main tenets are to challenge such traditions and remain self-reflexive). Postmodernists deny the existence of one externally knowable truth, and recognized the complexity, diversity, and uncertainty of the world; instead, it is concerned with understanding the "textualised" versions of the world (Usher 1996 p. 31). Based on Usher's preceding understanding of the postmodern research paradigm, I have decided not to include it as a separate paradigm. First, because many prominent writing on educational research paradigms (e.g. Lincoln & Guba's work) does not treat it separately. Second, because it seems in its ontology, epistemology, and methodological diversity, to overlap with interpretive/critical paradigms. It has elements of the relativism and subjectivity of interpretive approaches, and elements of the questioning of underlying power in critical approaches. For Denzin & Lincoln (2005), postmodernism is "a contemporary sensibility, developing since World War II that privileges no single authority, method, or paradigm" (p. 27), and as such, I believe the philosophy of it has infiltrated the philosophy of researchers who already locate themselves within critical or interpretive camps. Poststructuralism, on the other hand, sometimes combined with a critical approach (as in feminist poststructuralism), contends that "language is an unstable system of referents, thus it is impossible ever to capture completely the meaning of an action, text, or intention" (Denzin & Lincoln 2005 p. 27).

Openness about the researcher's positionality in qualitative research is considered essential given the partiality and situatedness of text and knowledge: researcher detachment and objectivity are "barriers to quality, not insurance of having achieved it" (Lincoln, 1995, p. 280).

I am an "insider" to AUC as a former student and teaching assistant (TA), and current staff member and adjunct faculty. I earned my Bachelor's degree in Computer Science in 2001 from AUC, and I currently work at the Center for Learning and Teaching (CLT) in the university, where I help promote excellence in teaching at AUC via the professional development of faculty (i.e. instructors), what some UK universities call an "academic developer" position. I am a part of AUC instructors' lives, and I became "one of them" in 2008 when I started teaching at the Graduate School of Education. I also worked part-time as the TA in the course "Scientific Thinking" several times, where the instructor and I conducted some research on students' online discussion. I have conducted several educational/pedagogical studies, often in collaboration with other faculty at AUC (several cited here such as Bali & Bossone, 2010; Bali & Carpenter, 2009; Bali & Balkenbush, 2009). While doing this research, I took a non-degree graduate course, so I was again a student at the university. All of these experiences have influenced my perceptions of the university and the research subjects, many of whom I will have interacted with closely in the past – I am therefore intimately familiar with the campus culture for both students and faculty/instructors. I also have ongoing access to insider information and details not normally available to researchers who would enter campus for time-limited data collection.

I am an "insider" to US education through my undergraduate studies, my current work, and a brief teaching experience at Rice University; however, my previous schooling was mostly British (all except for 3 years of Egyptian education, which shaped my understanding of it), my M.Ed. was from the UK and this PhD is currently being undertaken in a UK university. This has influenced my perceptions about education and the values I place on different aspects of education and educational research. It has also widened my understanding of CT.

Finally, I am an “insider” to Egypt by virtue of being Egyptian and having lived in Egypt since 1996²¹. However, I was born and educated in Kuwait until just before joining university. But my non-Egyptian (and considerably elitist) education renders me an “outsider” to Egyptian education.

Much of the small-scale research and assessments I conduct as part of my work at CLT has reinforced my views that a positivist approach to educational research is not appropriate for understanding the depth of learning in a classroom, or for providing useful knowledge for other educators to use in their own context. Much of my personal teaching experiences have reinforced my views on the importance of context in pedagogy, and has deepened my understanding of the complexities of developing CT.

I therefore started my PhD research as an interpretive researcher, believing that the most valuable knowledge about education lies with the subjective knowledge of the individuals involved in the process, and that a rich understanding of context was essential to understanding the educational situation (based on the first few educational research projects I conducted, where contextual, interpretive findings were more meaningful than quantitative, generalizable findings : for example, Bali, Ellozy & Thompson (2006) conclude that focusing on pre/post tests hides valuable knowledge about student motivation and engagement). My understanding evolved as I progressed in the thesis to incorporate elements of critical research in two ways: first, I found myself concerned with issues of social justice, I *cared* about whether there were inequalities of access and privilege in educational settings; I also started to recognize how individuals' subjective experience may sometimes be distorted by external factors over which they have no control (e.g. the prevalent Egyptian views on the superiority of everything Western). AUC's move to the new campus (mentioned later here) enhanced this criticism as it brought it to the foreground.

In questioning why we do educational research, Peterson (1998) emphasizes the importance of the researcher integrating her multiple roles and identities within her research. This both motivates our choices and informs our approach and strategies. My interest in education stems from my experiences trying different educational systems and my multiple roles within AUC. Throughout my writing, I draw upon my various roles as ex-student, staff member, teacher, faculty developer, and concerned citizen.

²¹ April 2007-2008 was mostly spent in Houston, TX; January 2010-July 2010 were spent in Norwich, England.

Returning to my alma-mater as a faculty developer, as a teaching assistant, I interacted with groups of students and noticed differences in their level of critical thinking. Since CT was one of the most important goals for AUC, I found it important to question how (and how well) this goal is attained at AUC, and how this occurs for diverse students. Taking an interpretive approach that foregrounds the experience of insiders to my setting, my study used interviews exploring student, instructor and administrator perceptions. However, my analysis takes a more critical stance which goes beyond taking these perceptions at face value, and into locating them within broader social structures on the micro and macro levels. My writing does not merely present how students perceived the development of their criticality, but also elements in their experience of which they may not have been cognizant, which may have limited the extent of the criticality developed, or the privileging of access to this criticality, for example.

Although my actual research process did not directly incorporate elements of effecting change at the institution (AUC), I have been doing so in my roles as faculty developer and teacher educator. For example, from discussions with colleagues at AUC about my research, some initiatives have taken place to improve student access to certain learning experiences that I have found to develop CT. I have also worked with others to conduct research at AUC in order to look deeper into phenomena that I was exploring in my thesis (e.g. Bali & Carpenter, 2009; Bali & Balkenbush, 2009), and I have then used the results of this research to provide further evidence in this thesis.

There have been many changes to personal, institutional, and sociopolitical contexts throughout this study, which I discuss in more detail at the end of this chapter and in my concluding chapter. Although the bulk of the fieldwork and writing was conducted before Egypt's 2011 uprising and the political upheaval that followed, I have adjusted my analysis to reflect on the significance of studying CT in Egypt today. The timing of completion of this thesis now (serendipitously) seems suitable to the context of AUC and Egypt today, which I hope will increase stakeholder interest in further research, as the importance of developing critical citizens becomes a nation-wide priority in a budding democracy.

My goal was to shed light upon experiences at AUC that have succeeded in developing students' CT, and to explore these further in terms of their limitations and issues of privilege that may restrict students' abilities to benefit from them. My stance is therefore emancipatory/critical in

the sense that the research seeks to expose inequalities and hidden power relationships within AUC's structure and practice that can subdue the development of CT. According to Harvey (1990, cited in Sparkes, 1992), this is an intermediate level of critical research using interpretive approaches: This means that I went beyond simply considering the broader social context, into examining how it mediates social processes at AUC, but have not gone to the most critical level of doing so dialectically. It also means that the relationship between social processes and wider structures only enters my research at the analytical level, but was not central to earlier stages.

At the same time, I hope my research will be used eventually to improve AUC's practice by highlighting the ways in which some experiences can develop CT, in order to improve their provision and widen access to them. I also seek to go beyond the micro-environment of AUC, and to connect the discussion to AUC's position as a provider of Western education within Egypt, and further Egypt's position as a postcolonial state currently undergoing democratic transition, but still in political upheaval.

4.4 My Research Approach

I find previous positivistic research about CT to be narrow and not deeply informative for practice. Learning that there is a correlation between standardized scores on a CT test, and participation in extracurricular activities tells us very little about how each particular extracurricular experience was able to develop each particular student, and whether students were then able to transfer this learning beyond the academic context. Instead, trying to understand the process of CT development is a question of meaning-making: how do students and instructors understand the development of CT, and in what ways do different experiences affect this learning? There is unlikely to be one universal approach to developing CT, but a variety of possibilities that manifest themselves in different ways to match the diversity of learners and educators, and their interactions with each other and their environments.

A key aspect of the interpretive approach I take is the centrality of the researcher, and the researcher's interpretation of the data, rather than the particular instruments of data collection (Sparkes, 1992) - the researcher is, herself, the instrument. A commonly used approach in interpretive research is ethnography. Ethnography is understood as an attempt to understand

"locally crafted meaning" in a setting, involving detailed description of the context being studied, as insiders' understandings "mediate the meaning of what is said in the course of social interaction" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2005, p. 488). Therefore, a researcher's capacity to gain these insider insights vary according to her cultural distance from the context being studied (Woods 1986 cited in Sparkes, 1992). In my case, "entry" into the context was a given, and the cultural distance was relatively small, given my multiple insider roles within AUC; however, I still recognize that each individual student, teacher or administrator's experiences differ than mine, and do not necessarily reflect my own. An ethnographer²² chooses whichever data collection method is appropriate for gaining the insights she seeks, and so I became a "methodological omnivore" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 232, quoted in Cohen et al., 2000, p. 139), taking an eclectic approach to my research. Following the images previously described of bricolage/quilt-making, I drew upon different interpretive methodologies in order to answer my research question, and kept adding to these as my analysis required more depth in certain areas to enrich the description, fill a gap in the data, or broaden the range of views incorporated. Influenced by an interpretive worldview, my research question (particularly the second) can only be answered in an interpretive manner: "How does CT develop **in practice**, for the **diverse student body** coming in to AUC, taking **diverse pathways** during their university life, and graduating with **diverse goals**?"

In attempting to answer this question, I attempt to follow the suggestions that:

[Interpretive] research must be grounded in the shared understandings about the culture developed between the researcher and the members of the group being examined; it must include the researchers insights about details of the culture that are not well articulated by members of the group; and it must include theoretical generalizations that go beyond the particular details of the culture to link the study to relevant portions of other research. (Harris, 1983a, p. 92, quoted in Sparkes, 1992, p. 35)

My research is a case study, in the sense that I am studying the development of CT at a singularity, a particular institution (AUC) in-depth. However, it is not the typical case study that is chosen as representative of other cases; it is, instead, what Stake (2005) terms an "intrinsic" case study, where the case has been chosen because it is of particular interest to the researcher. AUC is of particular interest to me because I work in faculty development at AUC; this "insider" status also

²² As I clarify later, my research is not strictly "ethnography" but contains elements of ethnography.

made AUC and its stakeholders more accessible to me than other institutions, and these are appropriate justifications for case selection (Stake, 2005). As such, it looks at AUC's development of CT from perspectives of students, faculty and administrators, as well as drawing upon a variety of institutional documents and available institution-wide research. By doing this as a case study, I look at the details of the AUC context and how it affects different students' pathways to developing CT - something more difficult to find in cross-institution studies. By clarifying the particular nuances at AUC, others reading the "thick description" (Geertz, 1973 cited in Cohen et al., 2000) provided by this research can have a basis to compare with their own context. Institutions that may have significant overlap with the AUC context are other Western universities located in the Middle East region; institutions in the West that cater to large bodies of international students may find some areas of overlap as well.

There are also strong elements of illuminative evaluation as described by Parlett and Hamilton (1977), in the sense that I am fitting my methods to suit my needs, and triangulating results from various data sets to validate my results. It is illuminative evaluation in that it seeks to understand the complexity of the learning milieu as applied in practice, from the points of view of various stakeholders, in order to influence decision-making (Parlett & Hamilton, 1977). Because my goal is to "illuminate", my findings are written by looking in-depth at learning experiences that develop CT at AUC as mini-case studies, exploring them from different viewpoints and comparing the AUC experience of particular students to the existing literature elsewhere. I present these mini-case studies next to each other, like pieces of a quilt (the image of bricoleur) or like a different snapshots included in a cinematic montage (Denzin & Lincoln's 2005 metaphors), and try to bring them together under a common umbrella in each chapter. This is also exploratory research since I am trying to shed light on something previously not tackled, expecting divergent results by virtue of the diverse student backgrounds, rather than convergent results that point to a few particular factors that influence all students equally. My only prediction was that there would be variability among students' self-reported influences on CT, and the ways in which these experiences affected them.

The research has elements of ethnography. Although most ethnography considers participant observation central (Sparkes, 1992), my research centres around interviews with AUC insiders, but contains elements of unplanned participant observation. As explained in my positionality, I was

immersed in the AUC context for a large portion of the time I was doing this study. Some of the experiences students mentioned are ones in which I have been a participant during this study; others I have direct contact with (e.g. particular courses and instructors, as they attend workshops, seek my consultations, or ask me to conduct in-class assessments of their courses). In yet others, I have been able to reflect and draw upon my experiences as a student when I had had similar experiences to provide further evidence. I have therefore chosen to present my data within each chapter as collections of case studies, examining particular experiences in depth, triangulating student views with other sources of data, including myself.

My research perspective was initially interpretive (during research design and data collection) but moves towards a more critical approach in my analysis, as I started to integrate understanding of impact of the broader social context on the micro-context I am studying (Harvey, 1990's second level of critical approach, cited in Sparkes, 1992). For example, although my research mainly takes an interpretive perspective in trying to understand how CT develops in practice, as a set of interactions between individuals at AUC (Cornbleth, 1990), my research goes beyond merely describing how it works, and goes further by tackling the questions Cornbleth (1990) considers typical of a critical approach to curriculum: I question whose knowledge is given preference, I question differential access to knowledge, and I question how AUC's curriculum benefits certain groups while disadvantaging others, drawing mainly upon social reproduction and human capability theory. I also make connections between global issues that impact upon dynamics at AUC, such as the values behind an American education in Egypt's postcolonial context, and the tensions between neoliberalism and a liberating education.

My analysis takes a social justice orientation, attempting to uncover inequalities in the AUC context, looking for ways power plays out as students' CT develops at AUC. This is a move towards critical awareness, but the evolution of my thinking suggests that a more participatory approach may have been better, as well as one in which social action is embedded in the research itself (Carr & Kemmis, 1986), instead of being a hoped-for after-effect. One criterion for critical social science, as put forth by Habermas, is for it to be emancipatory rather than merely enlightening, and to do so, it must go beyond raising consciousness and into critical action (Ewert, 1991). Although this study as it now stands does not directly involve such action, I discuss how this study can be taken further in the conclusion chapter, in order to benefit AUC as an institution.

One of the reasons my research was not critical participatory action research was my initial surface familiarity with such an approach when I started my thesis. Additionally, as I became more aware of this approach, I felt there were two reasons I could not use it: First, I find the emphasis in some critical research on a particular aspect such as gender, class or race, reductionist of the social complexities of a social setting. My approach does not focus on any one of these aspects, but on any institutional practice which perpetuates inequality or injustice, whether this practice occurs on a micro-level, or reflects the wider sociocultural/sociopolitical context. More importantly, having not conducted the research in a participatory manner to begin with, I do not feel comfortable imposing my recommendations on practitioners and students without giving them a stronger voice in the actual research itself (see conclusion chapter for recommendations for further research). Where possible, I reference additional documentation that gives voice to a wider base of practitioners (e.g. in chapter seven on RHET, I cite their self-study report, which included work of several faculty members and even some research by AUC students). My personal circumstances 2011-2013 took me away from AUC, such that any attempts to take my research back to the community had to be postponed, and so my plans for doing this have been included as "further research" in my concluding chapter. As a researcher, participatory critical action research is the future direction I would like to take, and in retrospect, that I feel I should have taken, in order to effect change. i.e. from an ethical standpoint, I think involving stakeholders in the entire research process, having them central to it, improves the emancipatory impact (particularly educative and catalytic authenticity, discussed in section 4.6). While I think I could present my work as is, and work on the catalytic authenticity later, I would rather involve stakeholders into it earlier so that my conclusions are not considered offensive or presumptuous, but develop (and may become different conclusions of course!) via collaborative consciousness-raising rather than be imposed from a semi-external "expert".

However my study contains elements of action research for myself as a member of the Center for Learning and Teaching and as a teacher, in the sense that my learning and findings influence my role as a faculty developer, and my practice of developing criticality in my students. I have also taken my role beyond working with individual faculty, and into attempting to influence student access to extracurricular factors that have potential to develop CT by working with various

departments at AUC. My motivation behind taking this research was to improve opportunities for AUC students to develop CT.

4.5 Positioning This Study within CT Empirical Studies

The majority of empirical research into CT development is either correlational (e.g. Terenzini et al., 1995, Geilin's, 2003 meta-analysis), or case-study type reflecting on one practitioner's particular experience in their own classroom (e.g. Ellozy & Mostafa, 2010; Harrell 2011), with little attention to institutional context (although the books by Fox, 1994 and Benesch, 1999 reflects on their personal practice with attention to context). However, in-depth understanding of how and why certain learning occurs in certain contexts entails exploration of meaning-making and is therefore best explored via interpretive approaches using qualitative methods, and Thelin (1976) advocates intensive case studies of institutions (cited in Tsui, 2000). Institutional research on CT using qualitative methods includes Tsui's (1998) thesis which seemed particularly "holistic" since it involved four institutional case studies, and included interviews with faculty, students and administrators as well as classroom observations, and explored various factors influencing CT development including campus culture, faculty attitudes and pedagogical techniques. However, I have found her published research on instruction that fosters CT too shallow to be directly helpful to teachers; while appearing on the surface to be interpretive, Tsui's (2002) paper on pedagogical influences on CT actually shows many signs of positivistic influence (Felix, 2009), such as observational data reported in quantitative rather than descriptive form, her quasi-experimental way of comparing results across institutions, and lack of depth in describing factors that influence CT (Felix, 2009). Another holistic study was by Donald (2002), who conducted twenty years of research about thinking in various disciplines and included observations and interviews with exemplary instructors and their students at various English-speaking universities around the world. Donald (2002) tackles thinking as a whole (CT being a subset) and emphasizes the different cognitive processes, learning environments and pedagogical techniques inherent in different disciplines, and the potential effect of this on the development of different thinking skills for students. Donald's study employed several graduate students who became participant observers in undergraduate classes of various disciplines, and so was able to achieve a depth and breadth not possible for a PhD dissertation.

The literature on CT identifies several factors as potentially influencing CT or having correlations with it. Terenzini et al. (1995) divide these into three categories of curricular exposure, formal classroom/instructional experiences, and out-of-class experiences. What follows is a summary of the most commonly cited influences on CT (I do not claim this list to be exhaustive, however).

Curricular exposure to CT can be either through direct instruction on informal logic and fallacies in CT courses (Paul, 1990; Ennis, 1989; Ennis, 1990; Ikuenobe, 2001), infusing CT concepts into regular courses (e.g. Ennis 1989 suggests a mixture of infusion and direct instruction), especially writing courses (e.g. Elbow, 1994; Paul, 1990; Benesch, 1999; Moon, 2005; Tsui, 2002), or philosophy courses not necessarily entitled CT or "informal logic" (Nussbaum, 1997; Moon, 2005), or via immersion in the disciplines where CT is learned indirectly (e.g. McPeck, 1990 proposes immersion with infusion; Moore 2004). There are also those who suggest CT is best developed via a liberal arts curriculum (McPeck, 1990; Nussbaum, 1997; Facione, 1990), or general exposure to a variety of disciplines or interdisciplinary courses (Barnett, 1997). Further notions of developing CT within disciplines include explicit discussion/teaching of disciplinary epistemology and how CT is enacted in the discipline (Burwood, 1999; Moon, 2005). This could be conceived as a direct way of teaching discipline-specific CT, but can be taken further (e.g. Burwood, 1999; Barnett, 1997) to encourage students to question disciplinary epistemologies not just take them for granted.

Pedagogical or instructional approaches to developing CT include in-class discussion (Brookfield, 1987; Benesch, 1999; Tsui, 2002; Moon, 2005), including debates (Hill, 1993; Colbert, 1995, cited in Allen et al., 1999), although dialogue should not be used unproblematically (Burbules, 2000; Ellsworth, 1989). CT can also be encouraged via exposure to multiple perspectives (Langer, 1997; cited in Pithers & Soden, 2000; Nussbaum, 1997) and exposing learners to realistically complex, ill-structured situations (Facione, 1990), particularly when reflection/metacognition are emphasized (Facione, 1990; Pithers & Soden, 2000; Moon, 2005), although reflection and metacognition can themselves be considered dimensions of CT (e.g. Barnett, 1997; van Gelder, 2005).

Finally, there are non-academic factors thought to influence CT development, including involvement in extra-curricular activities (Moon, 2005; Geilin, 2003 presents a meta-analysis of studies) and workplace contexts (Brookfield, 1987; Moon, 2005), experiences with diversity (Laird, 2005), and peer interaction (Brookfield, 1987; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Anderson et al., 2001;

MacPherson, 1999). It has also been suggested that campus culture or institutional context can influence CT (Tsui, 2000; Hagedorn, et al., 1999).

My research fills the gap of exploring, in depth, how students develop CT in practice (Pascarella, 2006 points out how this type of research is missing from higher educational research), inside and outside the formal classroom. The list of influences on CT above can vary greatly in implementation. The focus on one institution in depth, with a small sample of students, has allowed me to not only look at how certain learning experiences influence CT, but also how they work differently for different students; it has also allowed me to uncover inequalities and power differentials within the context of the institution, something not generally explored in the literature on CT.

Attention to AUC's particular context is important as it seeks to provide an American education to a mostly Egyptian student-base. There is research on the challenges and dynamics of developing CT with international students (e.g. Egege & Kutieleh, 2004; Vandermensbrugghe, 2004; Jones, 2005; Floyd, 2011), and there has been some small-scale research on CT in AUC (Ellozy & Mostafa, 2010; Bali & Ramadan, 2008), Egypt (e.g. Elsayed et al., 2011) and the Arab world (Suliman, 2006; Bendriss, 2012; Raddawi, 2011 conducted a larger-scale - 200 students- quantitative study of elements that hinder CT development for Arab students taking Academic Writing courses in a UAE university). However, there has been no institution-wide intensive research for the case of an American institution located in a Third World country, with mainly local students, such as AUC. There is no study that includes the perspectives of students, instructors and administrators. The situation of majority students from a different culture than the educational institution's dominant one allows one to see differences in cultural capital among these students, as opposed to generalizing about "most Chinese/Hispanic students", for example – even though we all know that these populations are not themselves culturally monolithic. Nor is the institution's culture fixed, nor its enactment via its faculty and staff, who are themselves not culturally monolithic.

Unlike correlational studies, this research is concerned with how differences among students affect their opportunities for developing CT at AUC. This view draws upon Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction (discussed section 3.2.4.1) which suggests that some students' home culture and background prepare them better (via cultural and social capital) for the dominant culture

implicitly valued in education, and so education can reproduce inequality in society. It also draws upon Sen's Human Capability theory (1999) which emphasizes that to achieve the same outcome, those having lower levels of initial capability will need different resources to achieve the same outcomes as those who started with higher levels of initial capability. Sen's (1999) work focuses on capability as freedom, and focuses on it as an intrinsic goal as well as means for development. The capability approach centres on issues of social justice, and asks "What is each person able to do and to be?" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 18). It works well with interpretive research approaches, because instead of reporting on average well-being in a society, capability theory focuses on each individual's available opportunities and freedoms, which they may or may not choose to exercise (Nussbaum, 2011). Sen's notion of capability is generic, whereas Nussbaum (2011) chooses to specify ten capabilities which she considers universally more important than others (but that can still be locally re-contextualized). She considers practical reason (similar to critical thinking) and affiliation (which involves responsiveness to others) essential because of their influence on other important capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011).

To translate the general thrust of the complex idea of capability into my study, I posit that students who have previous exposure to CT (e.g. through school or an open-minded family culture), will need less support to develop CT at college than those to whom CT is a totally new, and possibly intimidating, concept. They will require access to more (and different) opportunities to develop CT. In the sense of "practical reason"/critical thinking being a central capability influencing others, having the capability to think critically itself promotes further development of criticality (i.e. good critical thinkers are more capable of becoming better critical thinkers). Building on Sen's theory is Walker's (2006) concept of "critical capability pedagogies", which emphasizes the negative effect of an institution on capability-building to those disadvantaged, e.g. where the power dynamics in the classroom further increase students' disadvantages. For example, a student not used to participating actively in in-class discussions may be further intimidated when in a classroom with other students who excel at it; this may prevent him/her from participating, thus leaving a poorer impression on the instructor, who then favours participative students and continues the cycle. Although Sen's theory focuses on "capability" rather than "functioning", in education, it is difficult to assess "capability" if it does not manifest itself in some outer behaviour such as writing or speaking (Walker, 2006). I recognize that students may develop a capacity to

think critically in university but feel unable to act critically in the current cultural and socio-political circumstances s/he faces (what Nussbaum, 2011 calls "combined capability" p. 30). I will, however, assume that university environments are ones where students are encouraged/allowed to "act" more freely than outside university, so that there will be more opportunities for criticality to show. Also, many scholars understand criticality to incorporate an element of action (e.g. Brookfield, 1987; Benesch, 1999; Barnett, 1997); having the capability to be critical but not using it, or not being able to use it, is not enough; one must also have the disposition to use it (Facione, 1990). Nussbaum (2011) feels that in the issue of education, one cannot stop at building capability without it manifesting itself in action/functioning, because education itself is the entryway to other valuable human capabilities. As Sen suggests, "with adequate social opportunities, individuals can effectively shape their own destiny and help each other" (1999, p. 11). If the social conditions hinder one's capacity to be critical, the university can and should consider this when building students' CT; it should also consider the unequal distribution and access to important social opportunities it offers. I return to this discussion throughout the thesis.

Students go through different university experiences, ranging from which discipline they choose, to which particular courses they take, whom they deal with and which activities they participate in. They differ in their motivations and values, all of which affects how and what they learn. Disagreement exists in the theoretical literature, and in results from research studies, over which factors influence CT development the most; correlation analysis can only produce more hypotheses and generalizations - there needs to be more in-depth research into the personal circumstances of particular students first, for their experiences in a particular institution; and then more detailed analysis of how these actually work in practice (Pascarella, 2006 agrees).

4.6 Judging Quality

In interpretive inquiry, what counts as evidence is subject to interpretation; research is intersubjective built on the shared understandings between researcher and participants who are themselves historically and culturally situated; and interpretation is recognized to have political and ethical implications (Schwandt, 2007). This raises the important issue of how to judge its quality.

The scientific view that natural and social sciences should be judged by the same standards of reliability, validity and generalizability, is generally rejected by newer approaches to research (particularly when privileging qualitative methodologies as in most interpretive and critical research), since their ontology of multiple subjective realities is directly opposed to the positivist notion of one single truth that can be achieved using specific criteria and methods (Sparkes, 1992; Lincoln, 1995; Scott, 1996b). This view uses the term postpositivism as the "methodological and epistemological refutation of positivism" (Lather, 1985, p. 259).

There is also an approach that takes the extreme postmodern perspective and claims that there are no appropriate criteria for studying the social world (Scott, 1996a), but Guba (1992) suggests that this does not automatically follow from taking a relativistic ontology. The issue here is that having no criteria at all runs the risk of having no way to judge good from poor quality research, and can render all research trivial. Even though there is much diversity on what constitutes quality in qualitative research, the prevalent view is that most scholars agree on the need for evaluating the credibility of such research (Creswell & Miller, 2000), for example, to convince policymakers or funding bodies (Seale, 1999). The lack of consensus is understandable given an "endeavor whose guiding philosophy often stresses creativity, exploration, conceptual flexibility, and a freedom of spirit" (Seale, 1999, p. 467). To the extent that criteria/standards *may* be put forward for judging quality in qualitative research, these criteria are often tentative, subject to revision, and may differ by context and type of research (Smith, 1993; cited in Lincoln, 1995). Some criteria (e.g. Lincoln & Guba, 1986/2007) parallel positivist criteria of quality, which has been criticized (e.g. Seale, 1999), but which is understandable given the (often unconscious) pervasiveness of positivist notions of quality amongst researchers. Other notions of quality have been developed that are intrinsic to interpretive/critical research, and are value-laden, addressing ethical issues (e.g. notions of authenticity in Lincoln & Guba, 1986/2007; Lather, 1986; Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

Creswell and Miller (2000) highlight three different lenses by which qualitative researchers choose procedures for validating their work: the researcher herself; the viewpoints of participants; and external auditing. Choices of how to address quality using each lens can further depend upon paradigm: postpositivist (by which they mean those who use qualitative research but keep remnants of a positivist perspective), constructivist/interpretive and critical. I have reproduced their table (p. 126) in table 4.1 below, and added additional quality measures in *italics*. While I do

not see a strict division amongst paradigms (researchers from each paradigm could conceivably wish to draw upon any of the quality procedures they mention), I found the division of lenses enlightening, and will use that division to clarify which quality procedures I have used.

Table 4.1. Validity Procedures within Qualitative Research: Lens and Paradigm Assumptions (expanding on Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126, my additions in *italics*)

Paradigm assumptions/Lens	Postpositivist or Systematic Paradigm	Constructivist or Interpretive Paradigm	Critical Paradigm
Lens of the Researcher	Triangulation	Disconfirming evidence <i>Clarifying positionality</i> <i>Ontological authenticity</i> <i>Fairness</i> <i>Voice</i>	Researcher reflexivity <i>Clarifying positionality</i> <i>Crystalization</i>
Lens of Study Participants	Member Checking	Prolonged engagement in the field	Collaboration <i>Reciprocity</i> <i>Catalytic, Educative & Tactical authenticity</i>
Lens of People External to the Study (Reviewers, Readers)	The audit trail	Thick, rich description	Peer debriefing

4.6.1 Researcher Lens

Although **triangulation** for qualitative research could be seen as initially coming from a positivist/postpositivist perspective, involving use of different methods to check against bias in others, a more interpretive perspective would involve not necessarily use of different methods, but also different sources of information (Scott, 1996a), and not necessarily looking for convergence of data, but enrichment and deepening of understanding, even finding divergent/negative cases (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1986/2000). For each of the themes discussed in the findings chapters, I supplement student interview evidence with instructor/administrator interview evidence, as well as various AUC documents, research studies, and my own informal observations and reflections on past experiences. I became a "methodological omnivore" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 232, quoted in Cohen et al., 2000, p. 139) in finding different ways of extending understanding of the various themes that developed CT

at AUC. In doing so, I often found the same student experience can be interpreted in different ways, and that looking at the same experience in different chapters (where an experience had elements that overlapped across themes) provided new perspectives. I particularly found Richardson's notion of **crystallization** (a "transgressive" notion) helpful to describe the non-linear ways in which I viewed my research as it developed into written form:

I propose the central imaginary for "validity" for postmodernist texts is not the triangle -a fixed, rigid two-dimensional object. Rather the central imaginary is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, alter, but are not amorphous. *Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns, arrays, casting off in different directions, what we see depends upon our angle of repose.* Not triangulation, crystallization... crystallization provides us with a *deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding* of the topic. *Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know* (Richardson, 1997 p. 92, quoted in Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 208, emphasis added).

The final point about doubting what we know as we know more (which also resonates with Barnett's (2011, 2012) notion of supercomplexity), resonated with me particularly. The more I learned about critical thinking, the less concrete the concept seemed to me because of its many dimensions. The more I learned about how people developed CT, the more I wanted to learn. Getting to know my participants further (through re-reading and re-listening to our interviews), I was also reminded of the complexity of human beings. Since categorization allows us "neither [to] identify nor nurture the parts, the vital parts, of the other that transcends category" (Yalom, 1989, p. 185). In research, we need to use categorization to support our analysis, but we should never forget that this categorization is constructed and even imposed, and there is much more that lies beyond it, and we must realize that "the other is never fully knowable" (Yalom, 1989, p. 185).

The crystal image also resonates with how the multidimensionality of my thinking conflicted with my writing. It was difficult to write in a linear manner, when I could see so many interconnections in my data and reading, such that I could look at different combinations of data, and different categorizations, and possibly come up with different ways of telling the story of CT development at AUC. There is also always the possibility that there were angles I had not yet seen that would add value. Every new political event that happened in Egypt made me reflect and discover new angles. Every teaching experience gave me a new angle on my research.

Other important notions from the researcher's lens are clarifying one's **positionality** and being continually **reflexive** (Lincoln, 1995; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This involves researcher openness and reflection on the research process and her own biases and viewpoint (positionality) which I think I have done here and throughout the thesis. Reflexivity or critical subjectivity (Lincoln 1995) involves elements of **ontological authenticity** (how the research raises consciousness of the researcher - Lincoln & Guba, 1986/2007), which I have tried to make explicit, particularly in the conclusion chapter, and **educative authenticity** (raising consciousness of the participants and stakeholders - Lincoln & Guba, 1986/2007), which I believe fits more under the "participants lens" discussed in the next section.

Additionally, the researcher often tries to promote **fairness** (Lincoln & Guba, 1986/2007) and **voice** (Guba & Lincoln, 2005), in terms of attempting to give space/voice to multiple viewpoints that emerge from the research, without empowering certain voices above others. I found this one of the most difficult aspects to apply, because the eloquence of certain interviewees tempted me to quote them at length, whereas others' views were less eloquent and so their "authentic" voice was aesthetically more difficult to use in my writing of narratives. This is particularly the case for faculty who teach the sciences whose responses were more succinct and to the point, as compared to faculty who teach social sciences, whose responses were more detailed and revealing. With student views, my approach was rather sometimes to over-emphasize the disempowered to highlight issues of inequality. So whereas most of the students I interviewed would be considered privileged to an extent, there were instances where I needed to highlight the lack of such privilege in certain situations for some students.

But qualitative research does not occur in a vacuum, and one needs to evaluate one's research from the points of view of participants and peers. Each of these lenses is discussed below.

4.6.2 Participant Lens

One of the ways of enhancing **credibility** of qualitative research is via **prolonged engagement** with the subject of study (Lincoln & Guba, 1986/2007, Seale, 1999). In my case, prolonged engagement with the subject of AUC increased my "opportunity to learn" (Stake, 2005), and came from my personal involvement as student and staff member, and prolonged engagement with the participants came from my being the students' Teaching Assistant, and my knowledge of the

instructors in my faculty development role, prior to my interviewing them. While interviewing people I already know could be conceived as bias, another way of seeing it is that it enhances credibility as it shows evidence of prolonged engagement. This provided richer topics for discussion during the interview as I could refer to shared instances in our interactions outside the limited time of the interview itself.

Another element of quality is **reciprocity** between researcher/participants (Lather, 1986; Lincoln, 1995, also called "communicative validity" by Kvale, 1995; and also related to "dialectical theory-building" by Lather, 1986) which involves the openness of the researcher while conducting interviews; as well as negotiating meaning with participants throughout the research process, sometimes called "member checking", and also a kind of "giving back" to participants. It is important to recognize that "member checking" can be problematic because of the risk of false consciousness (Lather, 1986), meaning that individuals can be in denial due to their "commonsense ways of looking at the world [being] permeated with meanings that sustain [their] disempowerment" (Lather, 1986, pp. 264-265). The researcher needs to develop ways of differentiating between participants' reasonable rejections, and false consciousness, while also staying reflexive enough about the researcher's own a priori theorizing so as not to impose one's theories on the research (Lather, 1986). Sparkes (1992) points out that whereas participants may not agree with the researcher's interpretation, they should be able to recognize the important details of the researcher's account as true. I did a very rudimentary degree of "checking" with faculty interviews (I let them see transcripts of our interview; none asked for any changes) and students (I occasionally went back to confirm certain aspects of our interview, or to extend them by email). Since stakeholders at an institution go beyond those the researcher has interviewed or observed, there is always a question of whom to include in a reciprocal dialogue (Kvale, 1995). In my case, I occasionally and informally had AUC various insiders read drafts of my thesis chapters, and often had conversations with them about it which enhanced my understanding and made me revise my thinking sometimes; however, for an entire thesis with participant views interwoven throughout, it would have been impractical to ask people to read large sections of it (and indeed some people have declined when requested to). Some conversations about different aspects of the research resulted in my receiving further documentation to support my research (e.g. the Rhetoric & Composition self-study report Elshimi, 2007), and refinement of my understanding.

Finally, I asked some of my participants to read chapters of my work that involved their voice, and received feedback on that. It has been suggested that overreliance on "intersubjective validation" may imply lack of confidence on the part of the researcher (Kvale, 1995), whereas I feel it rather implies an ethical dimension, a respect for persons and their agency, as long as the researcher continues to use participants' responses reflexively, rather than take them at face value.

Another important aspect of quality in educational research is **catalytic validity/authenticity** (also called pragmatic validity - Kvale, 1995) which refers to the extent to which the research affects action (Lather, 1986; Lincoln & Guba, 1986). This to me, is obviously needed for participatory action research (as Carr & Kemmis, 1986 describe it) and praxis-oriented research (Lather 1986), but I do not feel it is "fair" to use it to judge other forms of research that are less action-oriented and less participatory as the implementation of non-participatory research could face lots of barriers outside the researcher and even participants' control (e.g. if research is against the institution's agenda).

In my concluding chapter, I suggest further research be done in a participatory manner, to enhance educative and catalytic validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1986/2000), rather than to take recommendations directly from this research which was not done in a participatory manner (and would therefore be an imposition). I stated earlier my belief that educational research needs to have some sort of impact on improving education in some way in order to be valuable, but this does not necessarily entail that this impact is intrinsic to the research itself if its design is not action-oriented to begin with. This is in line with Hammersley's (1992, cited in Scott 1996a) criterion of **intent**: that research should be judged based upon its intent rather than some external criteria. If research was done with the intent to illuminate or describe, it should not be intrinsically evaluated on its ability to cause change, even though change is desirable as a result of that research.

Having discussed quality procedures I have used from the researcher and participant lens, I now turn to the lens of external reviewers, as research is rarely conducted for one audience only.

4.6.3 External Reviewer Lens

An important consideration when considering one's external audience is the extent to which it promotes **transferability** (Lincoln & Guba, 1986/2000). This is often done by researchers providing "**thick description**" (Lincoln & Guba, 1986/2000), which is particularly important for case study research (Bassey, 2003; Stake, 2005) in order to enhance the reader's ability to judge applicability to their own context, as opposed to the generalizability criterion in positivism (Lincoln & Guba, 1986/2007). I have attempted to do this about AUC in general, and in each of the chapters by centring the details of the themes as in-depth case studies of experiences that develop CT at AUC. My aim was to provide a detailed understanding of each experience (e.g. Model United Nations) rather than a general understanding of the theme (e.g. learning in authentic contexts).

Other quality measures actually involve external reviewers in the process, as in the peer review process of academic journals. For this thesis, this involved of course my continuous discussions with my supervisor, as well as other critical peers at AUC and academics outside of AUC. I was, for example, invited to provide a guest seminar on intercultural learning and used that forum to discuss some of the issues I was considering for my thesis.

In summary, I have worked to enhance the quality of this research by triangulating data from student, faculty and administrator interviews as well as incorporating other observational and survey data from AUC, as well as institutional documentation. I have continually reflected on my own positionality (as someone with prolonged engagement with AUC as an insider) and the way this research has raised my own consciousness, and reflect on this further in the conclusion chapter. I have provided "thick description" throughout part III via mini-case studies on experiences that develop CT. I have informally taken feedback from insiders (and critical peers outside AUC) throughout the process of undertaking this study, and have taken some feedback from people I have interviewed not only on the interview transcripts, but also on written drafts related to their contribution to my thesis (at least one person for each chapter in part III). Most recently, I disseminated my ideas to a wider audience via a journalistic article highlighting the significance of my research to Egypt today (Bali, 2013), and discovered potential evidence of its transferability beyond AUC via communication with academics outside AUC. Future plans involve

sessions with AUC stakeholders to discuss my research in a participatory manner (see conclusion chapter).

The rest of this chapter is devoted to detailing my research design and implementation, before highlighting some key methodological challenges.

4.7 Introducing my Research Design

Having clarified my research approach, I now turn to the details of my research design. In interpretive investigation, it is necessary to include the participants of the educational setting (Scott 1996b), and I do so by involving students, faculty and administrators. In order to gain insight into factors that influence CT development at AUC, this study was divided into the following phases:

- **Phase I: WHO:** Selecting a small sample of “critical thinkers” among AUC undergraduates
- **Phase II: WHAT:** Understanding student perceptions on what develops their CT.
This was done by interviewing the selected sample (from phase I) of critical thinkers about the factors that have influenced the development of their CT, followed by occasional asynchronous email interviews to further investigate some aspects that came out of the first interviews. Although students' self-reported gains in cognitive development have been found to be relatively accurate (Tsui 2002), and are accepted by the Expert Consensus as a way of understanding the way a person exercises CT (Facione 1990), this is not my concern here. My concern was NOT with accuracy of the reported growth, but with students' descriptions of HOW each factor/experience influenced their CT development as THEY understood it. i.e. it is not the students' judgment of their criticality that I am seeking, but their perceptions of how they developed it.
- **Phase III: HOW and WHY:** Further investigating the AUC-related factors that students perceived to have influenced their CT. Building on results from phase II, I initially considered doing this in three ways:
 1. Interviewing AUC instructors (or administrators) identified as having a role in fostering CT;

2. Observing some AUC instructors/activities in action that have been mentioned as influences on CT development
3. AUC documents, institution-wide research, and other research I had conducted (often with AUC faculty) for other purposes.

Before providing details of the research design and implementation, I will first discuss two important issues: my choice of interviewing as the main research method; and my decisions regarding conceptions of critical thinking used during my interviews with students, faculty and administrators.

4.7.1 Interviewing as a Research Method

While interviews were not the *only* method I used in my research, they were the central form of data collection in my research, starting with student views on experiences that influenced their CT, and moving onto instructor/administrator views on how they develop CT.

Regardless of criticisms of interview research (discussed below), doing social research without interviews would be tantamount to not "taking account of the way actors interpret and thus understand their worlds" which would remove the meaning from one's sociological explanation, and imply that humans' reasons for their behaviour are irrelevant, "thus assuming a way of seeing which reduces human beings to the role of 'unwitting dupes' of structural forces beyond their comprehension and influence" (Scott 1996b, p. 67). Having said this, interview data cannot be considered an infallible source of information (Hammersley, 2003).

In trying to understand experiences that develop CT, neither correlational research, nor observation (of social interaction or even analysis of written texts) would have given insight into how any experience worked in practice to develop CT for each individual student. Instead, I chose to use interviews to try to understand how students perceived the development of their CT, and then later to understand how faculty/administrators perceived their own efforts to develop CT. These interviews therefore provide insight into the meaning-making of the interviewees (Hammersley 2003), to the extent that they were conscious of it, and willing to share it with me during the interview.

There are different approaches to interviewing depending on one's paradigm (Scott, 1996b) and research question, and one can differentiate among them along several continua regarding (Kvale, 1996 cited in Cohen et al., 2000): degrees of structure, whether they are more exploratory or hypothesis-testing, whether descriptive or interpretive, and whether they have a cognitive or an emotional focus. In general, positivists are likely to focus on hypothesis-testing and use more structured interviews than interpretive researchers (Scott, 1996b). Interview data can be used for a variety of purposes, including "source of witness accounts of the social world", "source of self-analysis" for the interviewee, as "indirect source of evidence about informants' attitudes and perspectives" (which assumes the interview data can be reapplied in different contexts and times), and as conversational data itself to be analyzed (Hammersley, 2003, p. 120) - sometimes the researcher uses interviews for a combination of these purposes.

As a researcher coming from a largely interpretive paradigm, I chose to conduct semi-structured qualitative interviews, during which knowledge was built constructively between the participants and me, as I probed their answers to understand them more fully. The student interviews were more structured than the faculty/admin interviews as I wished to cover different aspects of CT (see next section) with each student. Follow-up questions, however, depended upon the response, and aimed to probe for further details. Faculty/administrator interviews were much less structured, and more conversational, and often important points in the interview guide were covered by the interviewee without my prompting. In all my interviews, I occasionally referred to situations/experiences common between the interviewee and myself, asking them to elaborate further on those experiences. There were also some situations where I shared personal information (e.g. to tell students something about how I was a student) in order to encourage the interviewee to give more details.²³By bringing in such situations, I helped bridge the interviewee's thinking beyond the immediate situation, widening the contexts the interviewee could reflect upon (in an attempt to partially address one of the criticisms of interview data as representing reality that may not extend to other contexts/times Hammersley, 2003, more below).

²³ This approach to interviewing could be seen as a way of reducing the "power" of the interviewer, and increasing reciprocity (as the interviewee also learned something about me), but could be critiqued as manipulative in the sense of trying to persuade the interviewee to give more information by making the interview seem more conversational. Given that the subject matter of my interviews was not likely to harm the participants in any obvious way, and that these sharings were spontaneous rather than premeditated, I felt they were justified in order to encourage interviewees to talk with less inhibition.

Interviews, however, do not give the researcher direct contact with reality, but only entry into the way the interviewee perceives reality at a certain point in time. It is "not possible to access the 'authentic' self of research participants" (Roulston, 2010, p. 207). One needs to recognize that the interviewee's views of reality may be different from how others would see it (Walford, 2007, cited in Roulston, 2010); s/he may be unconscious of certain conditions and motivations influencing their behaviour, as well as unintended consequences (Bhaskar, cited in Cohen et al., 2000), and therefore be unable to articulate them in an interview. This is not to say that human beings are completely controlled by external factors, but that we must recognize that they are also not completely free social agents, (Giddens, 1994, cited in Cohen et al., 2000) nor are their reflections on their actions necessarily the only possible interpretations. It is always a possibility that interviewees would willingly choose to misinform, evade, lie, or pretend (Roulston, 2010), or even unintentionally mislead the interviewer, for example because of faulty memory (Walford, 2007, cited in Roulston, 2010). Moreover, everyone's perceptions can change with time and circumstance (Walford, 2007, cited in Roulston, 2010), and is shaped by background assumptions and biases (Hammersley, 2003). All of these critiques of interviewing do not discount the potential value of interviews, but provide cautions for researchers to use such data critically, and not to rely too heavily on them as the sole source of data (Hammersley, 2003).

There are also some ethical issues with interpretive interviewing which Roulston (2010) calls "romantic": the conversational tone may hide inequalities in power between interviewer/interviewee; and researchers may be able to manipulate the interviewee while they are in confession mode.

Some of the measures for improving quality of qualitative interviews are similar to those already mentioned previously (section 4.6), such as triangulation of methods and participants, using multiple interviews with each participants, member checking, prolonged field engagement, and researcher reflexivity and openness about subjectivity and research process (Roulston, 2010).

In my research, I tried to interview a diverse sample of students, instructors, and administrators, in order to gain insights into different viewpoints within AUC. The diversity in this sample works towards achieving what Gadamer (1975, cited in Usher 1996) calls a "fusion of horizons", which results from "intersubjective agreement where different and conflicting interpretations are

harmonised" (Usher 1996 p. 21). The different views that resulted from the diversity of individuals allowed me to compare their experiences and perceptions in order to gain and present a fuller picture of the variety of experiences available at AUC. Recognizing, however, that individual perceptions are partial, I tried to gain further insights by supplementing interview data with observational data and additional documentation, as well as other published and unpublished research conducted at AUC. In some cases, I returned to interviewees for further elaboration, though this was not done with all participants. I used member checking with instructors, but not students. Prolonged engagement with the field is one of the strengths of conducting research as an insider to AUC. I have also tried throughout this thesis to be reflexive and open about my research process, trying to bring out elements of my own and interviewees' positionality and background assumptions.

As mentioned, I conducted my interviews in a semi-structured manner, and because CT was the central topic to be discussed in the interviews, I chose to provide a detailed conception of what CT entails, in order to use it in the interviews. This framework is shared below, before details of my research design are shared.

4.7.2 Defining CT for the Purpose of this Research

Because there are so many different understandings of CT (discussed in chapter two), one cannot interview others about it without explaining what one means by CT. Before describing each phase of my research, I first share the definition of CT which I created in order to guide the semi-structured student interviews.

I was initially strongly tempted to use a participatory approach, developing a shared understanding of CT, and prioritizing aspects of CT most important to AUC students today, but I decided to forego such an approach and create my own definition early on in my research. This was done for several reasons: I had little knowledge and no experience of participatory approaches to research. Although I had some idea of the potential, I could not imagine how to conduct this research without having instructors feel they were being "put on the spot" in order to articulate a conception of CT. This occurred when we did this as an activity for workshops on CT, and I also sometimes felt instructors tried to impress us with providing articulate definitions, rather than what they actually teach in their classes. I also was unsure how such research can be

done on the PhD level where I am supposed to be the sole researcher, whereas the most participatory approaches to research involve stakeholders throughout the research process, including stages of defining research questions, designing methodology, and analyzing results. However, whatever definition I come up with is inherently (albeit indirectly) participatory, since my views on CT were influenced by discussions with colleagues at AUC, and therefore socially-constructed.

My definition incorporates different elements and conceptions of CT, with the hope of giving interviewees the opportunity to highlight the areas which they consider most important to their understanding and practice of developing CT (as instructors) and the areas which they feel AUC has helped them develop (as students). A participatory approach might not have been as inclusive, since some aspects of my definition are not widespread amongst AUC faculty.

For the purposes of this research, my definition of CT was influenced by a desire to provide clarity and structure for students during interviews, by breaking CT into component parts, which is considered pedagogically useful (Moon 2005). During instructor interviews, this removed the "pressure" from them in terms of having to come up with their own understanding of it in a free-form manner. The definition is modeled around Facione (1990) given its "expert consensus" status, and that it reflects the traditional understanding of CT in US HE, and AUC; however, I included other understandings of CT to allow for alternative conceptions of CT to emerge. My understanding of these alternative conceptions (such as Barnett's work and the critical pedagogy field) was rudimentary at first (e.g. I did not have access to Barnett 1997 until after I'd conducted my fieldwork), including them in my definition and interviews fortunately did show some experiences at AUC that promoted these alternative criticalities (limitations of my approach to defining CT discussed further in concluding chapter).

I needed to define CT in terms of "stages of development" of various "skills" in order to be able to identify factors that have influenced the development of particular skills/aspects from one (lower) stage to another throughout the college experience²⁴. I tried to make the definition wording as close as possible to how I can use it in interviews with students (see chapter three), including

²⁴ The wording of stages will benefit from Perry's model where appropriate and generic Likert-scale otherwise

specific applications. I initially tried to incorporate Perry's Model of Intellectual Development, but pilot interviews proved this question too complex to conduct. Table 4.2 explains my definition.

My definition clearly values the skills definition of CT, but adds to it elements of reflection and action, inspired by critical pedagogy and Barnett (1997). It also presumes CT is a general skill applicable across contexts. However, the first question shows the belief that one could be capable of thinking more critically in one area than another (e.g. someone can be willing to question the media, but not their teachers or religious figures). Also, in their responses, students' explanations of how they developed a certain aspect of CT would show whether their understanding of it is discipline-specific or general.

Table 4.2: My definition of CT²⁵ [a more detailed breakdown as used in student interviews available in appendix A-2]

<u>Part of CT Process</u>	<u>Description, how to recognize it, example</u>
1. Questioning: authority/media (Perry levels; Barnett 1997, disposition of scepticism)	Differentiate between: 1. Questioning media authority (stages mentioned in Thoman 2007); 2. Questioning teacher authority or 3. Questioning religious authority. Students were given a continuum of "believe completely" to "question completely" on a 5-point scale
2. Evaluating sources of information/evidence (evaluation with sub-skills assessing claims & assessing arguments)	Evaluating credibility, relevance, relative strength of information sources; recognizing assumptions, hidden agendas and "worldview" of each source
3. Synthesis/Justifying own claims logically to self and others of various audiences (Facione 1990)	Recognizing the importance of and having the ability to bring information from various sources to build a "sound" argument in a discussion with various audiences (especially from different backgrounds or worldviews)
4. Metacognition/reflection (in critical pedagogy but also Facione, 1990: self-regulation with sub-skills self-examination & self-correction)	Understanding own thinking process; recognizing own way of thinking and own biases; correcting self (e.g. "I realized I forgot to consider X when making this argument")
5. Ability to take critical action in the larger socio-political sphere (critical pedagogy: Giroux 1988, Giroux & Giroux 2006; Barnett 1990,1994,1997 cited in Creme 1999)	Problem-solving on instrumental level; influencing or enacting social change on a small-scale (self, friends) or large-scale (political or community)
6. Some Critical Dispositions (in Facione 1990)	Used from the expert consensus list (Facione 1990), including: inquisitiveness, open-mindedness, analysis

²⁵ Note that the first two rows of Table 4.2, highlighted in grey, involve the critical thinker as a consumer of others' ideas whereas the in third, fourth and fifth, the critical thinker is the producer of ideas/action.

4.8 Research Design and Implementation

4.8.1 Phase I

4.8.1.1 Description

The objective of this stage was to choose a sample of 12-15 students who displayed “good” CT to be later interviewed in Phase II, and to ensure diversity among those chosen students.

Although there is a plethora of standardized²⁶ critical thinking tests I have decided to forego these in my research. As expected, many researchers have identified the weaknesses and limitations of quantitative measures used to assess CT skill and correlate it with various factors (Berger, 1985; Helmstadter, 1985; Modjeski & Michael, 1983 – all cited in Tsui, 2000), including the fact that such standardized tests examine students’ CT unnaturally outside the usual classroom or application context. Even tests which involve writing or interviews examine a students' CT out of context, and in a moment in time. Instead, I have opted to select my sample of "critical thinkers" from a group of students I have had in-depth semester-long interaction with.

The reason I have chosen to take a sample of “good” critical thinkers, is that those are the students who have “succeeded” so to speak, and understanding which factors have influenced them should help us increase opportunities for others to become critical thinkers by exposing them to similar factors, where possible. For example, if a particular method of teaching seems to be helpful, then AUC should help more teachers develop the skill to use it. Also, critical thinkers are more likely to display some level of meta-cognition (widely considered a CT skill) and so are more likely to be able to reflect on the factors that have affected them than others who do not have this ability. I will look specifically in their online discussion postings for evidence of this ability.

There are multiple justifications behind the rationale of finding critical thinkers through their online discussions: It shows CT in an authentic situation, as opposed to e.g. a standardized test or

²⁶ The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES 2000) has produced a handbook reviewing and comparing different methods of measuring CT (e.g. various standardized multiple choice and writing tests). These include multiple choice tests (e.g. Watson Glazer *California CT Skills Test*, *Cornell CT Test*), as well as essay tests (e.g. *ETS Tasks in CT*, and *Measure of Intellectual Development*). There are also interview-based assessments (e.g. King's Reflective Judgment Interview based on King and Kitchener's Reflective Judgment Model).

a think-aloud interview, since CT was a requirement of the online discussion assignment or take-home exam. The extended reflection time allows students time and space to think more deeply than an in-class discussion, as well as opportunity for supporting their views with further research. Moreover, it equalizes opportunities for students less confident or less eloquent in a face-to-face situation, as they cannot be interrupted by others online and have more time to reflect (McConnell, 2002). Writing also gives insight into the “thought process”, not just the output. Finally, the online discussion medium allowed for interaction with other students and with the teacher and TA over an extended period of time. Interaction is assumed to heighten CT ability and the extended reflection time can also be expected to give opportunities for CT to show.

From a methodological standpoint, online discussions are pre-recorded evidence that I can reflect on and analyze after the fact, as opposed to observations that may not be recorded and when recorded are difficult to organize and categorize.

Despite these advantages, I recognize that the “equalizing” aspect of highlighting critical thinkers who may be too shy to speak up in class, may also end up favouring those who possess better writing skills versus others who are stronger orally. To counteract this effect, I included my judgment of these students’ in-class discussions as well.

“Scientific Thinking” was an ideal choice because I had rich, in-depth knowledge of these students as their TA, and observing a person over a long period of time gives the observer a chance to judge their CT in action (Facione, 1990). This interaction gave me a more holistic view of each student beyond just their online discussion; I had also already collected demographic information the semester I taught these students, which helped me select a diverse group to interview.

The course claims to aid in the development of CT – and the particular assignments I looked at have some aspects of CT as their aim – therefore it was expected to find CT in the coursework. Topics included online discussion of whether scientists are responsible for whether their discoveries are used for moral/ethical purposes (e.g. the atom bomb); and whether or not they would vote for stem cell research had they been in the US, given the ethical controversy over whether embryonic stem cells constitute a human life. Since the course is required, students come from a variety of disciplines, giving me access to a diverse student body from which to choose. Since the majority of students were in their first two years at AUC, this was ideal because their

online discussion postings would show their potential CT ability in their early years, but by the time I interviewed them, they had accumulated more experiences within the university and become exposed to more factors that have the potential of improving their CT.

Finally, these online discussions had previously been marked by the course instructor and myself, often collaboratively, for grading purposes and further analyzed for critical thinking for conference presentations on CT in online discussions²⁷. They were analyzed using Perry's Model of Intellectual Development and Wolcott and Lynch's model (mentioned in chapter two). So it is not my judgment alone on these students' CT, but a sort of informal inter-rater reliability.

In order to get a diverse sample of students, I looked for diversity in:

1. Discipline: this is because, as Donald (2002) shows, and as common sense would imply, different disciplines emphasize different cognitive skills and are taught in different ways. It would be worthwhile to see how these different ways have influenced the development of CT (and also whether CT seems to be discipline-specific as argued by some scholars, chapter two). I cannot get students from every single discipline, so I have grouped some disciplines together. I chose to use Donald's (2002) matrix of pure/applied and hard/soft²⁸ disciplines; these almost fit neatly into AUC's split of academic schools at the time. The target was to take roughly equal numbers of students from each group (see table 4.3 for the final split):
 - a. Sciences and Engineering (includes natural sciences, mathematics, computer science and three kinds of engineering²⁹ representing the "hard" disciplines);
 - b. Humanities and Social Sciences (includes English Literature, some Arts, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, etc.) representing the "soft"/"pure" disciplines;
 - c. Business, Economics and Communication (includes Management, Accounting, Economics and Journalism); representing the "soft"/"applied" disciplines

²⁷ I do not cite these presentations/papers here to preserve the anonymity of my co-author, since she has also been interviewed in the thesis. Besides, I didn't use the actual conference presentations to find my students, but the background analysis we conducted together, which is not published.

²⁸ According to this division, Physics and Engineering are "hard", but Engineering is applied while Physics is pure; similarly, Psychology and Education are "soft" but Education is applied and Psychology is pure-applied; Humanities are soft and pure.

²⁹ Since my interviews have been done, AUC has added more disciplines including several branches of engineering, but of course none of those were students I could possibly interview at the time.

2. By gender, since some critique CT for emphasizing the “male” notion of “good thinking” but not the more female ways of thinking such as “connected knowing” and creativity (e.g. Clinchy, 1994)
3. By high school background – since this is an influence on anyone’s education, and students who have come in from privileged educational and socio-economic backgrounds have more potential to benefit from university (Sen, cited in Walker 2006). Also, anecdotal evidence from AUC faculty suggests that students from specific high schools display more confidence and better CT (British, American and German) than those from Egyptian high schools (the degree called Thanaweyya Amma). It is important to note, however, that there will still be variations among different schools, despite the misleading unified “high school type”. So within Egypt, there are variations among quality in British/American schools, and not all students have had their education in Egypt, or indeed “all” of their education in any one school or setting.
4. I also interviewed students of different religions. I thought it might be possible that one's attitude towards one's religion can affect criticality. Also, it is possible that criticality is affected by whether one belongs to a minority or majority group in a country. Among students interviewed, 4/13 were Christian, 3 of whom are Coptic Christian, and one Protestant. I actually did not know the religion of all students previously as not all of them have clear Christian names or wear a cross, but had intended to provide this diversity.

Although I had collected demographic information on students’ high school degrees and, some AUC students often change disciplines before graduation, sometimes making large leaps like changing from engineering to economics, so I was ready to filter again if certain categories become “lacking” after the interviews.

I initially chose 4-5 students from each disciplinary category, and aimed for diverse gender and high school background within each group.

Of course, I did not aim for exactly “representative” samples since this is a very small sample to make generalizations from, and generalizations across differences are not my primary aim as an interpretive researcher. However, I believe the diversity is needed in order to gain sufficient insight into different student experiences.

4.8.1.2 Methodological Issues and Positionality

It must be noted that although this phase allowed me to choose my sub-sample of students from a sample that is relatively representative of the whole AUC population (in terms of gender, discipline and other demographics), the majority of the students were in their first or second years of university when they were studying Scientific Thinking, and so their CT (especially as influenced by the university) had not yet reached its peak. The few senior students in those classes would have been difficult to reach after graduation, and so were not included in my sample. It has therefore been a “practical” decision to undergo Phase I in this way.

This phase was meant to help me provide a sample of critical thinkers, but I recognize that it is only a “rough” indication of CT of some students relative to others in their cohort. The choice was limited by the performance of students in online discussion (someone might have been a good critical thinker but was uncomfortable with online discussion technology, for example, and so performed poorly), the type of discussion questions posed (it is possible certain students would have been able to think more critically had the topics been different), and our interpretations of the models used to assess critical thinking (Perry 1981, Wolcott & Lynch as presented in Wolcott 2006). Although the online discussion assignments were meant to help students develop CT, they were not custom-made to bring out all the particular aspects of CT that I consider to be important.

Also, I analyzed CT in online writing of students during their first or second year of college, then chose a few to interview during their third or fourth years of college. It is quite probable that some of these students did not develop much after that course, and it is equally probable that some who did not have very good CT developed it much better in subsequent years. For this reason, I looked again at some students' online discussions to look for “potentially growing CT”, as displayed by e.g. responsiveness to critique by peers, which may indicated an open-minded disposition, for example.

One other issue I expected to face was finding enough students from each different discipline. According to AUC's enrolment statistics 2003 (AUC Catalog, 2004), out of a total of 5,146 students, the more “applied” disciplines are more commonly chosen by students (see table 4.3; in **bold** are the most commonly chosen majors):

Table 4.3: Number of students in various majors across AUC and in one scientific thinking section

Major	# students enrolled (AUC snapshot)	# students (Scientific Thinking, one semester)
Accounting	119	1
Business Administration	462	1
Computer Science	370	5
Construction Engineering	123	3
Economics	297	5
Electronics Engineering	87	0
Engineering	355	0
Journalism and Mass Communication	460	0
Mechanical Engineering	241	2
Political Science	448	1
Psychology	94	0
Total Undecided (usually first year students)	1201	16 (+ 3 did not answer survey)
Total Other (~22 different majors, incl. grad)	889	
Total Enrolled Students	5146	37

Looking at this data, it is clear that very few students major in humanities and natural sciences. Similar proportions can be seen in one semester of the Scientific Thinking course’s demographic survey³⁰.

I anticipated difficulty in finding enough diversity among student disciplines, and hence enough critical thinkers from each broad category of disciplines – my choices were limited in the natural sciences and humanities. I decided to find as much diversity within my sample among the majors commonly chosen by AUC students.

4.8.1.3 Ethical Issues

Informed consent for using students’ online writing for research had previously been taken verbally in class, as long as we kept their names anonymous. I do not actually quote any of the students’ writing in this thesis, but have just used their writing to pick the critical thinkers for my sample. Verbal consent had been obtained for using demographic data previously, but I obtained written consent from students for using their updated demographic data and interview data.

³⁰ note that until recently, students could declare engineering majors before entry into university, but not others, hence the high number of engineering students and the large number of undecided students; note also that many students intending to major in business declare economics or accounting at first; on the other hand, students who fail to declare something like computer science may switch to e.g. mathematics or physics

4.8.1.4 Implementation

The Scientific Thinking instructor and I had conducted analysis of two online discussions of one semester of students, and categorized their postings according to Perry's (1981) model of intellectual development. Since a part of my definition is based on Perry, I have decided to take the most developed students from the results of that analysis/study as my "Phase I" students. I have also added a few students from a previous semester's study where additional diversity was needed. These latter students' discussions were not analyzed using Perry's model, but they were graded according to a rubric that included CT.

Due to personal circumstances, I was in the US at the time of conducting this phase of research, so I did not have face-to-face access to students. I contacted potential students via email (from their turnitin.com accounts) and others through facebook.com to confirm their demographic information (high school, major and standing) as well as to get their contact information and initial consent to participating in the study (nineteen agreed). They were told more details about the nature of the study and were given with the informed consent document approved by University of Sheffield ethics committee. The split of diversity is shown in table 4.4, with column "actual" showing how many of those contacted were actually interviewed in the end (why I stopped at 13 discussed in 4.9.1).

Table 4.4: Diversity Matrix for Interviews, following table 4.3

Discipline Category	MAJOR	High School	Gender	Actual
Hard/Applied	Computer Science	British/Egyptian	1M/1F	2/2
	Engineering	American/British	2M/1F	2/3
Soft/Applied	Journalism	American/ Egyptian	1M/1F	1/2
	Business	American/German	2M/2F	3/4
	Business/Economics	American	1M	1/1
Soft/Pure + Applied	Economics	American/German	2M/2F	1/4
	Political Science	British/Egyptian	2F	2/2
Soft/Pure	English Literature	American	1F	1/1
Hard/Pure	<i>No students found</i>			
	TOTAL	3 Egyptian, 4 British, 2 German, 12 American	9M/10F	13/19

4.8.2 Phase II

4.8.2.1 Description

Student perceptions give important insight into their learning experiences (Parlett & Hamilton, 1977). The objective of this phase was to explore the factors that have influenced the development of CT for a diverse sample of students (the outcome of Phase I) who are about to graduate and who have shown potentially good CT. The outcome was a set of possible factors internal and external to AUC that have had a positive impact on these students' CT development. This was done in three steps:

1. A written pre-interview questionnaire was sent via email to students, which they returned to me prior to the actual interview. The questionnaire (see appendix A-1) to confirm students' majors, and to know more about students' family background, travel experience, extracurricular activities, and favourite courses. This was done to help me understand each students' background further, and to help me ask additional questions to prompt students. It is expected that students' pre-university backgrounds and experiences not only affect their incoming CT, but influence their pathways through university (Terenzini et al., 1995).
2. Individual interviews with students chosen from Phase I; these interviews were semi-structured, but scaffolded using a detailed definition of CT (see appendix A-2 for the main questions), as it is not straightforward to reflect on influential factors in a one-hour interview, and I felt it would be difficult to reflect on CT as an abstract concept in a holistic manner without breaking it down into something more manageable; hoping not be patronizing, I still felt the need to consider the maturity of the students in order not to overestimate their reflective abilities.
3. After completing the interviews, and while conducting my analysis, I told students I might contact them again, and I sometimes sent email questions to individuals clarifying certain aspects.

4.8.2.2 Methodological Issues and Positionality

While interviewing students in Phase II, my previous interaction with them was both an advantage (already established rapport, shared experiences from the course) and a disadvantage (e.g. power relations – I used to be their TA and responsible for their grades; they may be automatically

influenced to think of the Scientific Thinking course, they may skip over certain details knowing that I implicitly understand them). I sometimes explicitly asked questions directly relevant to the course when I felt it would help carry the discussion deeper (e.g. I sometimes referred to certain things they wrote and say something like “that displays great meta-cognition, how do you think you developed this?”).

As I mentioned before, I expected scaffolding to be important, and that I would need to find ways to help them dig deeper into their thoughts, without leading them to particular responses. In the end, some interviewees were able to reflect and express themselves deeply without much prompting from me, providing rich data, while others required more scaffolding and prompting, and had difficulty identifying more than a few influences on their CT. While this is not unexpected, I recognize that this means the students more “eloquent” in the interviews had their experiences more deeply explored, and their interview data ended up being more prominent in the thesis. Similarly, students who had particularly interesting or deep experience influencing (and in some cases, hindering) their CT have ended up taking up more space than others in the analysis.

4.8.2.3 Ethical Issues

Informed consent was taken – my interviewees were presented with a briefing on the research and asked to sign the standard University of Sheffield forms.

I protected subjects’ identities by anonymizing all data collected and presented about them, and storing it in password-protected media. The only issue with this aspect is that the instructor of the course knows the students very well and might be able to identify individuals even without their names.

4.8.2.4 Implementation

4.8.2.4.1 Pilot Interviews

Prior to conducting the student interviews, I piloted one possible interview question (about questioning authority) with some AUC alumni via facebook (asynchronously). The purpose of this “pilot” was not to use the response data in the thesis, but to find out how the question was answered, and to get feedback on wording the question.

Responses received showed progress throughout university, and a variety of factors influencing this. However, the majority of alumni cited factors outside of university and some could not remember specifics related to university. This supported my decision to interview undergraduates instead of alumni. The quick responses of alumni indicated it was not that difficult for them to assess the change in their “questioning” level and come up with examples of factors affecting that change. Most replies were actually quite detailed. While alumni's maturity might contribute to more reflexivity than undergraduates, it was an indication that such reflection was possible.

I also conducted two complete interviews with non-AUCians, one face-to-face, and one on the phone, to test out my interview questions. I discovered that including Perry's model as an explicit question was too complicated, and I removed this question.

4.8.2.5 Student Interviews

Due to personal circumstances, interviews were conducted online on audio via Skype or MSN. I have reflected on this in the methodological challenges below.

All interview data was placed in an MS Access database I had designed myself. Student interviews were transcribed and coded using a grounded approach, where categories of “themes” emerged from student interviews. For each “influential factor” (hereafter referred to as factor) coded, I kept track of which question the student was answering, which led me to which aspect of CT it helped develop, so that I could then easily search the database for e.g. which aspects of CT a certain course helped develop; or which students mentioned travel experiences as influencing their CT. This “coding” was done in several iterations to tweak the categories into levels of detail.

4.8.3 Phase III

A job of the educational researcher is to begin examining the work of effective teachers, teachers working intelligently with appealing content, in an attempt to validate generalizations that may be made about the elements which make the teaching strong. (Atkins, 1977, p. 80)

Teachers' beliefs in their personal efficacy to motivate and promote learning affect the types of learning environments they create and the level of academic progress their students achieve. (Bandura, 1993, p.117 quoted in Tsui 2001)

4.8.3.1 Description

The objective of this phase was to further understand how internal AUC factors have influenced students' development of CT. This was done by choosing the most prominent factors emerging from phase II and conducting one of the following for each:

1. Interviews (interview guide in appendix A-3) with instructors (in courses) and administrators (in university-wide strategies or activities) about "how" they think they are helping students develop CT, what motivates them to do so, and how they tackle issues of access to students. The students will have already elaborated on this a little bit, but the interview aims to provide a more practical guide of what is done, and how others can replicate this "good practice"; these interviews were loosely-structured, with some questions common among them, others designed specifically for the person being interviewed (e.g. based on something the student said, or some other aspect I wished to interrogate), and often involved many unprepared questions as the conversation flowed.
2. Observations (of classes, university events, extra-curricular activities in action) to understand how they are conducted and how they influence CT

The final choices of whom to interview resulted in at least one administrator and at least one instructor interviewed for each of the emergent themes in the findings chapters. This, in addition to other documentation used, served to ensure a level of triangulation for each of the themes, such that I could cover the theme from the viewpoints of various participants.

4.8.3.2 Methodological Issues and Positionality

I expected interviewing and/or observing instructors or AUC administrators in phase III to be the most "sensitive" part of the research, as some people could feel uncomfortable opening up to someone who is so much a part of their daily lives. Also, they were likely to feel that a lot of what they needed to tell me was implicit in what they say and I would have had to ask them to be more explicit. At the same time, I have a good working relationship with many people in the AUC community and I am often invited to help faculty assess their own teaching via observation or interviews/surveys with students. And since in this research I was contacting them as "exemplars" in developing CT, they were unlikely to feel threatened or judged.

One issue is response bias. Individuals who know me personally are more likely to respond quickly to my request for interview, and more likely to be flexible in terms of meeting time, and to be open in the interview based on established rapport.

Another important issue to keep in mind is my own bias about each instructor based on my previous knowledge of them. For example, I observed several classes taught by an instructor who had given a workshop related to CT³¹, so I was expecting a wonderful class. However, I was extremely disappointed by how didactic her teaching style was and how she seemed to discourage divergent discussion and expression of dissenting views. Having observed this, I was surprised that her students were actually very pleased with her teaching style. Upon reflection, it is possible that I had expected “too much” of her, and that without my pre-conceptions I might have judged her differently. Such bias is unavoidable when one knows research participants deeply. Instead, I have tried to use my previous knowledge of participants to the benefit of the research by referring to previous interactions during the interview, thus enriching the interview. This takes advantage of my long engagement with them to enhance the credibility of the research, relying on more than merely the interview “moment”.

One other issue I was expecting to face was that administrators and faculty who are aware of the value of CT might say things that they think are “correct” but that they do not necessarily do. One way to overcome this was to ask them questions to elaborate specific aspects that students had mentioned in phase II, and then allow them to say what they would like to do more/better if they could.

4.8.3.3 Ethical Issues

Informed consent was obtained from participants in written form for all interviews. No specific consent was obtained for ethnographic observations, but approval from AUC to conduct research on campus was obtained mid-way through my research³². AUC only recently started implementing a policy of Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. The problem with the IRB approval process is that it is based on health-related research and emphasizes potential physical harm to subjects, and

³¹ Upon reflection, I think she meant “critical” in the Freirian way, wanting students to rebel against the power of corporations, but implemented it didactically (pushing students to criticize corporate fraud), rather than “critical” in the North American way I had thought she meant (allowing students to see a different view from hers)

³² The issue of obtaining consent from AUC (especially to use its name) was brought up in the upgrade viva.

review boards expect to be able to see survey questions, for example. This renders the IRB approval process problematic for qualitative research, where the ethical issues are more subtle (e.g. related to protecting anonymity), where potential harm is less obvious, and where the research methods are not pre-defined in advance (Lincoln, 2005; Morse, Niehaus, Varnhagen, Austin, & McIntosh, 2009).

I attempted to ensure anonymity in all data collection materials and final writing. Where individual faculty/administrators refer in their interviews to something that would easily be traced back to them, I tried to remove that detail, unless they specifically give me permission to keep it. However, some people's positions (especially administrators) are likely to be identifiable when an informed AUC insider reads the thesis. I have informed participants that this may be the case.

All instructors/administrators were shown the interview transcript for a quick review in case they felt I had misunderstood/misquoted them. Thankfully, none requested changes. However, one administrator refused to have his interview recorded on audio, and preferred that I take notes only³³.

4.8.3.4 Implementation

The full list of six administrators and eight instructors interviewed is provided in appendix B. I decided not to interview and observe the same individuals to avoid making them feel that I am evaluating them – interviews highlight their understanding of how they teach CT, whereas observations would have focused on my own interpretation of how they teach CT.

Observation would have allowed me to see things that seem to influence CT even when the instructor had not intended this (e.g. Eisner, 1977); not surprisingly, other research (Gladwell, 2005) shows that people often have difficulty putting their perceptions/intentions into words, and this is where observation is particularly helpful. However, when I contacted instructors, I gave them the choice between granting me an interview, and allowing me to observe a few of their classes. Many were open to either and even both options, but because of time and scheduling constraints, interviews were deemed more efficient in getting an overview and insight into instructors' motivations, and thinking processes, which can only be gained by asking them directly.

³³ His reasoning for this was that he did not wish to be misquoted. I found this strange, but did as he wished and chose not to waste time arguing.

Moreover, my analysis tended not to focus on the specifics of pedagogy, but on aspects of the instructors' intentionality in developing CT, which would not necessarily have been clear in observations. It is possible that, had I conducted observations, there would have been more pedagogical detail in my thesis.

In hindsight, given the time limitations, interviews were more appropriate to conduct than class observations. Observing a small number of classes would not necessarily have been representative enough of each instructor's teaching: scheduling and logistical issues would have forced me to choose between either observing a handful of instructors frequently, or a larger number of instructors infrequently. Besides, the focus of my analysis is on curriculum rather than pedagogy, and so class observations would have shifted the focus to a more micro-level than the rest of the thesis.

As a partial solution to the interview/observation dichotomy, most of the instructors I interviewed are ones I had observed previously either in a teaching setting, or giving presentations. This had a dual advantage: it helped me decide to choose them to be interviewed, as I had more data than was mentioned in student interviews; and it provided more material for discussion during the interviews as I could refer to those times when I had observed them previously. It also satisfied the quality measure of "prolonged engagement" proposed by Lincoln & Guba (1986/2007). Although my previous knowledge of these instructors may be considered to have biased me towards them, this is not particularly problematic here, since the purpose was to find "exemplars" who teach CT, and this is how I approached the interviews. There was, however, a response bias in the sense that instructors who knew me personally responded to my emails faster and were more flexible in setting up interview appointments.

As I started writing up results and discussions, I found areas that I wished to explore further, and I supplemented my data with:

1. Observations (of university events, extra-curricular activities in action) to understand how they are conducted and how they influence CT
2. Reflections on my own personal experiences with some of these factors, where I had appropriate depth of experience. Examples include Soliya (chapter nine) and MUN (chapter eight)

3. Analysis of additional university documents (e.g. Institutional Research surveys, AUC catalogs) and research (some of which was conducted by me with other AUC faculty for different purposes, mainly for conference presentations) to provide further evidence where appropriate

4.9 Methodological Challenges

Before describing the research design in detail and discussing the implementation, I share some methodological challenges that influenced the implementation.

4.9.1 Changes to Personal Circumstances

Even though for the most part, I was immersed in the AUC context throughout this thesis, there were several interruptions that affected my research. First, I lived in the US during 2007-2008, a time at which I had to conduct student interviews. After discussion with my supervisor at the time, I opted to conduct these interviews online via audio on Skype or MSN³⁴, similar to a telephone interview.

Literature on qualitative telephone interviews is rare (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004; Novick, 2008), as telephone interviews have been more often used for structured survey research, where participants and researcher are strangers (Cohen et al., 2000), whereas in my case, I was interviewing students I had semester-long interaction with, and there was already rapport established. Telephone interviews are sometimes viewed with scepticism because of the contextual losses from lack of visual cues (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004; Novick, 2008), whereas there is no evidence that there is significant loss in quality of interviews as compared to face-to-face interviews (Novick 2004). Instead, there is evidence of no significant differences in quality of data collected (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004; Kazmer & Xie, 2008), and that sometimes telephone interviews are even preferable as respondents can be more relaxed and open about sensitive topics (Novick, 2008), and may consider the telephone interview a more convenient option (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2008).

³⁴ Getting student contact information was in itself a struggle. I was able to get some students' emails from their Turnitin.com accounts, and was able to reach others through facebook. Thankfully, most of them responded openly.

My decision to conduct audio interviews could have risked compromising the rapport possible in a face-to-face interview³⁵, but since I already had rapport with the students, and all of us were comfortable with this technology of our generation, for the most part, I felt the interview quality was not compromised – thankfully all students had access to a high-speed internet connection in a comfortable place from which to meet me given the 8-hour time difference. In one particular instance, a student did not have a high speed internet connection at home and had to talk to me from a friend's house, which may have affected her level of comfort. Because of time zone differences we ended up doing the interview over two days. Although these were different conditions than other interviews, this particular student talked about how doing the interview on a different day might have produced different answers – so in her case, she did have two separate days to do so.

Out of nineteen students contacted, seventeen initially responded, and I was able to interview thirteen. I did not pursue the remaining students (who did not respond as quickly to follow-up emails) because student interviews were becoming repetitive in terms of student demographic background (e.g. students interviewed who went to American International schools highlighted the influence of school pedagogy and MUN participation on their CT; most of the remaining students were also from American schools) and no new “themes” for CT development were emerging (i.e. in Creswell and Miller's (2000) terminology, data were saturated enough to produce sufficient themes/categories, and no new themes were emerging beyond those I cover in part III) and the remaining students were not demographically very different from others I had already interviewed. If I had access to more Thanweyya Amma students, or students from e.g. French schools, they would have enriched the data more than adding more students from American schools. One student was not pursued because he had transferred to continue his degree at another university, while I was interested mainly in the AUC experience. Another student was not pursued because he was travelling and difficult to reach during the period I was conducting the interviews.

Living away from Cairo also gave me less time to conduct faculty interviews face-to-face during a shorter visit to Cairo. I insisted on doing these face-to-face, expecting faculty to be less

³⁵ when talking of Soliya in chapter 9, I discuss varying comfort with, and access to, technology

comfortable or familiar with online calling technology at the time. However, since I had limited time to conduct interviews, I had less time to pursue faculty who did not respond to my emails (resulting in three faculty not interviewed). This meant most of those who were interviewed were personal contacts who were more likely to read my email and respond quicker. One faculty member refused to be interviewed by me because he wanted me to send him the list of interview questions, and could not believe me when I told him there was no set list of questions (it was a very loosely structured interview), and that I felt sharing even the outline of the interview with him, when I had not shared it with others, would compromise the interview's flow. In the end, faculty and staff interviews turned out to be less central to my research than the student interviews, so I supplemented my research with small research projects as mentioned in the previous section.

There were a couple of other interruptions (again lived outside Egypt for 8 months during 2010, and then took personal followed by maternity leaves of absence 2011-2013) that distanced and disconnected me from AUC, but I was in the writing phase of my research. This may have been beneficial in that I could look at things from a distance instead of being constantly bombarded by daily occurrences on campus! But it also means there have been developments at AUC that I did not become aware of or at least could not include in my thesis³⁶. This means incoming AUC students may be faced with conditions different from those of the students I had interviewed in 2007. Where possible and necessary, I included some updated information (e.g. RHET and core curriculum changes). But I must clarify that this research analyzes AUC from 2007-2010. Any changes that have occurred since then have not been included unless absolutely necessary, whether on the AUC or Egyptian context (e.g. the 2011 revolution).

Finally, this distance from AUC near the end of my thesis meant I could not take my research back to the community, and to work with other stakeholders in order to improve practice (see conclusion chapter). I plan to do this when I return from maternity leave.

³⁶ One example is a huge strike by students on campus where students blocked access to campus for several days to get administration attention on their objections to increases in fees. I felt I could not comment on where this kind of behaviour lay in the spectrum between chaotic rebellion and critical action, without conducting deep research into the issue. So I did not include it in the thesis at all.

4.9.2 Changes to AUC Context

AUC was initially located in Cairo's downtown area, composed of several campuses surrounded by older residential buildings, shops and restaurants. Just outside AUC's (several) gates, students were immediately faced with regular Egypt and Egyptians, including tourists going to the Egyptian Museum right across Tahrir square, street beggars and vendors, and Egyptians of all classes entering and exiting the underground station located just outside AUC.

In Fall 2008, AUC moved to a new, larger, gated campus in "New Cairo", far away from downtown Cairo. The influence of neoliberalism on AUC has become more obvious since then. At first, AUC was surrounded by nothing, and residential communities nearby were all gated communities inhabited by the upper classes. The move to the new campus disconnected AUC geographically from the heart of Cairo while also making the neoliberal influence on AUC more obvious. For example, the need for securing funds resulted in several classrooms, halls and parts of campus being named after corporate and individual donors (e.g. there is a Pepsi Gate, a Commercial International Bank fountain, positions such as BP Professor of Accounting). On-campus services became contracted to outside vendors, such as catering and transportation. AUC started to advertise for itself on billboards along the way to campus, with alumni photos saying "I am AUC".

The language of accountability on-campus started to be more obvious. One of my students once summarized the apparent emphasis on appearance versus substance at AUC. He said that it seems AUC spent all their money on the exterior of the campus and had little money left to buy sturdy, comfortable furniture for the classrooms! Other changes are more routine, such as revisions of curricula including the core curriculum, changes in leadership (from locally hired American, to expat American, then to locally-hired Egyptian Provosts, from non-academic male President to first female President who herself had just been the Provost), and addition of new schools and departments, including the Graduate School of Education, and AUC's first PhD program.

Immediately prior to Egypt's revolution, there were worker sit-ins and protests, demanding increased salaries and improved benefits. More recently (2012), students protesting fee increases rallied to close off the campus gates and prevent even AUC students and faculty from entering campus, until they negotiated with the administration to have their demands listened to.

These changes to the social context mean that some analyses in my thesis, based on data collected in 2007-8, and based on the context *at the time* will be understood differently by AUC stakeholders at the present time. I make reference to these where appropriate throughout the thesis (e.g. liberal arts chapter I discuss different versions of the core curriculum); however, when sharing my research with the AUC community (see conclusion chapter), I would have to take these contextual changes into consideration. I have listed some of the important changes here, to clarify why they are not addressed in my interviews with students and faculty, which took place before any of these events.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter started by describing the major social research paradigms of positivistic, interpretive and critical research, and positioned my approach on the interpretive/critical continuum, clarifying that my research implementation draws upon case study research and illuminative evaluation, using interviews as the main research method, with added elements of ethnography for triangulation. I have explained my positionality as an AUC insider with multiple current and historical roles, interested in promoting social justice within the institution. I also discussed criteria for judging the quality of this work, including my own reflexivity and openness about positionality, the use of triangulation/crystalization, the use of "thick description", and prolonged engagement with the field of study. I also discussed ideas of educative, ontological and catalytic authenticity.

The latter half of the chapter clarified my positionality, restated my research question, and positioned my research within existing research on CT development in university. I then explained my research approach and described my three-phase research design. I showed the detailed description of CT which I used for my interviews, then discussed ethical issues and details of the implementation of each of the three phases: choosing sample of students to interview; interviewing students; interviewing faculty/administrators. The five chapters in part III will analyze the results of this research. I return to reflect on methodology in the conclusion chapter: ethical struggles, contextual challenges, and the main limitations of this research, as well as recommendations for further research at AUC and beyond.

Part III: Understanding CT at AUC

Part III discusses my findings on critical thinking at AUC. Chapter five provides contextual information on factors influencing CT development for AUC students, focusing on influences before/outside AUC. Chapter six discusses aspects of liberal arts education that promote CT, leading to a particular course, RHET, which is discussed in detail in chapter seven. One RHET instructor attempts to teach in authentic learning contexts, which is further discussed amongst other curricular and extracurricular authentic learning experiences developing CT in chapter eight. Chapter nine discusses intercultural learning experiences that develop CT at AUC. Each of these chapters explores literature on CT development and discusses issues with ways it is developed at AUC.

5 Contextual Factors Affecting CT

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a broad perspective on contextual factors (particularly those outside AUC) influencing students' CT. Its purpose is to provide background, particularly on pre-AUC factors, as these will impact students' CT development within the AUC curriculum, which will be discussed in the remainder of Part III chapters.

The motivation behind this research is the belief that AUC's confident slogan "Better Thinkers, Better Futures" is overrated. As a student, staff member, teaching assistant and instructor, I suspected that students entering AUC from different backgrounds, going through different paths will have different experiences influencing their critical thinking development. Different backgrounds include previous schooling, upbringing, and exposure to critical thinking (CT) influences. Different paths include choices of which discipline to study, which specific professors/courses to choose, as well as some non-academic choices such as whom to socialize with on campus, which extra-curricular activities to participate in, and whether or not to apply for study abroad. My research question was:

1. What are the factors (internal and external to AUC) that aid/hinder the development of critical thinking for (different categories of) AUC students?
2. How do *some* of these factors (internal to AUC) work in practice?

A cross-cutting theme that emerged from student interviews was the influence of "diversity" on CT development. This included exposure to diverse disciplines within AUC's liberal arts education, exposure to diverse people/cultures at university, exposure to diverse professors and ways of teaching, diverse readings, diverse media sources, or exposure to diverse viewpoints in a classroom or friendly discussion. Each student I interviewed had one or more "diversity" influences on his/her critical thinking.

This chapter first introduces all the students involved in the study, then focuses on the factors students mentioned as influencing their CT. I have grouped factors into three types:

1. External to AUC altogether such as high school, parents and friends;

2. Extra-curricular factors within (but some also before/outside) AUC such as intercultural interaction and experiential learning situated in authentic contexts [note: some intercultural/authentic experiences were also found in academic courses]
3. Academic/curricular factors such as the core curriculum, rhetoric and composition courses and particular professors.

While this chapter provides an overview of all factors mentioned by students, the four upcoming chapters are dedicated to the most significant themes at AUC (number 2 & 3 above) in more depth and with reference to literature. Factors influencing CT *outside AUC* will be elaborated upon in this chapter, as they impact access to AUC-related factors mentioned in future chapters³⁷.

I will end the chapter with an alternative look at the data: a holistic view of each student's story and which factors influenced their CT most.

5.2 Introducing the Students

I use this brief section to give a quick introduction to the students I interviewed, whose experiences developing CT shaped the themes of part III.

Student names are pseudonyms to protect identity. Between brackets is a breakdown of the student background where the first letter indicates sex (m/f), the last two letters indicate high school background (Gm=German, Am = American; Br = British; Th = Egyptian Thanaweyya Amma) and the middle four (or in one case, eight) letters indicate the major, as used by AUC's abbreviation system in the course catalog. Where: CSCI = Computer Science; CENG = Construction Engineering; MENG = Mechanical Engineering; BADM = Business Administration; ECON = Economics; ECLT = English and Comparative Literature; POLS = Political Science

Below are brief introductions to each student:

- Lina (fCENGAm) studied IB at the American International School. Her CT was influenced by interaction with diverse others locally and during travel, and a study

³⁷ All longer (indented) quotes by student/faculty throughout this thesis are italicized to differentiate them from indented quotes from scholarship.

abroad in Paris. She learned from extracurricular experiences in school, and later at AUC. Rhetoric and composition courses were also a strong influence.

- Osman (mMENGBr) started education in Saudi Arabia but moved to Egypt as a child to obtain IGCSEs/A-levels in an Egyptian language school. He felt IGCSEs did not help his CT because they were taught in an Egyptianized manner. The younger son of two university professors, he joined AUC's engineering department, and became so active in the Model United Nations program that he eventually became the Secretary-General (the high position of responsibility in the program). He also benefited greatly from an internship at the multinational company, as well as the rhetoric and composition courses he took at AUC.
- Kamal (mCSCITh) comes from Tanta (a small-ish city that falls midway between Egypt's largest cities: Greater Cairo and Alexandria). He had studied Egyptian curriculum all his life and had never been exposed to Western education, although his parents (medical professors) encouraged his curiosity and open-mindedness from an early age. His schooling did not encourage CT at all, and the greatest influence on his CT at AUC was extra-curricular activities. Contrary to Osman who grew within one activity, he preferred to diversify his learning experiences in order to maximize benefit.
- Kenzy (fCSCIBr) who studied IGCSEs/A-levels at an Egyptian language school. Unlike Kamal, she shied away from participating in extracurricular activities. Her CT was most improved by exposure to different disciplines through courses, and interaction with students from various disciplines, as well as reading.
- Hossam (mBADMECONAm) also mentioned reading as a major influence on his CT. He studied at an Egyptian language school that gave American diplomas. He did not used to be a big reader before joining AUC, even though his older brother was. He now says he reads all sorts of things, especially articles and especially non-fiction. He is unsure how or why he has started to read more, except that he was not doing well at some point and later felt that reading would help improve his chances at succeeding at AUC. He had extensive travel experience before joining AUC, but neither that nor his schooling (not international) influenced his CT.
- Sandy (fBADMAm), in contrast, was very influenced by her schooling (IB from American International School in Saudi). Extracurricular activities in school and beyond, as well as interaction with diverse others influenced her CT.

- Nasseem (mBADMAm) studied IB in the American International School in Cairo. His CT was supported by schooling, especially extracurricular and intercultural experiences in school, as well as an internship he participated in while at AUC.
- Hoda (fECLTAm) graduated from an American school in Kuwait. School influenced her CT, as well as reading in general and her major (literature) because of the analysis involved. Her CT was most influenced by reading, and interaction with people of various cultures and points of view, including at school, at AUC, and through family friends.
- Gamal (mECONAm) studied at an Egyptian language school that gave American diplomas. Like Hoda, his CT was influenced mainly by interaction with culturally diverse others.
- Mona (fPOLSBBr) grew up in Saudi but completed IGCSE/A-levels at an Egyptian language school. Rhetoric and composition courses were the greatest influence on her CT, but her upbringing also helped her become a more open-minded, less judgmental person.
- Noha (fPOLSTh) was born in the US but raised in Egypt. Her Egyptian schooling suppressed her CT, which made thinking critically at AUC difficult at first. Her CT was most influenced by an internship in the US, a comparative religion course, and a political science professor at AUC.
- Yasseen (mJRMCTh) had Egyptian schooling that did not develop CT. The main influence on his CT was cross-cultural dialogue.
- Yasmine (fBADMGr) found discussion of controversial issues with diverse others at school the greatest influence on her CT. Extracurricular activities and AUC did not promote CT for her.

5.3 Factors outside AUC

It may be that the best prepared and well-connected students coming out of high school are going to end up as the best who graduate from college, no matter what college they attend. We need to focus our assessment, in other words, on how much value has been added by an institution (Paul, 1992).

The above suggests it is enough to focus on an institution's added value only, and to resign ourselves to universities' reproduction of social inequalities. Is it acceptable to concern ourselves with adding value at university, but accept the likelihood that the better-prepared

and –connected students will be the best to graduate from college? Even if we did so for pragmatic reasons, the “added value” possible differs by each student’s preparation, especially when no special support is offered to equalize opportunities. For example, it is logical that students who enter AUC with better English language competence (linguistic capital) are likely to graduate with better language competence; even though the added value of AUC may be greater for those with weaker language competence as they are required to take more courses to improve their language skills. However, the linguistic competence has far-reaching effects beyond language. Students with weaker language skills will take longer before they can benefit from in-class discussion, will have a harder time completing complicated academic readings, be less eloquent in academic writing, and one would expect them to be less likely to interact with international students, for example (both because of their weaker language, and because their historically weaker language probably did not expose them to interaction with many English-speakers). Therefore, AUC might add value in terms of linguistic competence, but not enough, or not fast enough, to enable these students to benefit from other learning opportunities that AUC offers. When AUC graduates a student with a BA in Journalism, s/he is expected to have a minimum standard of competence as a journalist, and not merely to have been “improved” from his/her initial state before entering college. When disadvantaged students enter college, the university should recognize that they require more support to reach a similar level of “capability” (Nussbaum, 2003) as the privileged students. This also recalls Eagleton’s understanding of Marx’s notion of “genuine equality”, which entails “not treating everyone the same, but attending equally to everyone’s different needs” (Eagleton, 2011b) and that justice is for individuals to “be able to realize their distinctive powers and capacities in their own distinctive ways” (Eagleton, 2011a).

The following results show some differences in incoming students’ critical thinking and how it has affected their AUC experience. For each CT “aspect” or “sub-skill” that I had defined, I asked students what level they think they were at “before AUC”, and what level they thought they were at presently, a few years into the college experience. When a student perceived they had some level beyond “novice” before entering AUC, I probed further as to how they had reached that level before entering college. Among the factors influencing critical thinking before college were: high school, parents and travel experiences.

5.3.1 High school

CT instruction should not be reserved only for those who plan to attend college. Nor should it be deferred until college, since it is not likely to be effective if it were. (Facione, 1990, p. 15)

But referring specifically to pre-university education in Arab countries, Rivard agrees that "it is not possible to create in one or two years that which has not evolved over the past twelve" before college (Rivard, 2006, p. 30, quoted in Hall, 2011, p. 430). While I disagree that it is completely impossible, this quote refers to the difficulties of developing students' cultural capital in university, when they had not acquired it in their previous home and school environments. Arab (and Egyptian) education is notorious for emphasizing memorization and having a strong exam-orientation, which is very different from Western pedagogies in university which expect critical thinking (Hall, 2011). Moreover, students unused to questioning certain cultural taboos may struggle with and even resist doing so in college without heavy teacher support (Raddawi, 2011).

Students who went to international schools (i.e. practicing a Western-based curriculum including content and pedagogy), indicated that CT was developed through in-class discussion, exposure to diverse people and diverse views, a chance to practice critical research and writing skills and a general ethos encouraging CT. On the other hand, students who went to schools teaching Egyptian curriculum, or mixing Egyptian/international curricula, either did not mention the effect school had on them, or explicitly stated that school had a negative effect on their CT, that this hindered their CT development at AUC. It is important to note these differences, because the more practice a student has in CT, the better they will become at it (van Gelder, 2005), as is the case for many skills.

5.3.1.1 General Encouragement/Discouragement of Critical Thinking

For example, Sandy (fBADMAm) talked about how her American high school in Saudi Arabia taught her to question what she saw/heard in media:

My high school education was pretty critical – there was a lot of critical thinking I mean, especially that IB [International Baccalaureate³⁸] is an international course... it looks at different perspectives – even the American teachers were encouraging us to look at different points of view of the whole situation.

³⁸ International Baccalaureate is an international degree, comparable to 'A' levels in the UK (Moon 2005), which some students in American high schools undertake. Both IB and 'A' level courses can result in "transfer credit" at AUC - e.g. if a student takes IB or 'A' level courses in Mathematics, they can be granted college level credit and be allowed to skip a comparable undergraduate course. Therefore, IB or 'A' level courses can be considered of a similar level to first-year undergraduate courses at AUC.

School also encouraged her inquisitiveness, whereas she feels the environment in Egypt as a whole does the opposite:

I really like to know stuff, and I would say it's mainly from school, not from here [at AUC]. People in Egypt don't really look for knowledge, and people who think scientifically and like nature around them – [people] always think they're weird here in Egypt. I don't really see a lot of people wanting to learn ... but I have it in me and it's mainly from school and friends and environment I used to work in [at] school... [I] like reading, encyclopedia, discovery channel and I like these things a lot.

Sandy's school also developed her analytical skills, open-mindedness, understanding of different worldviews, and critical research & writing skills.

Nassim, who, like Sandy was strongly influenced his American school, thought the particular IB course "Theory of Knowledge" encouraged him to question:

... in 'Theory of Knowledge' we would write essays about different ways of knowing and areas of knowing...it was mainly through class discussions and the assignments themselves...they wouldn't define critical thinking, however they would allow us to acquire it gradually.

Nassim used to say the Theory of Knowledge course was similar to the Scientific Thinking course at AUC. Moon (2005) suggests that 'Theory of Knowledge' in IB is one way of teaching CT, on par with college courses in philosophy. Although Nassim here says CT was not taught directly in the course, Moon says the course helps students "understand the structure of disciplines, and the differences between them" p. 19. Lina (fCENGAm) talked about how learning about the scientific method in IB helped her learn to question hidden assumptions. Writing in IB English helped her question media credibility.

Yasmine's (fBADMGm), German schooling was a positive experience:

In school I had to do research and give some arguments and say what strengths and weaknesses are in the article...To bring counterarguments, this is something that strengthens the argument.

Yasmine feels school has developed her open-mindedness and ability to understand different worldviews, her willingness to question authority, and her ability to construct a strong argument.

In contrast, Noha (fPOLSTh), talked about how Egyptian high school (Thanaweyya Amma) discouraged questioning, and how this is affecting her until now:

I guess we were taught to always think that the teacher is right, as opposed to college. The way you were educated: the teacher is right and you don't question authority.

Noha says her “self-esteem or confidence in my own intelligence was limited because of education I had as a younger person –it is improving but taking a very long time”.

Others who studied the Egyptian Thanaweyya Amma, when asked about their inquisitiveness and curiosity, said things like:

Not in school. The things presented and the system in school itself didn't give a chance for any person to ask questions – we used to take things as granted. (Yasser mJRMCTh)

School didn't help a lot because teachers are sticking to the subject itself; when done with the class they leave. [Afterwards they were] not available for further discussions. Environment in schools is not encouraging at all; you find lots of students in a very small class; no one concerned with what the professor says (Kamal mCSCITH)

For Kamal, his parents at home were the main factor that nurtured his curiosity by encouraging him to ask questions of all kinds.

Noha talks about how her previous educational experience made her less likely to act on her curiosity

A lot of it is because I've had such a bad educational system, went to AUC, took my education for granted, didn't put effort to genuinely learn instead of pass... I now realize how valuable education is.... I will be much more curious to learn about my courses [than] I previously was. [I am] always curious, but don't always make the effort.

5.3.1.2 Practice in Critical Reading and Writing, In-class Discussion

Students from good international schools who majored in “applied” fields such as engineering and business administration said they got more practice in critical research and writing in school than at AUC. This raises concerns about students who choose these majors but have no high school background in critical research/writing.

Students who went to American schools (Lina, Sandy, Hoda, Nassim) all said that research and writing were emphasized at school. For Lina and Sandy, this was reinforced in AUC rhetoric courses, but not their engineering and business majors respectively.

Mona (fPOLSBBr) had some experience with writing in her Egyptian high school teaching the British system, using a small number of sources, but AUC added a lot of value through the rhetoric courses and her political science major. So in this sense, Mona's choice of major has

given her more practice in research and writing, but another student with her background may not have developed the same research skills had they taken engineering or business administration.

Nassim (mBADMAM) who went to an American international school in Egypt, also mentions how writing essays in school helped him make critical use of sources and supporting his argument, but that in-class discussions and debate had a greater effect on his critical thinking skills. Lina had a similar experience with debates in school.

On the other hand, Hossam (mBADMECONAM) who went to an Egyptian-type American school had no experience with in-class debate or presentations before joining AUC. This highlights the difference between international American schools and those using an Egyptianized system.

Yasmine talks about discussions in German school that helped her develop a level of relativism:

[W]e had discussions in school [classes] and the conclusion is that we all cannot meet at one point... For example, once we had a discussion about the different religions Christians and Muslims and Jews and we had discussions about the holocaust; it has a religious side; we talked about terrorism, and that many of the Europeans deem Muslims as terrorists not as Muslims.

Compare this to Mona's experience:

[My religion teacher in school] didn't leave any space for questioning, I think I became accustomed to doing the same with any other religious figure.

5.3.1.3 General Outlook on School versus AUC

Yasmine's school was the basis of her CT development, and she views AUC with derision:

...the most thing that made a difference to me is school; AUC is ta7seel 7asel [translated: something you do just to get it over with] even the way the courses are tafha [translated: insignificant, superficial, silly] - the way teachers explain things like someone with special needs is listening to them...Really most of the courses I took at AUC I feel that – except five or six.

Osman (mMENG2Br), an engineer who did his IGCSEs at an Egyptian school said:

High school was mostly memorizing facts and applying equations; analysis part was present but not that much compared to AUC. IGCSE in [in my school] has been Egyptianized.

Kenzy, a computer science major said her mother felt that her thinking improved because of IGCSEs, but she felt that her previous schooling limited her thinking even in IGCSEs:

...in IG[CSE], the examinations, and how we worked, depended on how we think and how you interpret things and before in primary and preparatory we were just like knowing things by heart and summing things but now [in IGCSE] we are learning how to think about things.

Having said that, Kenzy still feels that her IGCSE experience prepared her for AUC:

[It] was much like Thanaweyya Amma...the difference was only in the questions and of course how I studied for them and in [IGCSE] you don't expect what you're going to get in the exam... [it somehow prepared me for AUC] but in AUC in some courses sometimes you have to memorize, even in science courses. In [Computer Science] courses, I realized that I have to get past exams and sometimes people do memorize them and doctors sometimes don't change the exams and so lots of people do memorize exams rather than just studying.

A notable observation is that some students (Osman, Mona and Hossam) mentioned how they grew up in international schools in Gulf countries, and that coming to Egypt for the rest of their education was a culture shock where they felt the difference. This may be one of the reasons why they are more critical of the education they received here, which was not international but also not as bad as Egyptian Thanaweyya Amma³⁹.

5.3.2 Family and friends

Some students were fortunate enough to have had parents who supported their CT development. For example, as mentioned earlier, Kamal's parents encouraged his curiosity when school was discouraging it. Hoda, Lina, Mona and Kenzy all say their inquisitiveness was supported by their family and those around them.

Mona also says:

I've always been an open-minded person, due to my parents and my childhood in Saudi... the diversity in school, and my parents like I mentioned last time never impose any ideas ... They've allowed free thought, to a certain extent [for sure], but this has nevertheless promoted open-mindedness in me.

Noha was influenced by both her parents:

Lot of times my mom helped me think critically; she made it a point that I understand. This helped in AUC and I still do think this way.

Noha's father is a lawyer:

³⁹ I can relate because I had to make that switch for three years (British years 7-9) and was deeply critical of education in Egypt – no matter how much they tried, they were not doing it “as well as” (in my case) a “real” British school.

A lot of times, like I think of an argument made in class and think of how my dad would react to this argument and how this argument is justified. That could be it, lots of times he doesn't talk to me about law in particular but other topics of common interest for us.

One of the greatest influences on Gamal's CT was an older friend of his who was raised differently and had completely different views. He repeatedly mentions how discussions with this friend made him more questioning and open-minded. His family also had a relatively democratic household where he was allowed to discuss his disagreements with them.

Fortunately for the students in my sample, they all had parents who appear to be relatively well-educated, including university professors, medical doctors, engineers, lawyers and businessmen. A few of the mothers were housewives, but were still educated (e.g. one was originally a dentist, another a high school teacher). None of the students in my sample, therefore, come from the lower socio-economic classes, but I would be concerned about others at AUC (from any social background) who come from homes that did not encourage curiosity or open-mindedness, and how their minds would react to AUC's education system. Would they resist developing CT? If they developed it, would it cause them problems at home, communicating with families not used to this? Would they be considered rebellious and disrespectful?

5.4 Extra-curricular factors in/out of AUC

Some factors that influenced critical thinking development were available to some students before they joined AUC, but were also available to everyone once they had joined AUC. However, I question whether those never exposed to these "helpful" experiences realize their value, and whether they are given equal access to them.

5.4.1 Intercultural Interaction

Educational intercultural interaction possible through AUC will be explored further in chapter nine, but here is an overview of intercultural interactions students mentioned as helping develop some aspects of their CT.

The pre-interview questionnaire showed that most, but not all, students I interviewed had travelled outside of Egypt. However, some students (e.g. Hossam and Yasseen) had travelled before joining AUC but did not mention this experience as affecting their CT. This implies that

CT requires individuals to make use of the travel experience to deepen one's understanding of the other culture and reflect upon it.

Lina talked about how travelling with her parents encouraged questioning and open-mindedness:

Travelling a lot and meeting people from different cultures you see different ways of looking at things and you find they are not all wrong, so you start accepting.

Nassim also attributes his open-mindedness partially to travel:

I tolerate a lot of different views... maybe dealing with a lot of different – diverse communities all the time. Whether in school or AUC – teachers, students, while travelling.

Hoda also feels she needs to travel more to grow as a person:

I think travel is the major player in growing at the moment, before I would have told you reading but I now feel like I've read a lot and not travelled enough. I think I need to travel more to supplement what I have read.

Casual travel was not of course the only way to get intercultural exposure. Gamal and Hoda, for example, both have the disposition to discuss controversial issues with people from different cultures they meet right where they live. Sandy, Yasmine and Lina mentioned how interaction with diverse people within Egypt, especially people of different backgrounds or socio-economic class is in itself an eye-opening experience.

The deepest intercultural encounters that students mentioned as having a significant impact on their CT, however, are more “structured” experiences. Examples include Lina's study abroad experience, Noha's internship in the US, and Yasseen's experience with cross-cultural dialogue.

For some students with Thanaweyya Amma degrees like Yasseen and Noha, their intercultural experience was the most influential factor on their critical thinking. But how does CT develop in these experiences, what are the inequalities of power in undertaking these experiences, and are enough such experiences accessible at AUC to all students? This will be discussed in chapter nine.

5.4.2 Experiential Learning Situated in Authentic Contexts (in/out of AUC)

There is literature to support the influence of extra-curricular activities and experiential learning on critical thinking (Geilin's 2003 meta-analysis), but of course not all activities have equal influence, and each student's depth of experience differs. Chapter eight is dedicated to this topic, but a brief overview follows.

Several students mentioned the impact of doing summer internships on their critical thinking, some of which had a strong impact on CT, whereas others did not influence CT (e.g. Nasseem had one of each).

Several students also mentioned how participation in extra-curricular activities developed their CT. For Kamal, activities helped develop his communication and interpersonal skills, a pre-requisite to CT development in which he learned from interacting with others and gained confidence to express himself and persuade others. The greatest influence on Osman's CT was his progressive MUN experience from delegate to secretary-general (highest leadership position). Being an engineer, MUN was his outlet for research, writing and debate. Some students had pre-AUC extracurricular experiences such as MUN in international schools, and charity activities with church/family.

Having said this, some of the students did not mention in their pre-interview questionnaire doing any extra-curricular activities (e.g. Kenzy, Noha), and others had done such activities but did not consider them an influence on their critical thinking (e.g. Yasmine).

What does AUC do to encourage students to join extra-curricular activities, even those who are not already inclined to participate? Not everyone needs to go through every single "factor" to develop their CT, but everyone needs to have a fair view of the benefits of participating in activities (including the pragmatic need to develop skills for employability), and to have equal access to joining if they are interested. This is discussed further in chapter eight.

5.5 Academic/Curricular Factors within AUC

Among the academic influences on CT development were particular professors, particular types of courses, and exposure to a variety of courses at AUC.

The liberal arts curriculum, and core curriculum courses (discussed in chapter six) in particular such as scientific thinking and philosophical thinking were also reported as developing CT, because of the critical discussion and some research and writing. Some specific courses such as “comparative religion” (see chapter nine) also offered cultural exposure and probing of different worldviews, and the “Arab society” course was mentioned by several students as it encouraged reflection on their own society. For some students, the experience of taking courses in different disciplines was in itself helpful to the development of their critical thinking, through interaction with students outside their major and exposure to new ways of seeing the world.

The Rhetoric and Composition courses (Explored further in chapter seven), which infuse critical thinking skills within their teaching of writing and research skills were the most frequently mentioned courses across students. All the students mentioned their influence (except for one student who did not take the courses at all), especially in reference to improving ability to find relevant resources, evaluate credibility of information, and recognize hidden assumptions and hidden agendas. Some students also mentioned the courses’ influence in improving their ability to construct a strong argument and to modify their arguments for various audiences. A couple of students also mentioned how the courses helped them improve their meta-cognitive skills.

Other courses mentioned by several students include: the “information literacy” and “philosophical thinking” course, but both of these were often prompted by me and did not come up spontaneously. Interviews with RHET instructor and administrator highlighted their belief that RHET courses were more beneficial than “information literacy” because they taught students to conduct research in context of a larger piece of writing. There was also more detailed discussion in our interview of the “scientific thinking” course rather than the “philosophical thinking” course, probably because the students and I had this shared experience of it⁴⁰.

Finally, some students mentioned specific instructors and their practices as influencing CT. Some of these references were followed up by interviews with these professors (who teach

⁴⁰ For this reason, and because there was so much diversity in instructors who taught philosophy, and their ways of doing so, with little emphasis on a particularly excellent instructor who taught CT (e.g. there was one deemed excellent who did not conduct much in-class discussion, which I considered strange)... Therefore, I chose not to interview any philosophy instructors, and instead interviewed the one Sci 120 instructor they all had in common. I reflect on this choice in the conclusion chapter

scientific thinking, marketing, comparative religion, construction engineering, mechanical engineering, computer science, political science and rhetoric & composition), as well as my previous observations of their teaching in the course of my work (which they have allowed me to include in my data). Data from these interviews are spread across chapters where relevant.

AUC has five broad institution-wide learning outcomes, of which CT is one. Various chapters in part III of the thesis will explore how AUC experiences address these outcomes, and develop CT in the process of doing so.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the students who participated in the study, and presented context for the remainder of Part III chapters. I looked at how various themes influenced students' CT development, focusing mainly on factors outside/before AUC, but also highlighting which AUC extracurricular and academic experiences were mentioned in student interviews. The remaining chapters discuss AUC factors, as follows: Chapter 6 liberal arts education; Chapter 7 rhetoric and composition courses; Chapter 8 experiential learning in authentic contexts; Chapter 9 intercultural learning.

For more detailed interview data, see Appendix C for results of student responses by interview question (each interview question included details of a certain aspect of CT).

6 Liberal Arts Education

6.1 Chapter Introduction

Liberal Arts Education (LAE) often aims to develop critical thinking (e.g. Nussbaum, 1997, Pascarella, Wolniak, , Seifert, Cruce, & Blauch, 2005; Seifert et al.; 2008, Association of American Colleges and Universities 2013), and so it was no surprise that AUC students referred to it as influencing their CT development.

This chapter reviews the various understandings of Liberal Arts Education in the US before situating AUC's conception of liberal arts (the main vehicle of which is the "core curriculum" set of courses, previously introduced in chapter one) within the literature, while focusing on aspects relevant to CT. I show that AUC takes a "curriculum as content" approach to liberal arts, with insufficient focus on the process of "liberalizing" students in the actual classroom. I also show how the well-documented liberal/professional tensions in the West exist at AUC, hampering the potential of a liberal arts ideal.

I further explore the manifestation of liberal arts at AUC via three case studies: 1. How adjustment to LAE has been difficult for some students more than others; 2. Student and instructor views on how core curriculum and courses in various disciplines influence student CT, with clarifications from an interview with an experienced faculty member who leads the core curriculum office (hereafter referred to as CORE-ADMIN); 3. Focus on one particular required course, scientific thinking, and how it has been taught to develop CT.

In the discussion, I highlight the structural limitations on AUC fulfilling its liberal arts promise and developing CT for all of its students: students' lack of understanding of the liberal arts philosophy; students' lack of incoming cultural capital which limits their ability to benefit from liberal arts pedagogies; the overwhelming popularity of professional disciplines, combined with the tensions this creates with liberal arts; and the lack of focus on quality of teaching of core curriculum courses, including large numbers of part-timers teaching those courses. I also offer a macro-level critique of AUC's education, particularly questioning whose knowledge is privileged, and for whose benefit. Finally, I discuss AUC's contribution to promoting active citizenship.

I conclude that while AUC's liberal arts curriculum has potential, there are many critical questions that need to continuously be asked in order to fulfil the promise of improving students' criticality.

6.2 What is a LAE?

According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities [AACU] (2013):

Liberal Education is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. It provides students with broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g. science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth study in a specific area of interest. A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.

LAE, sometimes also referred to as Liberal Education⁴¹ has been defined in several ways. Common among all definitions is the historical understanding from the Greek sense of the term "liberal" used to denote the education of a "free" man as opposed to a slave (e.g. Farrison, 1946; Ahlgren & Boyer, 1981, Studley, 2003, Fen, 1961), or an education that "liberates the mind from bondage of habit and custom" (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 8). Freedom can also denote freedom from vulgarity, a "spiritual freedom" from one's baser instincts (Ahlgren & Boyer, 1981, p. 173).

In an article addressing high school students, an experienced college administrator clarifies that the "liberal" in liberal arts does not indicate a political affiliation and that the "arts" does not mean "artistic" (Studley, 2003). Despite variations among institutions offering LAE, she lists some of the most important features, including small classes (versus large lectures) "taught by experienced faculty members" (as opposed to graduate students) and emphasizing "serious independent study and research" (p. 20). She adds that LAE involves students in a variety of disciplines outside their major area of study while developing their critical thinking and communication skills.

Most conceptions of liberal arts emphasize CT as an important outcome. For example, Johnson (1945) expects the liberal arts graduate to possess "the valuable ability to criticize and to create, to demolish and to build" (p. 12). Ducasse (1944) mentions the inner freedom of reason and the many types of thinking one should develop, while Anderson-Mattfeld's (1974) emphasizes the

⁴¹ Not to be equated with having a "liberal view of education", because one can have a liberal-humanist view of education but not necessarily implement it via a liberal arts institution of higher education

importance of reason, judgment, deliberation and criticism. Pascarella et al. (2005) and Seifert et al.'s (2008) definitions include CT (see table 6.2).

Table 6.1: Different Emphasis in Liberal Education Literature. Created based on Ahlgern and Boyer (1981)

<i>Focus of discussion</i>	<i>Description and how to recognize it</i>	<i>Authors who emphasize this focus</i>
INTENT	what the institution is intending to do, as would appear in its mission statement for example, as well as intentionality of its teachers	Pfnister 1984, citing Yale University Seifert et al., 2008 focus on "institutional ethos" that values developing certain capacities.
CONTENT	how the university curriculum attempts to achieve a LAE, three broad categories: 1. specific types of courses covered, 2. diversity/broadness of curriculum offered, and 3. teaching methodologies used as could be measured by studying the curricula and observing or interviewing teachers	Specific Courses: Nussbaum (1997); Ducasse (1994); Gilbert (1995); Delucchi (1997) Specific ways of teaching: Farrison (1946); Anderson-Mattfeld (1974); McPeck (1990); Shoenberg (2009)
CONSEQUENCE	what the learning outcomes for a liberally educated person are (e.g. CT) as could be measured by pervasiveness of these student learning outcomes in the university's graduates	Johnson 1945, Farrison 1946, Fen 1961, Perry 1968, Pascarella et al., 2005 and Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College 2009

Ahlgern and Boyer (1981) provide a framework of differences in emphasis used in discussions of LAE: intent, consequence and content (see table 6.1 above), and show that colleges and universities who claim to provide LAE may mean different things, such as offering students courses from a wide range of subjects other than their specialization; requiring students to take some prescribed subjects in a variety of disciplines; requiring students to take interdisciplinary courses with "content explicitly contrived to be liberal" (p. 174); providing instructional methods that are "intrinsically liberalizing regardless of subject matter" (p. 174); and a general belief that whatever happens in the university has a liberalizing effect on students.

Although most educators would agree on the importance of all three aspects, some prioritize one aspect as most important while accepting modifications to the others. For example, those emphasizing consequence would modify curriculum design to ensure learning outcomes are met. In table 6.1 I have added which authors fall into these categories. Appendix D contains more details of various authors' definitions of LAE.

Another approach to categorizing understandings of LAE would be to apply curriculum theory approaches. A “curriculum-as-content” approach would be one where LAE is defined by the particular set of courses, or the diversity of courses offered. A “curriculum-as-product” approach would be one where it is defined by a set of measurable skills or outcomes. A “curriculum-as-process” approach would emphasize the importance of particular student-centred styles of teaching that are liberalizing. A “curriculum-as-praxis” approach would maintain an overarching emancipatory goal, while focusing on raising consciousness about social injustice and challenging the status quo.

While all LAE definitions imply the goal of liberation, few approach the implementation of LAE with a critical, social justice (“praxis”) focus of uncovering hidden oppression in order to challenge the status quo – it is often either a content, product, or process oriented curriculum. It may be that the history of LAE, as being offered to elites, had made questions of social justice less pressing. However, in today’s environment, and particularly when teaching liberal arts outside the US, the lack of critical orientation can render LAE problematic, as I will show later.

Whatever an institution’s goals, it will never truly have full control over the end outcome of the extent of a student’s liberal education, since this will depend upon the student him/herself and how s/he “takes selectively from his family, his peers, and the total environment what he is consciously or unconsciously seeking and ready for at any given time” (Anderson-Mattfeld, 1974, p. 283). Students' varying capacities to deliberate and make the best choices for themselves should not be taken for granted (Nussbaum 2011). In reality, one would need to look at individual students’ engagement with particular liberal arts experiences, rather than the institution’s offerings alone – many institutions provide such experiences but do not call themselves liberal arts universities (Pascarella et al., 2005), while others promote their intent to provide LAE when in fact they do little to meet that promise (Dellucci, 2009). Later, I investigate the extent to which AUC is able to meet its promise.

The next few sections will focus on understandings of LAE from the content and teaching process perspectives, as these are the most relevant for examining how AUC develops CT in the LAE context.

6.2.1 Emphasis on Content: Specific Content and Content Variety

The “liberal arts” are traditionally understood as what I had defined earlier (after Donald 2002) as the “pure” (i.e. theory-driven) disciplines, including humanities, natural sciences, and most social sciences⁴², as contrasted with “professional disciplines” (what Donald calls “applied”) including engineering, computer science, business, communication, law and medicine (Gilbert, 1995).

Some authors define a liberal arts institution as one where most students graduate with degrees in the “liberal arts” (e.g. Gilbert, 1995; Delucchi 1997, 2009). However, the Carnegie Classification of Institutions (2009) has renamed its categories recognizing that LAE “signif[ies] more than undergraduates’ major field concentration”, and any institution is capable of providing “liberal arts experiences” regardless of liberal arts identity or students’ chosen majors (Pascarella et al., 2005). Indicators of “liberal arts experience” include coursework ratio of liberal arts to vocational/professional courses; “integration of ideas”; and number of courses required of all students (Pascarella et al., 2005) – the latter presumably indicates that courses required of *all students* will be outside any one discipline, thus indicating a level of variety in the curriculum.

Ducasse (1944) believes any subject can be taught in a liberating way, but that a narrow focus can be “insularizing” as it limits the learner’s perspective. He thus advocates enriching in-depth study of one’s own discipline with the study of a variety of disciplines to give students various perspectives and habits of mind, each of which is best achieved in certain pure scientific or humanities disciplines. He also contends that even when professional education is taught in a liberalizing manner, it has limited potential to provide sufficient perspective. He interprets Aristotle to indicate the necessity of the inner freedoms of reason and balance, where balance is impossible if the individual is bound to and focusing upon just one narrow discipline. Research showing how different disciplines emphasize different kinds of thinking (Donald, 2002), and different disciplinary conceptions of CT (Moore, 2011) imply that exposure to different disciplines promotes diverse ways of thinking.

For example, teaching natural science alone may limit the degree of criticality possible:

⁴² Gilbert (1995) also includes psychology in this category even though it includes several “applied” sub-branches such as clinical and educational psychology

Natural science gives us power over the course of nature and over the lives of men, but itself never tells us what it would be good or evil, wise or unwise, to do with this power. (Ducasse, 1944, p. 8)

This may be because teaching sciences commonly tends to emphasize consensus and unquestioning belief in theory as fact (Hand, 1999), rather than probing into values and wider societal questions (Barnett, 1997). The study of natural/hard sciences is normally dominated by a technical interest in prediction and control (Habermas as understood by Grundy, 1987; Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

Research shows that hard disciplines are more commonly taught using information-transmission/teacher-focused methods, whereas soft disciplines are more likely to be taught using student-focused pedagogies (Kemp, 2008, citing her own study and similar results by Lindblom-Ylänne et al., 2006; Lueddeke, 2003; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999). Some believe that such disciplines that are not intuitively or commonly taught in a critical way can be redesigned to do so (McPeck, 1990; Barnett, 1997; Shor & Freire, 1997), albeit requiring ingenuity, needing a move away from information-transmission pedagogy towards more student-centred pedagogy that encourages questioning. One way is to include “an articulation of hidden assumptions and consideration of the philosophical and ethical issues raised by science” (Hand, 1999, p. 501), such as the discussion of nuclear armament in physics courses (Wellington, 1982). AUC’s Scientific Thinking course attempts to do this (see section 6.5.6.3). But one other way is to involve science students in interdisciplinary courses.

Interdisciplinarity is sometimes considered essential to a LAE (Ducasse, 1944; Ahlgern & Boyer, 1981). Barnett⁴³ generally perceives LAE in a positive light (e.g. Barnett & Coate, 2005), and advocates interdisciplinarity for developing criticality as it “encourages the possibility of different cognitive perspectives being turned on a subject and so illuminating it in different ways” (Barnett, 1997, p. 19). However, he warns against an uncritical interdisciplinarity:

A superficial encounter with a rival disciplinary perspective could be counterproductive: it could present unwelcome cognitive challenge and fail to bring even the cognitive transformation that a deep familiarity with a single intellectual field would bring (p. 19)

⁴³ though British, and therefore professionally outside American LAE

6.2.2 Emphasis on Teaching Methods

Rather than emphasize content, some authors believe the emphasis should be on “the point of view from which [that content is] considered” (Farrison, 1946, p. 379), and that LAE is achievable “only if faculty members are committed to liberal learning and not primarily to the apparatus of their own disciplines” (Shoenberg, 2009, p. 58). The teacher has the capacity to promote or hinder criticality (Ducasse, 1944):

The truly great teacher knows how to stir questionings, generate radical doubt, and inspire... devotion to the unfolding of truth previously hidden. This teacher, far from trying to turn out and polish up a student who will be well adjusted to the social environment, is secretly hopeful that his student will be intelligently maladjusted, bringing not peace but a sword. (Ducasse, 1944, p. 15)

However, not all advocates of liberal arts consistently teach in liberalizing ways, demonstrating

...deliberate intent of showing students how study of the matter at hand is related to human dilemmas and human values, or how facts, reason, and judgment must be integrated before one can appreciate, criticize, solve a problem or obtain understanding in any segment of any branch of learning. (Anderson-Mattfeld, 1974, p. 282-283).

The above sounds almost synonymous with critical thinking. Many authors emphasize the role of the teacher in developing CT in LAE. McPeck (1990) believes CT can be taught through science and history as well as it is already being taught in philosophy and literary criticism, but this is contingent upon the “teacher’s attitude or mode of conducting discussion” (p. 52) as well as his/her willingness to forego teacher and textbook authority and allow disagreement in the classroom. Teachers should encourage students “to be curious, to raise objections, ask questions, point out difficulties in the instructor’s position” (Facione, 1990, p. 17). Committed instructors “can enliven the thinking of students in almost any curricular setting” as long as they understand their students’ backgrounds and are dedicated to the goal of developing their reasoning (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 41).

Advocates of a discipline-specific view of CT (McPeck, 1990) consider a “good” LAE the best way to develop critical thinking via immersion in the disciplines as well as infusing critical thinking concepts within regular courses. Expert advocates of a general view of CT also consider liberal education essential to CT development (Facione, 1990) so students learn to apply CT across different contexts. CT in this view would be developed by mixing direct instruction with infusion (e.g. Ennis, 1989) or infusion of CT into writing courses specifically (Paul, 1990; Elbow, 1994).

Having described conceptions of LAE curricula, I next discuss two debates in the field of LAE: tension with professional education, and elitism of LAE.

6.3 Vocational/Professional versus Liberal Education

Liberal education is often defined as the opposite of vocational/professional education. Nussbaum (1997 p. 9) for example defines it as “a higher education that is a cultivation of the whole human being for the functions of citizenship and life generally” which is currently unrealized, as some universities now “subordinate the cultivation of the whole person to technical and vocational education” (p. 9). Seifert et al. (2008) emphasize that a liberal arts institution values “the development of a set of intellectual arts... more than professional or vocational skills” (p. 109 citing Blaich, et al.). Several authors cite the historical definition of a liberal education as that which denotes freedom, not just from slavery, but alternatively “in contradistinction to whatever vocational training was provided for slaves and serfs” (Farrison , 1946, p. 379) or as opposed to the person “otherwise preoccupied with earning a living” (Ahlgren & Boyer, 1981, p. 173). Even though vocational subjects *could* be taught in a liberalizing manner, focusing on any one subject is considered “insularizing” in itself (Ducasse, 1944).

Aristotle’s view of liberal education can be interpreted to mean that a truly liberal education “is not possible for men if they are not free both politically and economically” (Ducasse, 1944, p. 2) but Dewey (1961, Chapter 10) contends that most people are still *not* economically free, and that “our economic conditions still relegate many men to a servile status”.

Ivy League universities were initially liberal arts colleges, but historically, many liberal arts institutions had to modify themselves in order meet students’ “preoccupation with the immediate job market” (Delucchi, 1997, p. 414) which required more professional education (Pfnister, 1984).

Fen (1961) posits that

[V]ocational education is not only compatible with the idea of liberal education but also the only liberal education conceivable today. In all contemporary civilized societies, the pursuit of a vocation is a cultural necessity for individuals. The more advanced a society, the more earnest this pursuit. (p. 210-211)

Liberal and professional education are recognized as different but not necessarily mutually exclusive as society is no longer divided as starkly into “leisure” and “slave” classes (Anderson-

Mattfeld 1974). Suggesting that different individuals will feel the value of a liberal versus a professional education at different times in their lives, Anderson-Mattfeld recommends that education cater to this diversity of interest and need.

This discussion has made two assumptions: First, that liberal education is accessible to all and provides social mobility; doing so ignores how initial socioeconomic status and cultural capital limit individual access and choices of education (e.g. when LAE is connected to studying the "high culture" which favours the cultural capital or upper and middle classes - Strauss, 2004). Which brings up the second Issue: professional education can potentially limit individuals' capacity for social change (Apple, 1990; Giroux, 2002). Anderson-Mattfeld's and Fen's combination of liberal/professional is difficult to achieve due to the conflicting purposes of each (discussed further section 6.6.2).

Additionally, those from lower socioeconomic may favour a technical or vocational education that offers quicker financial rewards. They are not economically or politically free. In a country like Egypt, it is expensive for students to get the LAE provided by AUC, and students/parents seek maximum economical benefit. It is therefore easier to argue for the instrumental benefits of a LAE, as the goals of liberal education can prepare students for various vocations (e.g. Gunderson, 2005) and are demanded by employers (AACU, 2013 provides the "economic case" as well as the "civic case" for liberal education).

But the belief that everyone would benefit from connecting education to the needs of industry/business (e.g. by reducing unemployment) entails prioritizing the traditional norms and values used in business/industry over other values (Apple & Juncgk, 2000; Giroux, 2002⁴⁴):

Central to defending the university as a public good and site of critical learning is the recognition that education must not be confused with job training, suggesting all the more that educators must resist allowing commercial values to shape the purpose and mission of higher education. (Giroux 2002, p. 433)

The promotion of instrumental technical knowledge and skills in education helps maintain the economic status quo (Apple, 1990), and feeds the "hegemony of capitalism" by providing "creative, independent, value-free thinkers (i.e. engineers and computer scientists)" (Lash, 2001,

⁴⁴ While Apple and Giroux were not advocating a liberal arts education, I include here their critiques of vocational education here

p. 189). Carnoy (1974) suggests that historically, colonizers encouraged technical training of the colonized to meet the economic needs of the colonizer while preventing social development because individual rather than collective social mobility is emphasized. Egypt's colonial history has resulted in a society that encourages the study of the professional disciplines (especially medicine and engineering, but also at AUC, business) and derides the study of social sciences and arts.

Universities need to strike a balance between responding to students' (economic/market-driven) needs without losing their larger mission and purpose. Aside from the vocational/liberal divide, there are other criticisms of LAE in the US that are relevant to Egypt, and I discuss these next.

6.4 Defending Elitism: Nussbaum's "Cultivating Humanity"

There two major criticisms of LAE in the US (Nussbaum, 1997, Burbules, 1999) are:

1. A conservative current, which sees liberal education as a threat to traditional values as it promotes political correctness and relativism; and
2. The radical left, which sees LAE as elitist and exclusive of the views of non-dominant interest groups such as women and ethnic minorities.

Both of these criticisms seem relevant when applied to teaching LAE in a context such as Egypt, because of the cultural differences between Egyptian/Arab/Muslim and US/Western values implicitly or explicitly imparted via LAE. One could see LAE as a threat to traditional Muslim values, or one could look at LAE as a kind of cultural imperialism on the Westernized elites of a postcolonial nation, imparting dominant Western knowledge over local knowledge(s).

Martha Nussbaum's (1997) book is a defence of LAE against those two currents in the US, and although her attempt to defend liberal arts does not go far enough to responding to these criticisms (Burbules, 1999), I present the basic idea of her model here because first, it has clear links to critical thinking development, and second, it attempts to describe an inclusive LAE while emphasizing both content and process. A third reason, is that, as will be clear later, AUC's conception of liberal arts has some common aspects with Nussbaum's model, although again I will show how the AUC model does not go far enough to tackle these issues. Finally, I expected that

Nussbaum as a major scholar on theory of capability⁴⁵ (e.g. Nussbaum, 2003, 2011) might take an approach that shows how LAE can privilege some students over others. Unfortunately, the term capability was not even in the book's index.

Nussbaum conceives of a LAE that prepare graduates for global citizenship in the age of internationalization, aiming for the "cultivation of humanity" via three essential capacities:

1. *Critical reasoning*,⁴⁶ which should lead to *questioning of one's own beliefs and traditions*. This, in itself, could be considered the most important goal of critical thinking (e.g. Brookfield 1987). While she recommends this be developed over two semesters of philosophy, she recognizes it can be taught in any good humanities or social science course.
2. *World citizenship*. Here the goal is for students to prioritize their humanity over their local or special interest identities. This echoes Paul's (1994) view of a "strong sense" CT which goes beyond sociocentrism to incorporate different worldviews from one's own. Nussbaum's recommendation to achieve world citizenship is the extensive study of at least one unfamiliar culture as a basic requirement, "infusing diverse perspectives throughout the curriculum", and studying at least one foreign language", as well as encouraging study abroad (Nussbaum 1998). She recognizes the importance of providing professional development to enable faculty from various disciplines to infuse world citizenship in their courses, as it is not enough to have only one or two courses that develop this capacity.
3. *Narrative imagination*⁴⁷. Nussbaum (1997) describes this as "understanding the world from the point of view of the other... until we see the meaning of an action as the person intended it... in the context of that person's history and social world" (p. 3 of excerpt). She also suggests that compassion and empathy are central to developing narrative imagination, and suggests it is important to include the study of marginalized groups' knowledge (e.g. study of non-Western cultures, women's studies, sexuality and ethnic

⁴⁵ I also have a preference for Sen's more generic notion of capability, vs. Nussbaum's which lists a specific list.

⁴⁶ Note: "practical reason" is one of Nussbaum's central human capabilities (2003 p. 41).

⁴⁷ Note: this is similar to Nussbaum's central capability of "affiliation" (2003 p. 41-42).

studies). This echoes the feminine “connected knower” who “in order to understand what a person is saying she must adopt the person’s own terms” (Clinchy, 1994, p. 39, mentioned in chapter two). But while “connected knowing” is empathetic and almost uncritical, refraining from judgment (Clinchy, 1994), Nussbaum emphasizes that “narrative imagination” is not uncritical, as her end goal of narrative imagination is to judge the other, but after understanding their point of view in their local context. This echoes Edward Said’s “philological hermeneutics” approach to critique which starts with receiving a text (i.e. sympathetic understanding of an author’s point of view and context), before moving onto resisting it via criticism (cited in Nixon, 2006). It also echoes Brookfield’s understanding of critical reading as first looking at it from the author’s point of view (Brookfield, 2012). Nussbaum (1998) suggests this capacity is best developed in literature and arts courses.

Since liberal education is a mainly American type of higher education, Nussbaum comfortably makes claims such as “the relationship of a liberal education to citizenship... [has] a long history in the Western philosophical tradition” (p. 8). She also recognizes that although CT is a major component of a LAE, the US version of democracy is “prone to hasty and sloppy reasoning” (p. 10).

Although Nussbaum speaks from the US university perspective, and relies upon Western traditions and values, some of her points can be applied to AUC, albeit with much contextual adaptation. For example, Egypt’s democracy is not only prone to sloppy reasoning – it is almost completely composed of conspiracy theories; historically it has been an extremely superficial (Ibrahim & Hunt-Hendrix, 2011) one, and post-2011 remains a more procedural than participative democracy⁴⁸. Also, when considering the importance of incorporating different worldviews and empathies within the “world citizenship” and “narrative imagination”, adapting Nussbaum’s idea to Egyptian society, one must consider specific Egyptian sub-cultures (e.g. Coptic Christian, Nubian Egyptians) and currently conflicting political viewpoints whose holders are unable to negotiate successfully for lack of what Nussbaum would call “narrative imagination”. Also, when tackling intercultural understanding, this should not be done without sufficient attention to power differentials.

⁴⁸ By procedural democracy, I refer to the use voting and correct counting of votes; however, a participative democracy would entail much more than this, where the voices of Egypt’s diverse population would be heard and involved in all major decision-making.

Nussbaum's model is by no means perfect, and I offer my criticism of it in appendix E. I compare AUC's core curriculum requirements with Nussbaum's and others in table 6.2, and I provide a detailed comparison of Nussbaum's model and AUC's curriculum offerings in table 6.3

6.5 AUC as a Liberal Arts Institution

6.5.1 Approach to this Section

The previous sections described different formulations of a LAE and highlighted some of the issues in the field. This section describes AUC's conception of LAE, how it attempts to reconcile a professional with a liberal arts curriculum, and how it attempts to incorporate Arab culture. Of course no institution can fully control student outcomes (Anderson-Mattfeld, 1974). I suggest that an institution that promises liberal arts must provide a structure that maximizes opportunities for diverse students to benefit from the largest number of liberal arts experiences it can offer, at the highest quality it can produce. Since my research is concerned with CT, this section scrutinizes liberal arts aspects at AUC relevant to CT and asks whether these aspects (be it particular courses or particular ways of teaching) necessarily do develop CT. I do this by presenting student and instructor views on the current LAE offerings of AUC, as well as an in-depth case study of a particular required course, Scientific Thinking, which attempts to teach about science in a liberalizing manner.

6.5.2 Situating AUC within the Liberal Arts Continuum

Using Ahlgern and Boyer's (1981) framework, I will show⁴⁹ that AUC states its liberal arts *intent* in its mission statement, and offers a LAE via providing certain *content* as embodied by the core curriculum. It recognizes liberal learning outcomes (including critical thinking) as university-wide outcomes, and faculty recognize the importance of these outcomes and liberal teaching methodologies in the disciplines. Table 6.2 summarizes how AUC's application of liberal arts fits within the literature.

AUC's mission statement clearly states liberal arts intent, but takes pride in AUC's professional programs as well:

⁴⁹ Evidence used includes various parts of AUC's website, as well as Institutional Research (2009) and Lash's thesis about AUC

The university is committed to teaching and research of the highest caliber, and offers exceptional liberal arts and professional education in a cross-cultural environment. (AUC, 2011)

Instructors I interviewed, including those from professional disciplines (e.g. MKTG/Marketing, CSCI/ComputerScience, COMPREL/ComparativeReligion) mentioned “liberal arts”, indicating their awareness of its importance at AUC. According to Institutional Research (2009), AUC faculty have indicated they generally

[E]njoy teaching at AUC. They like the vibrancy of the learning environment, appreciate the LAE, and value the freedom of expression they have at AUC

6.5.3 Learning Outcomes Emphasized at AUC

Table 6.2: Liberal arts outcomes at AUC vs. literature

AUC (AUC Mission and Learning Outcomes undated))	Nussbaum (1997)	Pascarella et al., (2005)	Wabash (2009)
Professional skills	N/A (sees as threat to LAE)	N/A	N/A
Advanced communication skills	N/A	Reading comprehension Writing Skills Positive attitude toward literacy	N/A
Critical thinking	(Socratic) Critical reasoning	Critical thinking Preference for higher-order cognitive activities Science Reasoning	Effective reasoning and problem solving Inclination to inquire and lifelong learning Moral reasoning
Cultural competence	Narrative Imagination (also World citizenship)	Openness to diversity/challenge	Intercultural effectiveness
Effective citizenship	World Citizenship	N/A	Leadership
Not in AUC's broad learning outcomes	N/A	Plans to obtain a graduate degree Learning for self-understanding Internal locus of attribution for academic success	Integration of learning Well-being

Table 6.2 (above) compares AUC’s broad learning outcomes with those identified in literature, showing overlap particularly in outcomes pertaining to critical thinking, cultural competence and communication skills. The major difference is that AUC includes professional skills in its learning outcomes which are (understandably) absent from conceptions of LAE. Table 6.3 compares AUC’s conception of liberal arts with Nussbaum’s (1997), showing how some of her suggested curricular ideas exist at AUC.

Table 6.3: Nussbaum’s LAE vs. AUC’s

Nussbaum’s essential capacity	Nussbaum’s recommended way of achieving	AUC’s curriculum ⁵⁰
Critical reasoning, questioning one’s own assumptions and beliefs	Philosophy courses (but realizes can be infused in other ways)	Required courses in: Scientific thinking (some CT) Philosophical thinking Rhetoric and Composition (none of above directly or necessarily lead to questioning one’s beliefs)
World Citizenship	Studying one other culture in-depth Infusing diverse perspectives across the curriculum Studying a foreign language in-depth Encourage study abroad	Two Arab culture requirements “International World Studies” option for capstone (alternative is a “Community Engagement” capstone) English or Arabic language requirement only for those who need it (assumes most students already bicultural/bilingual since most Arab/Egyptian) Study abroad optional (usually in US/UK) (see intercultural chapter for more)
Narrative Imagination	Best done in literature and arts courses Importance of studying “marginalized” or different perspectives	One core curriculum course in humanities; one in “human spirit” No study of “marginalized” or different perspectives required

A more detailed breakdown of AUC learning outcomes, with faculty’s perceptions on the importance of each (Institutional Research 2009⁵¹) shows that more than 90% of full-time faculty

⁵⁰ Based on AUC core curriculum here <http://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/undergrad/core/Pages/default.aspx> (appendix F shows details and titles of some courses)

⁵¹ Institutional Research conducted a survey with AUC faculty to which 59% of full-time faculty responded (Institutional Research, 2009) – part-time faculty (who constitute around 45% of faculty and carry 29% of the teaching load as can be calculated from AUC Factbook 2008 p. 38) were not included in this survey. The Director of Assessment told me their needs are different and so they will be surveyed separately.

in each of the different schools, and 94.2% of full-time faculty overall consider it important that students develop the “ability to apply strong quantitative, analytical, and critical thinking skills to analyze and synthesize complex information to solve problems” (p. 22). Similarly important (94.6% overall and more than 90% within each school) is students’ ability to “write and speak effectively in a variety of disciplines” (p. 21). These two learning outcomes are perceived to be more important than those pertaining to cultural competence in some disciplines: only 75.8% of faculty in the School of Business, Economics and Communications (hereafter referred to as BEC) consider understanding “international interdependence, cultural diversity, and considerations of values and traditions other than his/her own” (p. 22) while 90.2% of faculty overall find it important. This was surprising since students studying business, economics, journalism or communications are expected to find themselves in culturally diverse situations when working with multinational corporations or dealing with international media sources. However, another statistic shows that 82.4% of faculty in BEC and 88.8% of faculty overall find it important that students are able to “collaborate effectively in a multicultural context” (p. 22). This may mean that some BEC faculty consider students’ multicultural collaborative ability more important than their intercultural understanding, and may not feel it is their responsibility to develop the latter.

6.5.4 Liberal Arts Content and Content Variety: AUC’s Core Curriculum

Today, AUC emphasizes liberal education and all undergraduate students study a common set of courses in the humanities and the natural and social sciences as part of the university’s core curriculum. In addition, the university maintains its strong commitment to fostering understanding across world regions, cultures and religions. (AUC History, 2009)

Also:

The Core Curriculum is the foundation of every AUC student’s education — the heart of the liberal arts experience. (AUC CORE, 2009)

As the above quotes show AUC’s “commitment to liberal arts is clearly articulated in its core curriculum” (Lash 2001 p. 91), especially that 72% of AUC students who have declared their major choose professional (non-liberal arts) disciplines⁵². This implies that AUC’s definition of a LAE focuses not on the “discipline” students decide to major in (unlike Delucchi 1997 and Gilbert 1995), but in providing a minimum set of liberal arts experiences (similar to Pascarella et al.,

⁵² calculated from AUC Factbook 2008-2009

2005a, Seifert et al., 2008) mainly via the core curriculum, which is a set of diverse courses (similar to Ducasse 1944). AUC recognizes the possibility of combining a professional and LAE (similar to Anderson-Mattfeld 1974) while deferring to a labour market that drives students to prefer a professional discipline as their major (Lash 2001, Delluchi 1997). However, both Studley (2003) and the core curriculum administrator I interviewed (hereafter referred to as CORE-admin) stressed that a background in humanities can still be an advantage in the corporate labour market (i.e. that majoring in a liberal arts discipline does not necessarily detract one's focus from a labour market orientation).

AUC's Core Curriculum (hereafter referred to as the "core" or "core courses") includes both specific content required of all students (e.g. courses in Scientific Thinking, Philosophic Thinking and Rhetoric & Composition), and a number of student-chosen courses that must cover diverse disciplines (at least one course in each of the natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences, as well as two capstone courses demonstrating a culmination of liberal arts outcomes - see figure 1.1 p. 20).

Strauss (2004) simply writes: "Liberal education is education in culture", but recognizes that what has traditionally meant "Western culture" must now embrace a variety of cultures. As part of AUC's core curriculum, students are required to take courses on both local (defined as Arab) culture and world cultures.

The latest core curriculum reported in this thesis (2007) has slightly different requirements from the earlier version students I interviewed went through, and is also different from the one I went through as a student, and all three of these versions enter into my interview with CORE-admin. To see details of the core curriculum design, its evolution over time (F-1), and examples of specific courses taught (F-2), please see appendix F.

6.5.5 Teaching at AUC

AUC considers itself a teaching not a research institution, since the focus is on undergraduate programs, with some master's but no doctoral⁵³ programs in place⁵⁴. This should imply a strong

⁵³ Using "The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education" (Carnegie Foundation, 2009), AUC would be characterized as a private, not-for-profit Master's College/university, defined as one that awards "at least 50 master's degrees and fewer than 20 doctoral degrees per year" – AUC does not currently offer any doctoral programs.

teaching emphasis at AUC. However, according to Institutional Research (2009) full-time faculty feel “the teaching load is very high” (p. 5) causing difficulty “balancing teaching, research and administrative duties”, especially that “teaching excellence [is] not given as much weight as research” in tenure and promotion (p. 3). Apple and Jungck (2000) list some of the obvious quality issues that arise from overloading teachers’ time, including prioritizing quantity over quality, having less time to develop their own judgments and reflections on their teaching, and having less time to learn from peers.

Even though, as previously noted, the core curriculum is the main area where AUC delivers its liberal arts promise, liberal arts learning outcomes are expected to be met throughout the disciplines. Two of the pedagogies for developing CT that are also relevant to liberal arts are discussion and reflection.

Although more than 85% of full-time faculty across departments claimed to use in-class discussions (Institutional Research, 2009), the quality, frequency and length of these discussions cannot be gleaned from a survey, nor can the quality of students’ participation and learning. As an insider to AUC, I know that some faculty would consider a five-minute question-answer at end-of-class a discussion. Burbules (1986) describes preventive power as “tolerating a degree of ‘open’ dialogue in which the agenda and debate are truncated” (p. 102) and Lash (2001) cites examples from AUC’s “Core Seminar” course⁵⁵ where critical discussion was encouraged but restricted to certain political limits which Lash perceived to be self-imposed by lecturers.

As mentioned earlier, critical discussion should involve questioning authority of textbooks, instructors, and epistemologies of a discipline. The teacher’s role is also to “foster the students’ confidence in their own powers of reason” Facione (1990 p. 18), and a political science professor (POLS) feels his students themselves resist questioning authority at first:

*Some students are not comfortable expressing themselves – some want to simply repeat what’s been given to them , are comfortable staying close to the text, don’t want to venture on their own – [which brings us] back to the confidence issue, **no one made them feel confident enough to say their view even if others may not agree.** (emphasis added)*

⁵⁴ One doctoral program in sciences/engineering was very recently introduced, but it was explicitly stated that there were no plans to introduce others in the near future

⁵⁵ This used to be the capstone core curriculum requirement but has been modified

[see case study 3 for a detailed example of a student's development in this regard; the case study includes the student's description of the professor above as well]

A professor of comparative religion (COMPREL) compares AUC students' views of authority to Western students':

I was in university – remembering teachers that were most inspiring to me and knowing that those were teachers that were kind of striking a balance between teacher as informed authority imparting information and teacher who is pressing students to think about new concepts and think critically and so forth – to think for themselves. That's you know, in a Western setting, students have just been brought up that way – independent thinking. Western culture is so focused on the individual, it's almost neurotic... it becomes more natural for students...second nature to think independently. Here [in Egypt], a different type of culture, where you [student, say], "I'm not the authority so who am I to speak, to offer my independent observation about this? The professor is the authority or the author of the book is the authority"... [the] whole issue of plagiarism at AUC, part of it is not so much – it can be students trying to get away with something – but part of it...[is the student's belief that] this person is the authority.

This view agrees with research done by Nelson, El Bakary and Fathi (1996) showing that Egyptian students show higher discomfort with uncertainty than US students⁵⁶.

According to Institutional Research (2009 p. 23), "Reflective writing/journaling/student portfolios" were used by 64.8% of Humanities and Social Sciences (hereafter referred to as HUSS) but only 35.3% of BEC and 18.4% of School of Sciences and Engineering (hereafter referred to as SSE) faculty. Faculty I had interviewed rarely taught Metacognition explicitly, but some felt they taught it implicitly (e.g. POLS, MKTG). Professor COMPREL says:

I think we don't really actively purposely do this [have students reflect on their thinking] in class, but I think a by-product of studying other religions, other cultures... it causes you to reflect about your own culture, and what you expect as given as this is the way things are – when you study other cultures who have other pre-suppositions about how the world is, it makes you reflect back on your own conditioning and what you assume...implicitly but not so explicit... I think that you know the course is working well [when] students are doing that on their own.

⁵⁶ The majority of their sample was first-year AUC students, although they also included some mature non-degree students who were non-Western educated and coming to AUC to improve their language or computer skills.

A computer science professor (CSCI) says Metacognition is taught “maybe not explicitly but maybe implicitly. It’s there to the extent that you can cast problem-solving as a type of Metacognition”, whereas a mechanical engineering professor (MENG) says his “main objective is reflection on what they learned in the course not on themselves.” A Scientific Thinking professor (SCI) uses online discussions and concept mapping to encourage student reflection (see case study).

The only other professor who talked explicitly about helping students think about their own thinking was the RHET2 professor, but the RHET administrator said this was not an explicit requirement in RHET courses.

An older version of the page “Why AUC?” (undated) on AUC’s website promotes AUC as having International faculty (professors) who are highly qualified to provide “new insight, research and a richer academic environment that inspires students and encourages them [sic] think critically, question and explore”.

One would have to interpret “international” to include both local and foreign faculty, since local hires constitute 58% of full-time AUC faculty (AUC Factbook, 2008-2009), and 88% part-time faculty (covering 29% of the teaching load)⁵⁷. Faculty backgrounds affect their degree of familiarity with LAE.

6.5.6 Case Studies of LAE at AUC

Having described AUC’s designed curriculum and discussed teaching used at AUC, I next present three case studies focusing on issues related to LAE at AUC. The first shows how one student faced difficulty adjusting to discussion and questioning pedagogy at AUC. The second explores how much CT is developed outside the core curriculum in professional disciplines. The third is an in-depth case study of the scientific thinking course, including how students/instructor viewed its impact on CT, and a criticism of its design and implementation.

6.5.6.1 Case study 1: Successful but Painful Adjustment: Noha

Noha is a political science major who overcame an initial cultural capital deficit and lack of confidence to develop critical thinking at AUC. She recounts how her previous education shunned

⁵⁷ calculated from AUC Factbook

questioning, so she did not start questioning at AUC until colleagues who were more critical encouraged this:

I guess we were taught to always think that the teacher is right as opposed to college. The way you were educated, the teacher is always right, you don't question authority... College, I would say as a freshman, it wasn't the norm for me to challenge professors at least intellectually and I'd take their word for granted and I learned from people around me...that everything they [professors] say is not necessarily true...

Her ability to question has grown slowly:

I guess my self-esteem or my confidence in my own intelligence was limited because of the education I had as a younger person. But I mean that's improving, but it is taking me a very very long time to adapt to.

Although her confidence (which Bourdieu 1983 considers an expression of social capital) grew, the transition was not easy:

This has been a huge frustration, because it has been a very tough transition from my previous schooling system into this. Last semester⁵⁸ I got better grades because I understood every teacher is different and has his/her own style and I learned to adapt to it faster; and I finally learned how to study, and it has taken me a very long time to learn that.

Noha attributes the improvements in her metacognition and willingness to question authority of teachers to liberal arts education in general:

Everything I guess, being exposed to this environment of liberal arts and critical thinking definitely had an influence... and this...having the freedom to do things my way, there is no one method of studying [so] it's different because you learn to adapt your method.

Her experience is echoed by others, such as Yasseen (mJRMcth), who, before AUC, "wasn't that exposed to many people of different cultures/opinions... But in AUC the system itself made me open-minded." Yasseen attributes this not to an entire course, but mostly core and journalism courses as a whole.

Noha's confidence fluctuates:

In my Scientific Thinking class I was very comfortable [but] sometimes in some of my political science classes I am not as comfortable because I always feel that I don't have enough political knowledge to argue, but I've learned that most of the people that are

⁵⁸ The semester she is referring to is during her third year of college

arguing have no idea about what's going on [in the first place]...and they're just... They argue for the sake of argument... When I argue, I like to argue about something I have full knowledge [about, because] I hate to make a fool of myself.

Noha's observation here shows she was initially intimidated by those more eloquent than herself in political science courses, but as her critical thinking developed, she realized how others' confidence masked lack of knowledge. Whereas earlier she had learned from more critical peers to question teacher authority, she did not later blindly mimic other peers in arguing without background knowledge, or what Perry (1981) calls "bull".

In terms of evaluating argument strength, she says what has helped her is:

Lots of readings, arguing in classes, understanding that there is no right answer. That's kind of...the real world where there is no right answer to anything and you can always argue against anything. Understanding when someone else makes an argument evaluating what that person is basing their argument on – it is based on conviction, solid evidence, biased to one thing, etc.

...Definitely, my math class and my business classes and accounting were absolutely NOT useful [we both laugh]...they are absolutely useless in argument... Maybe one of my very early classes that was so interesting for me – Philosophy with [ProfessorX] – I really enjoyed his class. I was still in this phase where I could not make lots of arguments, and I was more an observer but I was so intrigued by the arguments that he had, and just looking at things from very different perspectives. I also took the comparative religion class...because there were so many different religions that we were studying at the same time... so you can always argue one way... and you can always argue the other way... so I don't know, you just learn to accept that there is no right answer.

Certain classes did not encourage critical thinking, but even in the philosophy class, she showed interest in argument, but was unable to participate. Her initial discomfort with uncertainty changed into Perry's levels of multiplicity of accepting there is no right answer, and later to what seems closer to the next level of contextual relativism where she realizes that different contexts (e.g. in comparative religion) breed different acceptable perspectives. She accepts and transfers this learning to political science courses, but is still retains discomfort:

The same thing goes for all my political science classes ... accepting that there is no right answer. Which is still very frustrating for me, because I was so used to having one right answer growing up, so it's still very frustrating at times to not have a right answer.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Nelson et al., (1996) found Egyptian students were less comfortable with uncertainty than US counterparts

Political science courses also helped her question media and understand politics, as did interaction with peers:

I was more naïve politically speaking before I started AUC, actually before I started my political science courses. Then after them I just learned more about corruption and all that is going on and I was more naïve before that, especially in politics...another thing is...hanging around political science students in general and listening to their debates...made me realize how everything is not as proper as it should be.

Noha's experience shows the slow and painful adjustment to accepting uncertainty and gaining confidence to participate in argument. Starting out with little cultural capital, her adjustment to AUC education was facilitated by particular core curriculum courses and teachers. She was further exposed to argument via writing and discussion in political science courses – while students in others majors do not have that privilege. She learned from observing and conversing with peers, as well as out-of-class contact with a good teacher. The pedagogies, courses, and out-of-class faculty and student contact she mentions are all aspects of a good liberal arts education.

An important point she raised was how political science courses clearly developed her criticality more than mathematics, business or accounting courses. The following case study focuses on whether sufficient criticality is developed in professional and scientific disciplines at AUC.

6.5.6.2 Case Study 2: How Liberal Can Professional Disciplines Get?

I argue elsewhere that students studying professional disciplines get less exposure to academic liberal arts experiences in terms of actual number of courses, and that the courses outside the discipline tend to get marginalized because of the way AUC structures the relationship between LAE and the disciplines. Hence, if CT is an important AUC goal, it would be necessary to focus on developing criticality across the disciplines, not just in core curriculum courses. Although all instructors I interviewed from professional disciplines (CSCI, CENG, MENG and MKTG) tended to situate their teaching within liberal arts and encourage students to question their authority, they and their students believe this is not the rule at AUC for their disciplines. This section shows how computer science/engineering and business/economics students' critical thinking has developed at AUC, focusing on questioning authority which is essential for Perry (1981).

Engineering students I interviewed found the skills learned in their major transferable. Osman (mMENG2br) and Lina (fCENGAm) both say that engineering builds the disposition of analysis and

problem-solving skills that they feel applies in other courses and even social contexts. However, engineering students showed more comfort questioning authority in non-science courses:

Definitely in university I believe in them [teachers as authorities] more because they have masters and PhD but in school they only had bachelors... Especially in topics like math, physics or chemistry; if it's philosophy or English – maybe I question them more... I take management courses... steps, process, etc. it can be up to me to question and decide, but math and physics there is nothing to question. (Lina)

In AUC... there can be some slight differences in opinions, and especially when it comes to my major, it's more of technical stuff so I don't have such a strong background as the professors do in the field. [But] when it comes to other courses mainly such as economics, the English language [Rhetoric] courses there can be some room for opinions and difference in judgments, stuff like that...No one is... everyone can make mistakes. (Osman)

Even though Osman recognizes areas where there is “room for opinions”, his generalization into “everyone can make mistakes” implies a limited critical thinking – that a teacher should be questioned because they might make a mistake, not because there might be a different valid perspective, and that a teacher’s depth of knowledge in a technical area makes it difficult for a student to question him/her (similar to early multiplicity on Perry's 1981 model). Lina’s quote implies both a respect for authority based on educational qualifications, and a tendency to question more easily in non-science disciplines.

Kenzy (fCSCIBr) notes how some science courses do not encourage CT because of the way they are assessed:

In [Computer Science] courses, I realized that I have to get past [previous] exams and sometimes people do memorize them and [instructors] sometimes don't change them so lots of people memorize exams rather than just studying.

Osman mentions an exceptionally good teacher whose exams were challenging, bringing unexpected cases and examples, and did not depend on memorization, indicating that such exams are the exception rather than the rule in engineering. He mentions another good teacher models analysis for students in the first few semesters, before letting them practice analyzing as a group for the rest of the semester.

I interviewed this professor, and he told me “I don't give them [students] the answer of the question directly – when suitable, I let them find the answer themselves, 50% of the time” (MENG). Another engineering professor says “I tell them [students]: never believe anything I tell

you, seriously” (CENG). A computer science professor told me “My style in general is not to say anything dogmatic – everything is open to question”, and he encourages them to question the textbook as well. Although he feels the best thing he does with students is “challenge them. I don’t spoon-feed them”, he feels some other faculty teach introductory courses in too lenient a manner, not challenging students enough. The three instructors I interviewed show how some science/engineering professors attempt to forego some of their authority in class, but student/instructor interviews show this is not the norm in the sciences at AUC.

Students show how some aspects of CT develop via core courses but not their discipline. Osman says the core courses helped him evaluate different world views because they involved debate and not “just facts” (this presumes that most of engineering is “just facts”). Lina says practicing doing research has helped her improve her evaluation of relevant sources of information, and that she wrote more papers in high school than at AUC – where her only writing came in core courses. For Kenzy (fCSCIbr), the most important factor in developing her critical thinking was the general exposure to different ways of thinking in various courses, such as art and psychology, and she talked about how she became more able to question the authority of teachers “*because I am exposed to different teachers from different cultures*”, by which she seems to include disciplinary cultures as well.

Despite some science/engineering teachers demonstrating liberalizing teaching philosophies and methods, it seems that others teach in more traditional ways (e.g. emphasizing memorization in exams) that limit questioning and debate. It seems the liberal arts exposure these students have had (however limited) helped them develop critical thinking, but not the disposition to apply it where it is not encouraged (e.g. in certain science courses).

Typically, the study of sciences/engineering tends towards a technical orientation, but it can be taught with an emphasis on investigation (Grundy 1987), and infused with ethical questioning – as has been done in Scientific Thinking (see case study 3).

Business as a professional discipline and economics as a semi-professional/semi-pure discipline may not be “hard”⁶⁰ disciplines, but are not typical liberal arts disciplines either.

⁶⁰ “hard” as defined by Donald (2002)

Business/economics students seem more willing to question authority in core curriculum courses than in their majors:

... usually you don't have arguments in economics and finance and so on because they give you facts so you can't argue the facts. History of Economic Thought tells you Marx [did this] then Adam Smith did that. But in Philosophy you can argue about everything and Arab Society... Finance definitely you can't argue, coz it's just numbers... (Hossam, mECONBADMam)

This surprised me, because interpretation and analysis in finance and history are important, but Sandy echoes Hossam's sentiments, although she bases her lack of questioning on lack of knowledge compared to the professor's own depth of knowledge, but for core courses, she feels more able to question and discuss. However, Gamal's (mECONam) questioning was more general:

I question every professor and every teacher but the problem is – certain subjects I would question. They are humans. They tend to make mistakes. They are more experienced in many things... If I don't question, if I just trust, I am naïve.

He also told me how he would often explore the opinions of several professors on a topic in order to see the full picture.

Economics/business majors talked about LAE improving their critical thinking. Gamal says the simple exposure to variety of teachers and teaching helped him understand the way he learns better.

Hossam's ability to make sound arguments came mostly from core courses via discussions and writing arguments in papers, whereas at the time of our interview he had not yet had any research in his double major business/economics.

Business/Economics students seemed to generally appreciate the impact of core curriculum courses and the liberal arts experience on their critical thinking, but some of them felt less able to question authority and be critical in their own major.

6.5.6.3 Case study 3: In-depth - Scientific Thinking as a Liberal Arts Course

Typical science courses do not take a critical approach that involves “articulation of hidden assumptions and consideration of the philosophical and ethical issues raised by science” (Hand 1999 p. 501) but AUC's required Scientific Thinking course (hereafter referred to as SCI120) is one

where “Moral and ethical issues in science are examined” (AUC Catalog 2009)⁶¹. It is a good example of a liberal arts course that has evolved into one more conducive to critical thinking development. I examine some students’ and their instructor’s (hereafter referred to as SCI) views of CT development in the course.

All students I interviewed took SCI120 with the same instructor but over two different semesters. Yasseen/mJRMcth and Mona/fPOLSbr consider SCI120 among the top three courses influencing CT. Osman/mMENGbr said SCI120 was one of the courses that helped him evaluate different world views because it involved “more on debate than getting the fact and that’s it.”

Kamal/mCSCIth thinks high school “did not help a lot” in his learning because of large class sizes and teachers who just “stick to the subject” without open discussion, whereas discussion:

is the way I learn best because I know what other people think and this encourages me to do some research and then go with my own way of argument and post it [online]. And argue with it... even in normal life with friends.

For someone just starting to learn via discussions in college, Kamal’s philosophical thinking course helped him learn, and involved “lots of interaction, depends on discussion between students.” SCI120 online discussions went one step further in improving his open-mindedness and ability to evaluate argument strength because:

The discussion board in Scientific Thinking was one of the main reasons that made me actually have this broad mind... you can see that 3-4 people are talking, each taking a side, and you read the four and you try to make something to support, or for, or against a specific side, and you try to support it differently than the other four. Clearer than in class – [which is] limited in time, maybe I won’t have time to say my point and explain it, maybe I just say the point and shut up; but in the discussion board I am not limited neither by time or anything so I can say whatever info I want and can support my argument as I want; in class it is otherwise. In class you have to be to the point and concise.

So whereas Kamal learns well through discussions, online discussions are “clearer” because he gets more space and time to support his own argument and critique others’. Linking this with the first case study shows how this instructor’s use of online discussion may have helped students such as Kamal and Noha who were not used to face-to-face discussion previously. Online

⁶¹ Sci120 Catalog Description retrieved Nov 20, 2009

discussion gave them the time and space to think and organize their thoughts before writing their responses.

Hossam, Osman and Kamal all mentioned how discussion and debate in core courses, especially SCI120 helped develop their critical thinking. Noha/fPOLSth has discussions in her political science classes as well, but was more comfortable in SCI120:

In my Scientific Thinking class I was very comfortable,[but] sometimes in some of my political science classes I am not as comfortable because I always feel that I don't have enough political knowledge to argue.

She mentions how SCI120 would have been different with another teacher:

Noha: I was never bored, never. I completely loved the class, because she [the instructor] was so interesting and so intriguing and challenging [so] I knew [from the beginning]... I was so happy. Getting into a Scientific Thinking class the expectation was: it was going to be very boring like [all] other scientific thinking classes [meaning: sections]; [the previous semester I had taken] another class and dropped it because the guy [instructor] was so slow.

Me: what did you like about her class?

Noha: I liked the discussions we could have in class... I just liked that she was very open about everything.

Gamal/mECONam also focuses on the instructor herself, saying:

I always believed Sci120 was the best...[the instructor's] system of her course...like everyone participates in class. I didn't find [this] in ANY other course and I think it's hard that any professor would be able to do such a thing

The SCI120 instructor (hereafter referred to as SCI) says:

I try always in class to draw in everybody; but I try, I don't necessarily succeed...[to] make the class safe, and also try to keep it light so they don't feel they're under the gun, but even then. I think the discussions online have shown me that... what comes out of the discussions online... they are much more reflective, deeper, unexpected from what comes out in class.

Elaborating on what makes the class environment "safe" and discussions "light", she says:

By light I mean not too strict. To tell them that's it's ok that one doesn't know everything... when I learn from them, I mention it. That hierarchy, authority figure sort of disappears... I

try to do it so we're more peers. At the same time if I ask them a question and I sense that they are uncomfortable I say, 'OK we can move on'... I let them know that's it's OK not to be prepared.

That may explain why Noha was more comfortable in SCI120 than in political science courses where she was afraid to “make a fool” of herself.

The instructor responded to my question about how she deals with student differences:

I find it very difficult. Especially if there are different levels in the class ... In discussion online [there] was a big difference between those that are mature or have a different background or at a higher level. They bring in something different but at same time challenge the others. Learning process that they have to be... if it happens I have to draw others in so as not to be intimidated by the more [eloquent]... but on the whole in online discussions I didn't feel they were intimidated... [some] saying platitudes but not intimidated. But in class they may be intimidated sometimes.

She thinks teaching CT in the course “depends on how you teach/approach it”, since it is the process of scientific thinking that is most important but is not necessarily prioritized “across the board” by instructors.

I think you can do that [encourage critical thinking] almost with any content... if you set yourself to thinking: how can I use this content to develop this particular process – I don't think its content itself that should determine... For example if you have readings that are open-ended...more than problem-solving, but that even can have critical thinking skills.

She gives examples within the course, such as the bio-ethics discussions near the end. She has also started asking students to do concept maps based on readings, which helps her see their thinking, but helps them also visualize their own thinking overtly. She tries to encourage reflection also by letting students do research themselves and be aware of their own thinking, but it has been difficult.

This particular instructor taught this particular course in a way that has managed to develop some critical thinking for students from various backgrounds, using in-class and online discussions, helping students to start questioning authority, and making students more conscious of their own thinking by using student-developed concept maps and instructor-developed rubrics for

assessment. The instructor recognizes that not all of her attempts succeed⁶² each time, but she adds different pedagogical techniques each semester.

6.6 Discussion

The previous section has shown three cases studies highlighting some of the dynamics of LAE at AUC. This section discusses aspects of AUC's LAE that may limit its potential to develop CT: inequalities among students, resulting in misunderstandings of LAE and difficulties adjusting to it; tensions between the core courses and professional disciplines; and issues of teaching quality that may limit the liberalizing potential. I end the chapter by asking the broad question of whose knowledge is privileged at AUC, and for whose benefit?

6.6.1 Inequalities among Students

Parents and students in the Arab world do not intuitively understand what a LAE entails (Bertelsen 2012), but it is vital that students understand the philosophy behind a liberal arts education, because AUC's core curriculum is based on choice; even for required courses, students get some choice as to when to take them and with whom. As theories of social reproduction and theories of capability remind us, individual preferences that impact upon choices are shaped by different (sometimes unjust) background conditions (Nussbaum 2003). Offering equal opportunities to all students does not account for students from different backgrounds needing different levels and kinds of resources in order to reach the same outcome (Nussbaum 2003 p. 35). The university must start first recognizing the extent of difference that privileges some students over others because it is "an expression of power when it comes to be taken for granted by both the privileged and the unprivileged" (Burbules 1986, p. 102).

The first difference between students relates to how well they understand LAE and the AUC education system. Word-of-mouth has a strong impact on student choices at AUC (Lash 2001, CORE-ADMIN agrees), but it privileges well-connected students (e.g. who have friends/relatives at AUC) over those who do not have that social capital (Bourdieu 1983).

⁶² While I have placed this course as an example of a course that develops CT, I recognize that the course and the way it is designed has many flaws, including its content-oriented focus without sufficient questioning of how that content choice might be colonizing or oppressive for some students. The course design has evolved into progressively more democratic processes amongst teachers, but there is still room for improvement.

AUC's new "First Year Experience" (FYE) program is a three-day orientation required for all incoming students, which could help bridge this informational gap:

This program aims to familiarize students with *knowledge* of the purposes and expectations of higher education, AUC culture and services, student rights and responsibilities, academic, personal and social competencies necessary for college success; equip them with the *skills* to become self-reliant in the use of university information resources, and in identifying relevant service offices when needed; and promote the *values* of respect and appreciation for the institution, other members of the AUC community, and the learning experience.(FYE, 2009)

I have experienced this program firsthand as a faculty facilitator in this program⁶³ and the three days were insufficient for in-depth coverage of these ambitious goals. However, the three-day obligatory experience conducted mostly in small groups led by faculty/student facilitator pairs is an improvement upon the previous one-day non-obligatory orientation conducted in larger groups that I experienced as a student myself. Small group activities, however, may still not address the needs of individual students. Also, such a one-off event may be insufficient for induction, which may best be conceived of as a process (Leese, 2010).

The role of the one-to-one student academic advising system is therefore crucial, and AUC recognizes the need for improving it such that students receive enough information on options, requirements, and differences between majors (IR 2008). Time constraints⁶⁴ between student acceptance into AUC and the beginning of classes is the main constraint on academic advising. CORE-ADMIN says there is "essentially no time to discuss with students before their first registration what they should be taking", and the role of the so-called "freshman advisor" is relegated to the logistical struggle of registering students into suitable classes. With so many students to "advise" in so little time, students are usually just asked what they intend to major in, and advising is based on that pre-determined choice. However, I suggest that it is more than information that students need: it is mentoring that recognizes how each student's background and needs require different support systems to enable them to understand and realize the potential benefits of LAE in order to develop within AUC. In fact, some universities consider the process of making such choices a way of nurturing critical thinking (Nussbaum, 1997).

⁶³ The design and implementation of this program keeps changing and I stop at what I knew in 2009.

⁶⁴ IGCSE/A-level results come out in August, AUC starts in September, so their advising takes places later than other students accepted much earlier (who come with IB, American diploma, Thanaweyya Amma, etc.)

Once students join AUC, there are further inequalities adjusting to the pedagogy provided in some courses. Pedagogy is not necessarily culturally-neutral (Skelton, 2005) and should not be treated as such. Treating all AUC students equally is “implicitly favouring those who have already acquired the linguistic and social competence” and cultural capital that gives them an advantage (Bourdieu, as cited in Apple, 1990) at AUC.

Students interviewed with non-Western schooling showed that critical thinking, questioning, openness, and writing were new experiences at AUC to which they had to adjust, and more so if they had to adjust linguistically. Lash (2001, p.5) asserts that the simple act of “balancing the expectations and demands of the American liberal arts curriculum with the expectations and demands of Egyptian society” may in itself help develop critical thinking and self-reflection but de-emphasizes the struggle these students must endure while their Western-educated counterparts adjust quickly. Although it is not unnatural to delay teaching CT until high school (McPeck, 1990), proficiency in CT “requires long-term, deliberate and dedicated practice” (Davies, 2008, p. 331) and some recommend including CT at kindergarten (Facione, 1990). Moreover, Apple (1990) affirms that “ideological and social stability rests in part on the internalization, at the very bottom of our brains, of the principles and commonsense rules which govern the existing social order” (p. 43) and that this is most effective when done earlier in life – this means that early indoctrination into *non-questioning* modes of thinking internalizes them, thus making developing critical thinking later in life more difficult.

AUC students coming from Egyptian schools that emphasize memorization and shun questioning and inquisitiveness will have internalized over many years this system of thinking and behaviour, and my interviews have shown that people like Kamal and Noha have had difficulty starting to think critically at AUC – they did not even start thinking critically at high school as McPeck would have suggested. They did, however, eventually negotiate their way into the LAE. However, their counterparts who had been in an American school system previously (such as Nassim and Lina) had already internalized the values of the American system and fit into AUC well - they had the advantage of cultural capital⁶⁵.

⁶⁵ Osman and Mona are in-between cases: they had had exposure when they were young to a Western-style education, before they came to Egypt to continue the rest of their education, and later to AUC. Their interviews show reflection on

For “core” courses specifically, a partial solution has been to incorporate more critical discussion and writing in specially-designed introductory-level courses specifically focusing on improving students’ academic skills such as reading, writing and discussion. Some of these courses were designed on a Mellon grant, and later taught by full-time humanities faculty with experience developing and assessing these skills. CORE-ADMIN cited these as examples of courses designed to help students adjust to the skills needed for LAE in their first year at AUC.

The misunderstanding of liberal arts, and the struggle with Western pedagogies, results in more students continuing with their original choices of professional disciplines and focusing on them while marginalizing “core” courses. This is explained next.

6.6.2 Tension between Professional and Liberal Arts Disciplines

Learning critical thinking via liberal arts courses becomes insignificant if students are not disposed or able to use them in other educational and social situations (Apple & Jungck, 2000). Students (such as those mentioned by Lash, 2001 and many I have seen throughout my experience with AUC) often do not see the relevance of the core curriculum courses, and are uninterested in them - something Osman mentioned in case study 2.

AUC continues to struggle with the challenge of “recognizing the importance of teaching in the core program as equal to that in other disciplines.” (10 years earlier, Middle States evaluation quoted in IR, 2008, p. 111), of which the high number of part-timers teaching core courses (40-50% over past five years as reported in IR, 2008) is a symptom. Although CORE-ADMIN suggests AUC's commitment to liberal arts is clear (e.g. by continuing to hire faculty in these programs), professional programs derive their power from market-driven student demand, which forces them to prioritize requirements of the external accreditation that legitimates them.

Professional programs require students to start taking discipline-specific courses in sequence early in their studies in order to finish their degree within a reasonable timeframe, and in some cases, they must achieve a minimum grade in these courses (major GPA⁶⁶) before being allowed to

the changes in the educational systems they went through (e.g. noticing that their schools offered Egyptianized British curricula emphasizing more memorization than the more expected kind they had been taught when they were younger⁶⁵), and slightly less difficulty adjusting to AUC than their Egyptian-system colleagues.

⁶⁶ Major GPA is calculated based on grades related to the subject matter (e.g. physics and maths, for engineers) but not core courses. This means a student need not get good grades in core courses in order to declare their major

choose their preferred major. This leaves little space for taking core curriculum courses early in their university years when they could be most helpful. Students thus either delay taking these courses, thus delaying potential benefits from them (CORE-ADMIN); or they take them but marginalize them as they focus on discipline-related courses.

Moreover, students often complain that they cannot connect the relevance of core courses to their chosen discipline. In addition, being exposed to just one course from a different discipline often results in a superficial and frustrating experience (Barnett, 1997), especially that students in most professional disciplines have fewer “free electives” to use in order to explore their interest in non-major disciplines by taking a minor (see Appendix G-4 and G-5).

Focusing on professional disciplines entails prioritizing commercial/industrial values (Giroux, 2002; Apple, 2001), and exposure to just a few liberal arts courses is unlikely to change this focus. It is particularly important for those studying sciences/engineering disciplines where expert opinions are more consensual than divergent (Elder & Paul, 2001) to have exposure to liberal arts, but the structure at AUC means those studying sciences/engineering have little such exposure.

Teaching these disciplines in a more liberalizing manner, while already established as difficult, could help reduce this problem (e.g. McPeck, 1990), but there are issues with teaching quality at AUC for both core curriculum and other courses, discussed in the next section.

6.6.3 Teaching Quality

The diversity of faculty⁶⁷ and the significant percentage of overall courses taught by part-timers (29%⁶⁸) results in a variety of teaching philosophies and styles not necessarily compatible with LAE. Teaching quality issues fall within four interrelated categories: prevalence of part-time and young faculty in important courses; lack of formal professional development to enhance teaching; prioritizing research over teaching in tenure and promotion; and lack of a meaningful evaluation of teaching quality. There is also the problem of high student enrolment which can result in crowded classes (35-40 students according to IR, 2008) not conducive to LAE nor CT development.

⁶⁷ Between Egyptian, US and International faculty

⁶⁸ Calculated from AUC Factbook 2008-2009

Two of the core curriculum departments at AUC consist almost exclusively of full-timers - Rhetoric and Composition (see chapter seven) and Philosophy. Otherwise, as mentioned earlier, 40-50% of core classes are taught by part-timers (IR, 2008). Although some part-timers are successful teachers at AUC, others are considered unsuccessful according to student evaluations and other assessments (IR, 2008).

CORE-ADMIN said that full-time faculty in most departments are reluctant to teach introductory courses and prefer teaching advanced and graduate courses, similar to senior faculty in the US, partly because of the prestige and rewards of teaching advanced courses (e.g. Anderson-Mattfeld, 1974). This has resulted in some departments at AUC “relying too heavily” on part-timers as he says. Although some part-timers are good teachers and well-versed in LAE (CORE-ADMIN, IR 2008), their hiring criteria are not as stringent as full-timers, and CORE-ADMIN says the university would prefer not to rely too much on them⁶⁹.

Prevalence of part-time faculty arrangements is an injustice to both students and faculty: Students pay a constant tuition, but can get a different level of education if they have a part-time teacher who is not recruited with as much vigour as a full-timer, can be less motivated by lack of benefits, and whose presence is discontinuous (Giroux, 2002); and part-time faculty are treated unjustly by poor pay, lack of benefits and lack of job security Giroux (2002), plus lack of prestige.

Another problem with part-timers at AUC is that they are less likely to participate in discussions about course design and assessment, although at AUC, each individual instructor usually has autonomy over how to teach and assess their classes. Spending less time on campus, they are less available for students outside of class time except for limited office hours – from student interviews it was clear that some consider this out-of-class contact important in a good teacher, and Pascarella et al., (2005) consider this an important liberal arts experience. Some part-timers’ English language is not very good and they will use Arabic in class and will definitely not be prepared to give writing-intensive assignments or exams. Having said this, some part-timers are

⁶⁹ This is not a unique criticism of AUC. I taught ESL part-time at Rice University and the recruitment process was very simple – just looking at my resume and a reference from an ex-colleague were all it took; I had little experience teaching ESL and no one followed up or observed me to make sure I was doing it well. I also taught Professional Ethics part-time at another university in Egypt and that recruitment was easy as well.

acculturated to AUC, especially those who have been involved with AUC for a long time either as students, as ex-full-timers⁷⁰ or as long-time part-timers⁷¹.

According to CORE-ADMIN, even in departments that have no graduate programs and where the full-time faculty can all commit to teaching core curriculum courses regularly, such as the philosophy department, classes are still crowded at 30-40 students per class. This makes student participation in discussions difficult and grading of written assignments more cumbersome, while promoting student competition for the scarce resource of teacher attention (Burbules, 1986). Despite this, students in my sample still felt the philosophic and scientific thinking courses helped develop their critical thinking, and they specifically mentioned in-class and online discussions in both these over-crowded courses.

It is a sign of AUC's commitment to liberal arts that it continues to hire full-time faculty in departments with low student (major) enrolment. However, to counteract the reluctance of senior faculty to teach introductory courses, post-doctoral fellows were hired specifically for teaching such courses. However, these fellows are American and hired for only three years - very little time for an inexperienced teacher to adjust to the AUC culture.

In trying to balance liberal arts with professional disciplines with limited resources, the quantity and quality of faculty hired in both is compromised. With no mandatory professional development to address this, and more importantly, no suitable measure of teaching effectiveness, AUC cannot ensure quality teaching.

AUC's Center for Learning and Teaching (CLT) regularly offers optional teaching enhancement workshops and newsletter topics relevant to CT and LAE. From my experience facilitating such workshops I know that some new and veteran full-time faculty are not prepared to teach this way, let alone those who never attend professional-development workshops. It is more of an issue for part-timers who are not immersed in the AUC culture and who may be teaching at other universities where there is little or no emphasis on critical thinking and writing. Some departments/courses also offer professional development workshops for their faculty (e.g.

⁷⁰ (who did not get tenured so had to continue part-time)

⁷¹ For example, two of the Arab Society professors students mentioned in interviews were long-time part-timers who regularly attend professional-development activities. These instructors have a more holistic view of the placement of their courses within the larger liberal arts curriculum at AUC.

Rhetoric and Composition, English Language Institute, and the Scientific Thinking instructors). CLT can also help faculty improve their teaching by getting student feedback via written or oral mid-semester evaluations.

In a survey conducted in 2009, 61% of AUC faculty said they had “participated in a teaching enhancement workshop at AUC” over the past year, and 38% had participated in such a workshop outside of AUC (IR, 2009, p. 25), although it would be important to know the degree of overlap between those seeking internal and external professional development, and to distinguish quality and frequency of these experiences. Science/Engineering faculty participation in such workshops at AUC (46%) and externally (28.6%) was much lower than the overall. Moreover, only 12-18% of faculty across schools had opted to use CLT’s mid-semester evaluations of their teaching (IR, 2009, p. 23). All of these statistics pertain to full-time faculty, whereas part-time faculty are likely to have less exposure to teaching support because they often have fewer hours to spend on campus, meaning fewer hours to attend events and lower awareness of facilities available.

Faculty also feel AUC “needs to do a better job at mentoring junior faculty” (IR, 2009, p. 3), something which is not done in any organized way at the moment, although one young part-time faculty member told me in an email about a positive experience:

I agree that assessing teaching skill is often not at the core of hiring new faculty. When I was 'hired', I was asked at the time to sit in with [another professor] as an auditor for a whole semester. This was a very effective way to introduce the course as well as showcase an example of good teaching. This is not applied in all situations and I know that the 2 post-docs we had ... were lost when they arrived.

Another point to mention as a part-timer is that I received no orientation, invitations to meet other faculty, or other information when I started teaching. I was lucky enough to have an excellent mentor but this is not the case for everyone and maybe for only a select few who seek it out or are just lucky.

One young faculty member recalls how he felt before getting CLT support (CLT DVD, 2009):

This is the first teaching job I've had ... since I got my PhD, and I came into AUC not exactly familiar with what it means to be a teacher, trying out some things, and feeling like I was failing all the time. And those conversations through a lot of people at CLT turned into conversations not so much about failing but into opportunities about experimenting... instead [I] started to be excited about what things I could try. (Ryan Derby-Talbot, Inquiry-Based Learning video)

When I interviewed faculty on what has helped them become better teachers, some talked about being influenced by previous good teachers they had had (e.g. MENG, CSCI, COMPREL), others talked about mandatory teaching-enhancement workshops they had attended while doing their PhD in the West (CSCI, MENG, CENG) or optional ones at AUC (e.g. MENG), although POLS feels there is not enough time to attend CLT's workshops despite their usefulness when he does attend them, and CSCI feels AUC faculty need more basic topics to be tackled in the workshops, which is why he stopped attending them. Some have cited various challenging teaching experiences (MENG, POLS) as helping them become better teachers, and exposure to various teaching/learning environments (CENG, POLS). CSCI, who was himself an AUCian talked about how there is one course he tries to teach in an engaging manner because he himself was never taught that course in an engaging way, and MKTG (himself an engineering graduate of AUC) talked about how his first undergraduate marketing course emphasized memorization which he later discovered is unsuited to the discipline. He now teaches marketing differently based on his industry experience and passion for the discipline.

In sum, there is no organized effort to ensure all teachers get some form of pedagogical preparation for university teaching, let alone teaching critical thinking specifically. Facione (1990) suggests that there needs to be a move away from simply training instructors and towards educating them more comprehensively to prepare them to teach critical thinking. This is more of an issue for AUC part-time faculty, many of whom have graduated from Egyptian universities and have not necessarily had much opportunity for teaching enhancement, exposure to teaching in a liberal arts environment, or knowledge of diverse learning environments. But AUC is forced to maintain a higher number of part-timers than it would like.

Finally, AUC continues to struggle with finding appropriate measures for evaluating quality of teaching, as well as tenure/promotion criteria. In hiring and advancement, faculty feel teaching quality is "not given as much weight as research" and that "teaching and service should be valued equally with research" (IR, 2009, p. 3). Faculty have requested "a better mechanism for evaluating teaching" be adopted (Institutional Research 2009, p. 38) instead of the current student evaluations.

Faculty sometimes ask CLT staff to observe their classes and/or get feedback from their students because someone from CLT staff is “a neutral person, a person with no vested interest” (Mark Mikhail in *Instructional Consultations Video*, CLT DVD 2009), not a formal evaluator. The results of these assessments are confidential between the CLT and the instructor, and participation is completely voluntary. Students often ask CLT to conduct evaluations of classes where they have problems with the teacher, but CLT cannot do so without the instructor requesting it. CLT has also helped evaluate programs such as the English Language Institute and the recently re-designed Scientific Thinking course, but again, this is only done if the department requests it, and CLT has no authority over whether recommendations are incorporated into future courses.

Enhancing teaching quality entails elevating its status by increasing its weight in tenure and promotion, using more holistic measures than student evaluation of courses, and supporting professional development with teacher education rather than ad-hoc training, as Facione (1990) suggests. This is especially important for young and part-time faculty (prevalent in core courses), as well as those teaching professional disciplines that do not lend themselves to liberal learning⁷². Resource-intensive as this may be, it is essential for a teaching university such as AUC to prioritize teaching quality. The Scientific Thinking course is doing some of this (see case study).

6.6.4 Whose Knowledge Is It?

Rather than simply asking technical questions of what is stopping AUC from meeting its promise, I suggest that all of the issues mentioned above stem from an insufficiently critical approach to designing AUC’s core curriculum. First, there is a focus on particular courses, as if that content is inherently liberalizing without possibly being colonizing as it privileges Western culture. Second, there is insufficient consideration for students’ own interests and how their diverse backgrounds disadvantages some in both capacity to make informed choices, and ability to adjust to, then benefit from, LAE. Third, insufficient focus on developing liberalizing teaching methods means that some students may receive an education that is not very different from Egyptian universities – this may result in fewer adjustment issues, but not meet the liberalizing goals of LAE. Finally, the tension between professional and liberal education is recognized but its impact on diluting the LAE students receive is not addressed.

⁷² One model is Bentley college’s extended workshop to faculty from business to work with those in liberal arts disciplines to develop interdisciplinary liberal arts courses (Arenella et al., 2009).

AUC displays several signs of neoliberalism (as listed by Harris, 2005) such as emphasizing useful knowledge (professional disciplines) rather than knowledge for its own value. Although “core” courses are meant to overcome this, liberal arts is often “marketed” as a way to improve prospects of students in the job market, more than any intrinsic value to the person or society. Reliance on external regulation is clear in the accreditation of professional disciplines. This envisions “students as human capital” who “must be given the requisite skills and dispositions to compete efficiently and effectively” (Apple, 2005, p. 273). Such a neoliberal orientation utilizes market-driven discourse, rendering the university accountable to a corporate world and less focused on social justice and social change (Giroux, 2002). Promoting technical education for elites helps protect the interests of global capitalism benefiting neocolonial America (e.g. Carnoy, 1947; Lash, 2001; Giroux, 2002) and developing individual versus collective social mobility (Fanon cited in Carnoy, 1947) as Western-educated students become the best-paid professionals in the country (Cook, 2000). It is important to look at education as a political process, with “subtle connections” with “latent social and economic outcomes of the institution” (Apple, 1990, p. 34).

So while the prominence of professional education discourages questioning of the status quo of the dominance of the US world system (my case studies indicated students are less prone to questioning in professional disciplines, whether because of the teaching or the epistemology of the discipline) it is possible that in developing the critical thinking and creative skills needed for the marketplace, some AUC students (“the colonized”) will inadvertently develop a consciousness that may make them want to “break the dependent situation” of the colonizer (Carnoy, 1947, p. 57) – whether that colonizer be the hegemony of US-based globalization, or the oppression of the Egyptian state.

While liberal arts bring students closer to developing this consciousness by promoting questioning of authority (as seen from case studies) and including “citizenship” as an outcome, the core curriculum itself is not value-neutral, and imposing it upon students wanting to become professionals for economic prosperity is patronizing:

Certainly a major rationale for assuming power over others, or justifying it to them, is the presumption that one knows better and can best serve their interests. (Burbules, 1986, p. 99)

By virtue of being imposed and unconnected to students' chosen disciplines, the "core" reduces its own legitimacy and instrumental value. But how can AUC survive financially without meeting the labour market needs in the face of competition by other private universities in the region, given their lack of understanding of LAE? How can students survive economically without learning skills and knowledge useful in the labour market? Neither AUC, nor its students, are structurally or economically free to make these decisions.

In liberal arts courses, when students ask "why am I studying this?" is it taken as rebellion rather than legitimate resistance? The previous core administrator asked students "not to surrender to such cynicism" (quoted in Lash, 2001, p. 94) thus removing all legitimacy behind that question. No one discusses with students the values behind, say, studying Arab sociology at an American university, or the values in teaching scientific thinking in the way it has been taught, or why certain topics have been prioritized over others. Or why they are "forced" to study all of this. Who has "the power to define both what important skills are and who has the right to label them as such" (Apple & Jungck, 2000, p. 115)?

CORE-ADMIN told me how the previous versions of the core curriculum were historically-based and how the president asked for the core to be "reformed". This is a top-down approach, despite involving faculty in discussions about the details later; there was no mention of taking feedback from students or involving instructors in curriculum decisions. CORE-ADMIN said there were no resources (people) to evaluate the impact of the redesigned core curriculum on students.

AUC claims it is "essential to foster students' appreciation of their own culture and heritage and their responsibilities to society" (IR, 2008), but has recently reduced the core curriculum's Arab World studies requirements from three to two courses. Faculty in general did not consider developing students' Arabic language skills an important learning outcome in regular courses (IR, 2009). In a curriculum taught entirely in English, using Western ideology, who had the right to decide that reducing the number of Arab World studies was a legitimate logistical not ideological decision? Taking two courses in Arab world studies that were taught previously, who decided that it was enough to study a "survey of Arab history" that ends before the 20th century, and not modern Arab history or Egyptian history starting with the pharaohs? CORE-ADMIN asks this question and uses it as justification for widening the choices in the reduced requirements. But

also: Was this particular time-frame agreed upon to attract international students? What are the benefits of this to Egyptian students? Whose version of history is being taught at an American University in Egypt? Being a “survey” course, I remember just sweeping over large periods of time in a superficial way without stopping to reflect or analyze. Who decided to study “Arab Society” and not “Egyptian Society”, and who decided sociology was more relevant than studying Egyptian politics or media for example? Who decided to study “Arabic Literature” and not “Islamic Art” or “Egyptian Film”?

Knowledge choice exercises power in two different but related ways. First, it builds in students the belief that only the “included” knowledge is educationally worthy, thus further degrading the excluded knowledge of the marginalized (e.g. working class students, women). Second, students who come into university prepared with the kind of knowledge, skills and attitudes valued in academia (because of cultural capital accumulated since childhood) gain an advantage over others who lack it, and are more likely to succeed in the university whose requirements/culture are familiar.

Questioning content choices in AUC’s context has additional dimensions of complexity because it is a Western institution teaching primarily non-Western students in a majority Muslim postcolonial country⁷³. Is the knowledge chosen potentially colonizing and can it alienate students or further reproduce inequalities among incoming students? First, is Western knowledge valued above local knowledge? This is not just in teaching philosophy of the ancient Greeks versus Islamic philosophers, but also for example Western ways of doing business or engineering, possibly taught by Western teachers who are unaware of local context. Not only should we question whether it is potentially colonizing (by perpetuating Western thought and practice as superior if not “the only way”), but also because it may not even be instrumentally relevant to what students face in their daily lives, and later in their workplaces.

A second layer of complexity lies when one tries to incorporate local knowledge - one must then question whether it is the knowledge of the dominant class in Egypt. For example, Muslims are the dominant majority in Egypt, but arguably a marginalized minority globally and in the West, so

⁷³ Similar issues occur when international students attend a Western university, although addressing “local” concerns then becomes even more complex and more difficult to anticipate with the diversity of incoming students

when teaching Arab history at AUC, after asking if courses are taught from a Western/Orientalist or Arab perspective, one needs to then question whether they are taught from a dominant Islamic, patriarchal, nationalist perspective, or whether it is a more postcolonial, self-reflexive approach (Nayar 2010), and whether for example minority religious groups and women have a voice (also assuming that, like Black feminists, Egyptian and Muslim feminists may have different views from White feminists – for example, aside from political issues, Egyptian feminists have fought for specific women’s rights issues in Egyptian marriage/divorce laws that draw upon religious texts to legitimate them).

A third issue is related to “cultural capital”, the socially valued knowledge, discourse and culture perpetuated by educational institutions (Esposito, 2009). For example, students who had previously studied the Egyptian curriculum were taught a particular history in a particular way, whereas students taught a Western curriculum previously are more likely to find AUC's teaching familiar, thus improving their chances at succeeding, or at least reducing the amount of acculturation required of them in such courses.

Aside from the Arab World component, it is important to question the extent to which faculty are involved in course design. How are Egyptian (especially part-time) faculty introduced to teaching them in a liberalizing manner? How are American faculty introduced to the challenges of teaching critical thinking to a mixture of Egyptians with varying exposure to Western education? Not much occurs in this area.

Resource allocations are also an indication of the university’s priorities. Why is there no mechanism in place to evaluate the efficacy of these courses and their impact on students? CORE-ADMIN recognizes the need for this but no resources are assigned for it; on the other hand, when a professional program needs accreditation, everyone in that department frees some time to participate in the process, students and alumni included.

What attempts are made to bridge the cultural capital gap between incoming students? Does the content (not just methodology) of some courses favour certain students over others (e.g. those who studied Shakespeare or Huxley in school, seeing them again in courses?) What attempts are made to help faculty coming from abroad understand Egyptian students, and what attempts are made to help new Egyptian faculty understand LAE?

These questions require further research and reflective self-critical study within AUC, and I will return to them in the concluding chapters. The final sub-section in this discussion was written after the 2011 uprisings in Egypt, to reflect on AUC's contribution to the uprisings.

6.6.5 AUC Meeting its Goals: Where's the Action?

Though curriculum implementation often diverges greatly from curriculum design, an institution that states its goals should have a structure in place towards achieving those goals. If we question how AUC's curriculum is *designed* to meet AUC's stated goals, we will find that all have clear course requirements to develop them, except the "effective citizenship" goal (see table 6.4).

CT is relevant to, and to an extent intersects with the goals of cultural competence and effective citizenship, and even advanced communication skills. The chapters in part III explore how CT is developed in practice as AUC goals are addressed via academic and extracurricular experiences. The learning experiences covered in this thesis are not comprehensive, they are themes that emerged from student interviews, and which I have explored in more detail beyond those particular students' learning experiences.

However, one important aspect that was not mentioned in student interviews, but which requires special mention *in the context of Egypt's current social and political upheaval*, is "critical action" as an element of "effective citizenship". Fahmy (2013) suggests that "liberal education entails, indeed necessitates, training students to be civically engaged and politically aware", and is sorely needed in the Arab world.

Table 6.4: AUC's Learning Outcomes

Key AUC Learning Outcome (AUC Mission and Learning Outcomes undated)	How articulated in core curriculum design
Professional skills	Assumed in each discipline
Advanced communication skills	<i>Rhetoric and Composition courses</i> (See chapter seven) some first-year humanities/social science courses especially designed for this; I do not count the language courses in Arabic and English, as they are more concerned with "basic" than "advanced" communication skills

Critical Thinking	Scientific and philosophical thinking. Also a component of Rhetoric and Composition (see that chapter). Assumed also to be included to some extent in all courses as part of liberal arts (see chapter six).
Cultural Competence	Capstone option International Perspective; also a required course in International World Studies. (see chapter nine)
Effective Citizenship	Not clear. There are Community Engagement and Practical Experience capstone options which may work towards this (see chapter eight)

It is not entirely clear how AUC's core curriculum promotes effective citizenship. There are of course some courses that promote critical awareness – for example, one activist refers to a “political science seminar about social mobilization under authoritarian regimes” (Welsh 2011), but such experiences are not accessible to all students, and focus on political awareness but not necessarily action.

The next section gives a historical overview of some incidences of “critical action” at AUC, and my reasoning for why it was absent from my student interviews. I return to this topic in more detail when discussing authentic learning (chapter eight).

6.6.5.1 Where is the Action?

If critical action involves a spectrum from volunteerism, to influencing one’s immediate social circle to community service to more political actions such as voting, advocacy and demonstrating (Underwood & Jabre, 2010; Mercy Corps, 2012), none of the students I interviewed mentioned reaching the level of action in the political sphere (though there was some on the social sphere). However, this is not for lack of such action at AUC. Historically (Lash, 2001; Abaza, 2011; Badawi, 2011; Soliman & Abu Hussein, 2011)⁷⁴, there have been two kinds of student activism, internal and external activism. Internal activism, such as student protests against administrative decisions regarding e.g. tuition fee increases, and university community-wide demonstrations such as staff/faculty/students supporting blue-collar workers on a strike to demand the administration improve their benefits. External activism started early in AUC’s history, spanning protests against British rule, to peak activism in the 1970s, and covering demonstrations in solidarity with the Palestinian cause, especially at the beginning of the millennium, and protests against the US

⁷⁴ These three references used throughout this paragraph

invasion of Iraq in 2003. Demonstrations included sit-ins, use of handouts, posters and signs (some included in Lash, 2000), and sometimes ended in marches towards the US embassy, or students taking down the US flag on campus. In some cases where students took demonstrations outside the university's gates, students clashed with Egyptian police⁷⁵. There are also some on-campus demonstrations that have an internal/external focus, such as demonstrations demanding the administration support political prisoners who are AUC students/graduates. I have observed classes during times of such campus activism, and have seen how some teachers in various disciplines incorporate these themes into class discussions and even assignments. Some academic activism occurs in the form of conferences, such as the "AUC Beyond Community" conference which critiques many of AUC's practices after it moved to its new campus in 2008.

These are all examples of activism, though I have not investigated them all deeply enough to understand how much of it was really "critical" and "reflective" enough, rather than mere activism. As an insider to AUC, I know many people who participated in these activities without being deeply engaged with the causes. One student says some of his colleagues participate in demonstrations "for popularity reasons" (Abaza, 2011).

It is likely that students I interviewed did not mention any such activism because the 2-3 years these particular students had been at AUC (2005-2007 roughly) there was coincidentally little political upheaval and hence little motivation for activism⁷⁶, as opposed to recent peak years of activism in 2000-2003 (Soliman & Abu Hussein, 2011). I have not followed the same students interviewed to find out the extent of their participation in the January 25 revolution⁷⁷, or even the 2008 April 6th movement. However, I will show in the authentic learning chapter (eight) how certain AUC learning experiences may have contributed to the large number of AUCians⁷⁸ who participated in the revolution, as well as its precursors of less political civic engagement (drawing upon evidence by El-Taraboulsi, 2011).

⁷⁵ (although this is nothing compared to what has happened during and is continuing since the January 25 revolution, but now that AUC's campus has moved far away from Tahrir square just before the revolution, any such violence does not target AUC students specifically)

⁷⁶ The major incidence that triggered protests during that period were the "Danish Cartoons" (not really a unifying political issue of the magnitude of Palestine, Iraq and domestic corruption issues)

⁷⁷ I considered this, but feel that doing so would be akin to questioning patriotism, something which has been happening a lot in Egypt as people have become more vocal about their political views and activism, and discourse has become exclusionary to a great extent. I did not want to put these students on the spot in case they were *not* participants in the revolution.

⁷⁸ The term "AUCians" usually refers to AUC students and alumni, but also includes faculty and staff.

6.6.5.2 AUC's Response to January 25 2011

Since the January 25 revolution, AUC as an institution has responded to incorporate sociopolitical themes across the curriculum. For example, individual faculty in various disciplines found ways to insert revolution topics/themes into their classes in the semester that started immediately after Mubarak was ousted (Bali, 2011) and this was supported by the Provost to the extent that entirely new courses were created and approved quickly enough for students to register for them that semester. AUC also had an academic conference entitled “From Tahrir: Revolution or Democratic Transition” (AUC Today, 2011). Moreover, AUC modified its “freedom of expression” policy such that students no longer require administrative approval before demonstrating, nor do they require approval over printed material they plan to distribute – as long as they do not impinge on the rights of others (Abaza, 2011).

This contrasts with the policy mentioned in AUC's 2000 Student Handbook (Cited in Lash, 2001), which specifies that student are not allowed to “engage in non-academic religious and political activities within the university, nor should university facilities be used for those purposes”; that despite encouraging intellectual questioning and autonomy “as a matter of policy, AUC carefully refrains from involving itself in political or religious issues and it does not permit its campus or facilities to be used by AUC personnel or students for such involvement.” Students who demonstrated faced penalties by AUC and suspected they might be reported to state security (Lash, 2001). Two political science faculty interviewed by Lash (2001) sound slightly cynical about AUCians' activism at the time – saying it was the way Westernized elites tried to engage with the communities of lower social status. One professor even critiqued them as “elite[s] seeking validation” who later went on to work for the IMF and a life of luxury after spending their undergraduate years protesting (Lash, 2001, p. 173). In contrast, after January 25, professors were generally encouraging and supportive of student activism (Bali, 2011). For example, one professor says “I believe that students have to start being involved in political activism early on because this is how they develop their personalities; this is how they develop their engagement with public issues. ... [Students] need to change things within their campuses for the larger change of this nation.” (quoted in Abaza, 2011). AUC's President recognizes the risks of doing so, but emphasizes the importance of taking those risks in order to maximize students' growth as “genuinely well-

educated and well-prepared citizens” (Abaza, 2011). I return to this topic in more detail in the authentic learning chapter.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has explored different understandings of LAE in the US literature, and has shown how AUC attempts to implement LAE in the Egyptian context. I have shown that although AUC claims to offer a LAE, and students are getting some benefit from it, the implementation faces several limitations. LAE is generally not understood, which leads to most students choosing professional disciplines and the AUC curriculum structure results in marginalizing the LAE aspects of the curriculum; students without the cultural capital of having studied at a Western institution previously are disadvantaged when liberalizing teaching (especially discussion) is used; the large number of part-timers and young foreign faculty teaching core curriculum courses suggest some students may not be getting the full benefit of a liberalizing learning experience. There are also global questions of whose knowledge is given privilege in AUC’s LAE, and whether this truly serves to promote the interests of Egyptians. Finally, I start discussing AUC's role in promoting critical citizenship, a subject to which I will return in the authentic learning and concluding chapters.

The coming chapters investigate how CT is developed via writing in AUC’s Rhetoric and Composition courses; learning experiences situated in authentic contexts (through courses or extracurricular activities) and intercultural learning (through courses and beyond). Whereas the first is a clear core curriculum requirement, the latter two learning experiences can be found in AUC’s core curriculum, but not as outright requirements.

7 Developing CT through Writing

7.1 Chapter Overview

Teaching thinking, especially CT, through writing is quite common in American universities (e.g. Elbow, 1994; Ennis, 1989; Paul, 1990) and there is evidence of its effectiveness (Tsui, 2002; Pascarella et al., 2005), although others believe that CT should be taught by immersion within the disciplines (McPeck, 1990) or by cognitive apprenticeship (Atkinson, 1998). After analyzing how AUC's RHET program is designed to develop CT, I explore how the courses help develop particular aspects of CT in practice, from the points of view of students, an administrator and an instructor.

I then discuss limitations of the program in achieving its potential. I discuss the various processes of teaching RHET at AUC, and the kind of CT they encourage. I then address the issue of transfer of learning in RHET to the disciplines, an issue that emerged from student interviews and other research with AUC instructors in the disciplines (Bali & Carpenter, 2009). Finally, I discuss some of the cultural issues of teaching thinking through writing to non-native speakers of English (e.g. Kaplan, 1966; Fox, 1994).

I conclude that there may be room for improvement within RHET, despite evidence that RHET is helping develop CT for students, and that the department's instructors are continually reflecting on improving their practices. But what exactly needs to be improved, and how, needs further exploration by RHET instructors within their own unique classroom contexts.

7.2 Teaching CT through Academic Writing

Writing or Rhetoric/Composition courses are essential in a liberal arts institution (Tsui, 2002; Pascarella et al., 2005; Hall, 2011), and Tsui's (2002) multi-institutional study found that students attending universities with a "strong writing orientation" developed CT better, which implies emphasis on writing throughout the curriculum beyond introductory writing courses.

Academic writing involves a process of creative thinking to generate divergent ideas, interlaced with CT to analyze, filter and converge the ideas to be used (Elbow, 1994; Paul, 1990). Infusing the explicit teaching of CT in writing courses (e.g. Ennis, 1989) is a complex process that can

involve synthesizing research, critical reading, improving audience awareness via the development of persuasive arguments, and using metacognition in the revision of drafts (Moon, 2005). Putting one's thoughts to paper is a way of making one's thinking visible, so that one can step back from it and return to it with a fresh eye (Moon, 2005). It is possible that the processes of peer review, and self-assessment inherent in re-writing one's work are conducive to CT, especially when coursework emphasizes the use of synthesis and analysis as expressed in writing (Tsui, 2002). Teaching CT this way is more contextual than would be done in informal logic courses, which would teach skills and fallacies in an instrumental de-contextualized manner; however, teaching CT in generic writing courses still de-contextualizes it from any particular academic discipline, and the diversity in writing styles between engineering and economics and history are not trivial. By teaching writing and CT in this de-contextualized manner, students may gain skills but not directly transfer them beyond writing courses (McPeck, 1990). There are, however, other models that support students' writing in disciplinary courses by linking a discipline-specific course to a supporting writing module (e.g. Benesch, 2001). Teaching CT via writing has the potential to enhance social awareness and encourage dissent (what Gieve, 1998 calls dialogical CT) but may be limited to informal logic skills and develop instrumental CT (what Gieve, 1998 calls monological CT), depending upon the way it is taught and the intentionality of the instructor.

Since writing is an expression of thought, teaching writing to non-native speakers (such as AUC students) is more complex because of the influences of native culture and language on thought processes (Kaplan, 1966; Fox, 1994; Chandler, 1995). Research found that Western or American-educated individuals have closer writing styles to native Westerners/English-speakers (Nelson, 2009 and Fox, 1994 respectively) than those less exposed to Western/American education or home environments. This suggests that Western-educated AUC students may be better prepared for American academic writing than their non-Western-educated counterparts for linguistic and cultural reasons. Research in other Arab countries suggests that lack of critical analysis in school education in other Arab countries, and the general lack of reading/writing proficiency of Arabic-speaking students in their native language⁷⁹ contributes to struggles with writing in a second language (Hall, 2011). This weakness may be specifically due to the fact that, unlike English, formal written Arabic is

⁷⁹ This is true for government schools in Egypt, but even more so for students who study in private schools, because Arabic language/literature teaching follows the same curriculum as government schools, but is marginalized even more - as the English-language subjects are the priority.

completely different from the colloquial form spoken every day (Hall, 2011). It may also be related to how cold and overly logical and linear English rhetoric is, compared to Arabic rhetoric (Yorkey, 1974 cited in Hall, 2011), which is more "embellished" (Santos & Suleiman, 1990, p. 5, quoted in Hall, 2011, p. 425). Later in this chapter, I will return to a discussion of how AUC students' language and culture affect their readiness to learn and apply CT in their writing.

7.3 Writing at AUC

The RHET program consists of a group of courses that aim to develop CT through academic writing, including a group of introductory courses designed for students' first 1-2 years at AUC. I have used RHET's website (June 2009), interviews with an administrator and instructor in the program (in 2007), and the department's Self-Study Report (Elshimi, 2007) to gain insight into how this is done in practice. I also include Bali and Carpenter's (2009) survey of 36 AUC faculty on persistent linguistic issues they face with students in various disciplines. All the students I interviewed who took RHET courses (12) reported their positive impact on various aspects of their CT, from questioning authority to metacognitive skills. Transfer of this learning beyond the RHET courses, however, was uneven among students. The next section explores the RHET department's descriptions of how its introductory courses develop CT, before delving into interview data.

7.3.1 Rhetoric and Composition: Curriculum and Pedagogy

According to their website (RHET, 2009a), RHET:

Provides a solid foundation for critical thinking reading and writing, promoting excellence in research and rhetoric in a variety of multi-modal, discipline-specific and inter-disciplinary genres.

This chapter focuses on the three introductory RHET courses offered, because these were the ones most widely-taken at AUC, and mentioned in my interviews⁸⁰. Often misnamed "English" courses by students, they are: RHET 101, 102 and 201⁸¹. All undergraduates are required to take 1-3 RHET courses⁸² depending upon their writing proficiency level. RHET instructors are adamant that their courses teach more than language, and their website emphasizes that they

⁸⁰ However, there are now also several advanced discipline-specific and interdisciplinary RHET courses (RHET 2009a).

⁸¹ (the latter was RHET 103 until recently)

⁸² More proficient students may be exempt from some of the introductory courses and required to take an advanced course.

“open our students’ minds to the principles of a liberal education” and that they “develop and reinforce the fundamentals of academic writing, critical analysis and independent thinking” similar to RHET taught in other US universities (RHET 2009a). Two advantages RHET has over other liberal arts courses at AUC are: 1. Mostly full-time faculty (Western and Arab⁸³ - 36/38 according to Elshimi 2007), and 2. An enforced maximum of 15 students per class (Elshimi 2007) - both of which are conducive to quality teaching of CT. Unlike other AUC departments, however, most faculty do not hold PhDs, and are instructor-level⁸⁴ (i.e. not tenure-track).

Table 7.1 aligns RHET course descriptions and course objectives from AUC Catalog (2009) with parts of CT in my definition throughout this study. There is some evidence of an interest in developing instrumental CT with the repeated use of the words “skill”, “training”, but the repeated use of the words “process” and “critical analysis” implies more emphasis on the writing process. Also, the mention of “student voice” implies some interest in empowering students. The courses teach general, non-discipline-specific writing.

If curriculum is what actually does occur in classrooms, rather than what is written or planned (Cornbleth, 1988; Barnett & Coate, 2005), then actual processes of RHET classes should be included in our understanding of RHET at AUC. Table 7.2 looks at some of these processes that I know occur in RHET classes, which I have learned from my work as a CLT staff member, through observations, confidential in-class assessments with students, and numerous formal consultations and informal discussions with instructors. These processes include the re-writing of drafts, peer review or group critique, one-on-one conferences with instructors, and the use of in-class discussion on controversial topics. The table shows how each of these processes can be expected to develop CT, and which dimension of CT (e.g. meta-cognition) it promotes.

⁸³ About 1/3 Arab when I revised the names in RHET 2007 - however, I know some of the Arab names are Egyptians with a Western parent or upbringing, and some of the American names are Americans married to Egyptians - so the Arab/Western division is not absolute. That is why I did not provide numbers of how many are Arab and how many Western.

⁸⁴ The significance of this will become clear in the discussion on the marginalization of RHET courses; however, it is worth noting that in the US most RHET departments depend on part-time faculty, so AUC is slightly better in this regard (Elshimi 2007)

Table 7.1: CT Skills Expected from RHET Course Descriptions

<i>Course Description</i>	<i>Expected to Develop</i>
<p>RHET 101 - Approaches to Critical Writing (RHET 2009b) Develops proficiency in critical expository writing, critical reading and greater fluency in expression. Focuses on the writing process with an emphasis on developing the student’s voice, organizing and developing ideas independently within the context of academic writing. Introduces library research and use of sources.</p>	<p>Questioning (“critical reading” implies this) Recognizing alternative viewpoints (“critical reading” implies this) Evaluating information sources (“introducing library research and use of sources” implies this) Some preliminary level of “making one’s own argument” (all references to writing and student voice imply this)</p>
<p>RHET 102 - Effective Argument (RHET 2009c) Develops the skills to produce effective argument with a focus on organization, content, analysis of readings, critical thinking. Provides training in the use and integration of sources, library and online research.</p>	<p>Evaluating information sources (“use and integration of sources, library and online research”) Making one’s own argument, including synthesis (“produce effective argument” and “integration of sources”) Disposition of analysis (“content analysis”, persistence in following through with own argument (“produce effective argument”)</p>
<p>RHET 201 - Research Writing (RHET 2009d) Develops the skills to produce extended forms of academic essays and research papers with a focus on the methods of research, process of research paper writing, integration and evaluation of sources and critical analysis.</p>	<p>Same as above, only “extended forms” + "critical analysis"</p>

Table 7.2: CT Development Expected from RHET Pedagogies

<i>Pedagogies Applied in Courses</i>	<i>Expected to Develop CT</i>
The process of re-writing drafts after instructor (and sometimes peer) feedback.	Meta-cognition, including self-correction and self-evaluation. CT can be developed by re-writing drafts (e.g. Tsui, 2002; Lambert, 1999 cited in Hall, 2011) and peer assessment (e.g. Browne & Freeman, 2000; Lambert, 1999 cited in Hall, 2011)
One-on-one conferences to discuss drafts with instructor	Meta-cognition, including self-correction and self-evaluation, as well as developing other writing/argument skills if the instructor models how to do so (Lambert, 1999 cited in Hall, 2011)
In-class discussion as a first step to exploring alternative viewpoints before writing	Questioning, understanding different worldviews, skill at improving one's argument Discussion/dialogue is commonly used to develop CT (e.g. McPeck, 1990; Tsui, 2002; Freire, 1970; Barnett, 1997) and helps Arab students who come from a traditionally oral culture (Hall, 2011) to start the CT process
Instructors choosing controversial topics to motivate students' writing and discussion	Disposition of inquisitiveness/curiosity, understanding different worldviews (Benesch, 2001)
Low-stakes writing assignments	Allows students to practice in a relatively safe environment -and practice helps them improve (Hall, 2011). Some instructors did this by encouraging students to use blogs, wikis and facebook (Mikhael, Maklad, Wali & Bali, 2009)
Group critique in class	Some AUC instructors use students' own work for group critique/discussion. Hall (2011) found this technique helpful in her class
Community-based learning (also sometimes called service learning) where instructors involve students in improving the condition of surrounding or internet communities while working on their research and writing	Understanding of different worldviews, and has the potential of promoting critical awareness, as well as critical action [only a small number of RHET instructors do this]

The next section explores students' perceptions of how RHET has influenced their CT, supplemented by views of the administrator and instructor I interviewed.

7.3.2 Student, Faculty and Administrator views on CT Development in RHET

RHET is the only set of required courses at AUC dedicated to explicitly developing CT. This section looks at how various aspects of CT are successfully developed in RHET from the points of view of students, RHET administrator (RHET-admin) and a RHET instructor (RHET-instructor).

7.3.2.1 Questioning

Only four students said the RHET courses helped improve their ability to question, and it was with reference to questioning credibility of media. For example, Mona mentions the critical analysis of media articles done in RHET 102, her first introduction to CT. For her it

was initially introduced to us as a set of steps; for example they gave us a list of logical fallacies that we could look for in articles etc., but I think the long-term aim of it was to gradually change our way of thinking... with me, it became a habit in other courses I guess, or became to be the "right" thing to do

Even though the mention of a "list of logical fallacies" implies CT may have been taught as informal logic, it seems Mona saw this as a step towards the "big picture" of CT that changed her way of thinking and she was able to transfer the learning to other contexts.

Osman says the RHET courses taught him "that every source is biased... inclined towards a certain opinion no matter how unbiased they want to appear" and this learning stayed with him beyond the course.

RHET-administrator said that reading assignments within RHET courses are often "geared to force [students] to question" and that instructors chose topics according to their comfort levels. A general guideline given to instructors is to pick a topic that does not "run the risk of feeding into [students'] pre-conceived ideas and [end up] not provoking them sufficiently", and so topics unfamiliar to students are often chosen, unless the instructor can present them in such a way that can provoke students to make their "biases appear". This orientation seems to help provide a good learning environment for students, since content is chosen not for any intrinsic value it has, but for how well each individual instructor feels they can use it to enhance the process of CT. However, using topics that are distant from students' lives risks limiting the depth of their CT (Paul, 1994), as I will show in the discussion section.

RHET-instructor agrees that encouraging questioning is part of the design of RHET courses. She promotes this by not lecturing in her courses but instead dedicating time and resources to helping students “question each other, me [the instructor], the text”.

7.3.2.2 Evaluating Sources of Information

All students included RHET among the influences on their ability to evaluate information sources critically. Mona calls RHET 102 a "life changing class! Before that, the idea of hidden assumptions didn't really exist [for] me" Other comments were less extreme: Kamal says RHET taught him “how to research for a good site” but that he rarely uses the skill in computer science, because it is a “technical major”. Lina said that although she wrote a few research papers in high school IB, and had to make sure sources used were credible, the emphasis at AUC on evaluating credibility was stronger, especially in "English 103" which helped her become a better researcher and writer. As an engineer, she now rarely writes anything more than a lab report where she only needs to research the introduction section. Kenzy had had very little experience with debate before AUC and felt in-class discussions and debates in RHET classes helped her ability to evaluate the strength of arguments. Osman's ability to recognize hidden assumptions improved in RHET where classes involved “analyzing sources” and “critiquing or refuting a certain paper” which helped him learn to search for assumptions and flaws in evidence used. He felt RHET teachers and courses were good “if you take them seriously” and channel the critical and analytical skills, but that those who “disregard them” end up writing papers without benefiting from the courses. Osman's refers to some people not taking the courses seriously, and I will return to this point in the discussion section, especially with reference to science/engineering majors.

RHET-instructor considers developing students' evaluation of information sources built into the RHET courses, regardless who is teaching it. Instructors cover a topic for 2-3 weeks which is “more intensive and looks at things from different angles and notice differences in sources”.

RHET-instructor considers critical reading a pre-requisite to questioning and writing. RHET-administrator also feels the skill of reading between the lines is “part of reading – again that usually is something they're trained to do when they discuss a topic with the teacher...begin to see subtleties...[which is] difficult for those who don't read, in a second language culture to understand subtlety of tone, implication”. Yet “there is no systematic effort to develop reading, and some people say to include it in the syllabus, but [there is] no time” - but then faculty in the disciplines complain that their students cannot read enough. He feels it is very

difficult to encourage students to read unless their family environment and schooling encouraged them to look at reading as “a source of pleasure or entertainment” rather than something limited to textbooks in school (anyone who reads for pleasure in Egypt is often sarcastically said to be “studying”, including toddlers!). Several students I interviewed (Osman, Hoda, Noha) talked about their love of reading since before AUC, and how it has helped develop their CT, whereas Hossam, who just started reading during college, says it does not come naturally to him, but he has found that reading helped him develop CT and improve academically. Hall (2011) found this phenomenon of lack of reading common among Arab students, although RHET-administrator suggested that even US students are now struggling with academic reading.

Although both RHET-instructor and administrator agree that understanding “the other” is part of the courses, RHET-instructor tries to take students beyond just seeing “different perspectives”, “counter-attack” and “persuasion techniques” (what Paul 1994 calls “weak sense” CT), and incorporates “themes that revolved around ... dialogue and diversity”, exposing students to “political dialogue, community... difference across cultures” (what Paul 1994 calls “strong sense” CT) and tries to include community-based learning that increases students' sensitivity to the situation of individuals in underprivileged areas, and power discrimination that the use of English can create (what Benesch 1999 would call dialogic CT). This particular instructor's strategies for developing students' ability to understand different world views takes them beyond a theoretical and instrumental skill, and into improving their awareness of the reality around them and the authentic application of this ability to transform their surroundings.

7.3.2.3 Making One's Own Argument

Both RHET administrator and instructor agree this is the basis of RHET 102 – to write persuasively, but surprisingly, only three students mentioned RHET as the main influence on their persuasive argument-making.

Lina improved her skill at modifying arguments for different audiences. Whereas IB school papers were not written with a particular audience in mind, at AUC she learned to consider her audience, for example, recognizing the need to remove any hidden cultural assumptions when writing for a teacher from a different cultural background about culturally specific topics.

Mona's ability to recognize the importance of making a sound argument came in two RHET courses “through writing our papers, and how both professors would take apart the argument

of our papers, learning through my mistakes basically”. The peer feedback in RHET, however, was “never that substantial” because of differences in students’ “levels”, especially that she felt not all students “put 100% effort into checking each others’ papers”.

Students in political science clearly transferred these skills to writing papers in their major. Students in engineering and business were not able to transfer this skill to their own major, but Osman used it in MUN (a politically-oriented extracurricular activity, see next chapter). The low number of students who felt they developed the skill of developing strong arguments in RHET may be attributed to the differences between doing so in RHET and doing so in other contexts

7.3.2.4 Metacognition

Seven students mentioned RHET influencing their metacognition. Students who had high school IB felt their self-evaluation improved through doing research and writing papers in school, but RHET courses improved them further. Lina says her metacognition improved from giving and receiving peer feedback in RHET classes. On the other hand, Yasmine's RHET instructor's feedback on her writing improved her self-correction skills, but her peer review experience, like Mona's, was not very positive. Mona felt her self-correction skills improved in RHET where “re-writing drafts was more than just fixing a few sentences because first drafts would always come back from the profs marked all over with changes that had to be made” but when she moved onto political science courses, she got accustomed to correcting herself.

Students from business (e.g. Sandy, Nassim) and engineering (Osman) say that although re-writing drafts in RHET helped them develop self-evaluation skills, they were unable to transfer this to their major.

RHET-administrator thinks RHET instructors do some reflection in their classes but doesn't think “teachers specifically encourage that”, especially that some instructors have been unable to implement peer review successfully. However, RHET-instructor says she constantly includes reflection in her classes, including helping students reflect on how what they've learned can transfer to their research in RHET and other courses. She also uses one-on-one conferences to teach her students about audience awareness: she reads their paper with them for the first time, making her own process of reading explicit to the students, so that they eventually read their own paper from that perspective and make corrections without needing her feedback on every point.

7.3.2.5 Dispositions

Although the RHET courses are designed to promote the dispositions and skills of analysis, and the pedagogy used promotes openness to diverse views, only three students' CT dispositions were improved via RHET. Mona felt most of her CT dispositions were developed through family and school, but analysis was especially developed through RHET, among other courses.

Osman's openness to different views was improved in RHET courses through in-class discussion and research for essays where "you'd come across different sources, sources that were inclined towards a certain idea or agenda, while others that were against this idea or agenda, and somehow you find that both are valid, but you favour a certain argument".

7.3.2.6 Critical Action

Although the RHET department claims one of its guiding principles to be a belief "that writing is a powerful intellectual tool and that it has the potential to be socially transformative" (RHET 2009a), RHET-admin said that preparing students for transformative action or even solving problems in their everyday lives is not a main aim of RHET. He did recognize that a few instructors had personally decided to use learning themes that developed students in this way but that it was "not a syllabus thing" for the required introductory RHET courses. These instructors designed their courses around service or community-based learning (CBL) experiences, in which they visited outside communities to conduct their research, and often attempted to produce positive effects on these communities through their research and writing. In those courses, some personal growth and transformation occurred for students even though it was not a planned outcome within RHET. Although the administrator supports what he called these "tangential" modifications to RHET courses, the department does not require instructors to aim for these outcomes and cannot be given credit for producing them. The instructor I interviewed (RHET2) is one of the RHET instructors who implemented service learning. She chooses topics that help students reflect on social reality and reflect on solutions to contemporary problems facing Egypt, taking them out into the communities to work with them towards improving their lives. Chapter eight expands on this instructor's use of CBL.

7.3.2.7 Summary

Overall, RHET seems to have influenced various aspects of CT for the students I interviewed. For business, engineering and computer science students, transfer was difficult, compared to those in political science and journalism. There were some instances where students seemed to interpret the learning from the courses as instrumental and pertaining to steps and

disjointed skills, but there were other cases where the courses clearly developed a more holistic view of what it means to read and write critically, and in some cases, students learned to look at relevant social issues critically. Although RHET courses are not designed to encourage critical action, some instructors such as the one interviewed here, was able to apply community-based learning in the courses.

Students benefited from the particular topic choices and the way they were tackled via in-class, and they learned from instructor feedback, although the peer review experience was not always successful.

RHET-administrator expressed his awareness of different levels of language skills amongst students, and the overwhelming lack of motivation for reading. From the student interviews, clearly those who studied IB in school had exposure to CT, research and writing in school, but for most others, RHET was their first exposure to CT, research and writing.

The discussion section scrutinizes processes used within RHET, explores possible reasons for insufficient transfer, and opens up linguistic/cultural issues of teaching thinking through writing in a second language.

7.4 Discussion

Whereas RHET seems to develop some CT for most students, there is untapped potential. An over-arching question is: what is the purpose of RHET? Is it a support department for the disciplines, or does it have value in its own right? (Benesch, 2001 also asks this of English for Academic Purposes). If it is the former, then it is important to see the effect of RHET teaching on the disciplines, which is clearly problematic (see section on transfer). If it is the latter, then one would assume RHET should have an effect on the growth of the student as a person and as a citizen, and yet there is evidence that RHET may not fully meet this potential because of a technical-rationalist orientation in some of the course design and implementation (see section 4.1). What kind of CT is being learned in RHET, and how is this done in practice? Is the learning successfully transferred to other courses and to students' lives? What are some of the cultural challenges of teaching writing to second-language learners? I pose these questions and explore them further here, indirectly incorporating the views of more RHET instructors from their self-study report (Elshimi, 2007). I recognize, however, that the dynamic and self-reflexive group of

instructors in RHET may now have made changes responding to some limitations they had already recognized in 2007.

7.4.1 What kind of CT?

I question whether some RHET practices imply a technical orientation to curriculum (emphasis on measurement and control, rather than the processes of learning and teaching) and whether this may limit instructors' capacity to promoting only an instrumental CT. Limiting CT to the instrumental technical tasks of using informal logic and identifying fallacies may inadvertently promote "sophistry": skill at rationalizing one's irrational habits or prejudices so as to put an opponent on the defensive; or "dismissal": considering others' arguments as sophistic and resorting to other methods such as intuition or feelings rather than CT (Paul, 1994). Teaching CT in this way limits its value to producing and evaluating decontextualized arguments (Kaplan, 1994), missing the empowering potential of a CT encompassing complex consideration of diverse worldviews, what Paul (1994) calls "strong sense critical thinking".

Although the RHET department places a high value on individual teacher judgment, there is an ongoing departmental debate regarding the tension between standardization and teacher autonomy (Elshimi, 2007).

A technical interest in developing RHET curriculum and in developing instrumental CT is indicated by following the institutional emphasis on outcomes, having similar assignments across RHET sections, emphasis on the output/product students produce in the courses (i.e. the final written product) rather than the process of their learning, and having unified pre-set rubrics for assessment regardless of student background and class dynamics (evidence from Elshimi, 2007 and RHET website, 2009). In practice, however, there are elements of a more process- and even critical-orientation to curriculum.

The standardization of course outcomes and rubrics are done to promote fairness across sections, and to ensure all students reach a similar level of writing: that an "A" in RHET 102 has the same meaning in terms of the quality of writing students produce. Even though within each class, a portfolio of shorter writing assignments and drafts of papers are kept, the grading is done only on the final 1-2 pieces of writing, and is conducted by more than one instructor, via inter-rater reliability (Elshimi, 2007). This places more emphasis on a kind of "objective" assessment of the product of the course, than the actual processes that each instructor knows have been taking place throughout the semester, including student participation in in-class

discussions, the quality of their peer feedback, and their responsiveness during one-to-one conferences with the instructor. It also gives students the feeling that their teacher does not have full control over their final grades. This can be useful if students feel the instructor has personal biases, but otherwise excludes much of the actual classroom learning from the assessment and undermines teacher authority.

It is important to note, however, that the outcomes and rubrics are not imposed on instructors “from outside”, but developed via discussions among RHET instructors, and are renegotiated every semester. It appears that RHET instructors use these standards as guidelines but modify them when appropriate. This is evidence of instructor judgment used in the development of RHET curricula. Also, the “inter-rater” grading is not performed without discussion amongst teachers. The decision to use inter-rater reliability was itself taken after instructor discussion and debate (Elshimi, 2007). To put this process in perspective, it would be useful to contrast it with what occurs in the Intensive English Program (IEP – which some students undergo to improve their language before entering RHET and regular AUC courses). For IEP courses, all students take end-of-semester standardized tests that most instructors are not allowed to see, nor have any control over. This means that no matter what is taught in classes, the tests will be the same across sections, and coursework has little weight. Several IEP instructors have spoken to me about how frustrating this is for them. In comparison, RHET teachers themselves are the ones who set the criteria, and it is the students’ work during the semester that is being graded, not a time-limited piece of writing under test conditions. However, differences in student writing background and their disciplinary interests raise questions about the legitimacy of standardized course outcomes, and I will return to that in the sections on culture and transfer.

Despite the emphasis on standardization, there is also evidence that RHET emphasizes pedagogy that supports CT development beyond the instrumental level. One of the more positive aspects of RHET is that instructors are given freedom in terms of classroom content and processes. Meanwhile, they are supported via departmental professional development activities, and encouraged to seek further professional development via the CLT, with whom some have also conducted small Classroom Action Research projects (Elshimi, 2007).

The majority of student feedback mentioned earlier implies that processes used in RHET (e.g. class discussions, instructor feedback) promoted CT. However, Mona mentioned “a set of steps” and “list of logical fallacies” which implies a technical orientation. However, she recognizes this as an introduction to what later became a habit and she considers it the “right”

thing to do all the time. The rest of Mona's feedback on RHET shows the courses brought to her consciousness issues of which she had previously been unaware, such as hidden assumptions and hidden agendas. Additionally, RHET-instructor spoke of negotiating rubrics with her students as well. However, this process, even when well-intentioned but may end up exacerbating hegemony as students still have little control over the final summative assessment (Taras 2008). I am also unsure how the instructor then reconciles student-created rubrics with the department-wide standardized outcomes. It is possible she was referring to the advanced courses (where she may be teaching the only section), rather than the introductory ones). Several students mentioned unsuccessful peer-review experiences, and RHET-admin and Elshimi (2007) recognize that peer-review is an area that requires improvement. These examples show RHET focus on processes that develop CT, and the instructors continue to reflect on how to improve their practices.

The process of choosing RHET topics is interesting. Content is not chosen for any pre-determined value but for their potential for developing CT within the teacher's comfort zone. RHET-administrator said most instructors try to choose topics that are distant from students' lives in order to encourage questioning and avoid reinforcing existing beliefs. During confidential in-class assessments, some students have complained that some RHET instructors choose uninteresting topics and readings that they feel are unrelated to their own lives⁸⁵. Instructor-chosen topics may be used pedagogically if the instructor emphasizes empowerment in the way topics are handled and discussed, even using student resistance to raise awareness (Benesch, 2001). However, choosing topics distant from students' lives can result in inauthentic learning as students cannot test what they are learning against their own context (Grundy, 1987). We cannot ignore the egocentric and sociocentric beliefs most students bring with them to college, and we cannot expect students to question those beliefs unless we teach CT in the context of these pre-existing beliefs: to do so would risk making students more sophistic or apologetic than critical (Paul, 1994). Choosing neutral, if controversial, topics would have a limited impact in encouraging students to apply CT to their *own* prejudices and worldviews, Whereas Brookfield (1987) considers questioning one's own beliefs and assumptions a crucial aspect of CT, he suggests starting with less personally controversial topics before moving to topics that directly tackle students' deep-seated beliefs and assumptions. Research in other Arab countries (Hall, 2011) shows that Arab students need

⁸⁵ (e.g. topics that are culturally important in the US but are difficult to automatically relate to Egypt)

encouragement from instructors to approach taboo topics, so avoiding such sensitive topics in RHET may mean students would not approach them on their own. Having said this, some RHET instructors do choose topics that encourage students to question their own beliefs and values, such as the ones on Sudanese Refugees in Egypt, and the comparison between Jewish and Palestinian refugees mentioned by Sandy. I have also observed an instructor spontaneously choosing a low-stakes writing topic based on events occurring on campus: a blue-collar workers strike that was supported by students and faculty but resisted by the administration. Also, RHET-instructor specifically chooses topics that help students reflect on social reality and reflect on solutions to contemporary problems facing Egypt (e.g. Mikhael et al., 2009, and Community-Based Learning, Bali & Balkenbush, 2009).

Still, many of the broad topics are chosen by the instructors for the students to then choose sub-topics, rather than involving the students in the broad topic choices from the beginning. In confidential assessments, students have sometimes suggested they be offered different versions of each RHET course so students could choose topics they are interested in. This may actually be logistically simpler than having instructors decide topics with each cohort, but would deprive students of this process which in itself has pedagogical benefits. It is also recognized (Elshimi, 2007) that courses with community-service components may require more work from students and that they should be made aware of this beforehand.

7.4.2 Problems of Transfer?

The reason RHET courses are required early in students' AUC experience is that it is hoped the CT and writing skills they develop can be transferred to their other (disciplinary) courses. However, there is evidence that this is not occurring successfully from student interviews and Elshimi (2007). After showing this evidence, I will explore possible reasons, some of which overlap with those mentioned in the previous chapter.

Students in political science and journalism transferred learning from RHET, but those in science/engineering and business/economics students felt they rarely used these skills afterwards. However, all computer science/engineering students are required to write at least one major piece of research: a graduation thesis. But none had reached this stage or done *any* research in their major by the time I interviewed them. This was also my experience as a Computer Science major at AUC, and I continually see evidence of this in sciences/engineering

(e.g. high rates of plagiarism in graduation theses, indicating lack of emphasis on research/writing prior to senior year).

More evidence of lack of transfer to disciplines comes from Bali and Carpenter's (2009) survey. All quotes from faculty in the disciplines henceforth come from that survey. Eighteen faculty mentioned students' inability to organize and structure a paper well; seventeen faculty mentioned grammar and spelling issues and eight faculty mentioned students having problems with plagiarism, citing references or integrating sources (all of these things are taught or reinforced in RHET). An engineering professor thinks students use "poor language as an excuse" for "inadvertent" plagiarism as "they don't know how to say what needs to be said in their own words in English". Another engineering professor remarked that engineering students "who come in with poor [English] skills do not seem to improve [at AUC]". This finding is shared by engineering professors in Tsui's (2002) study across institutions in the US.

A RHET teacher also noted

...male science majors' ... English writing skills tend to be weaker than students in the humanities. Some of these science majors, don't see the point of taking Rhetoric and Composition courses to start with and resent having to do that

This sentiment echoes Osman's point about students not always taking RHET "seriously", and is a phenomenon recognized by Elshimi (2007), which I showed earlier extends to all core courses.

Although Bali and Carpenter (2009) were asking about linguistic issues, some comments showed lack of CT as well. At least four different instructors mentioned lack of analytical writing at the higher levels. Some other comments include:

They do not provide critical insights on what they're presenting. – Political science professor

They are excellent in free-form discussion that doesn't require any advance preparation. But they are not as good at careful, nuanced analysis of a text, for instance. – History professor

So what are the reasons RHET learning (including CT) does not transfer well? I believe some reasons lie within the RHET department, and some lie within the disciplines.

7.4.2.1 CT Taught Out of Context?

If one subscribes to the view that CT is context-specific (McPeck, 1990), then teaching CT via RHET is only helpful in that it teaches CT in the context of that particular course's content, then we would conclude that it may transfer to social sciences or humanities with similar writing styles or (possibly) epistemologies, but not as readily to disciplines such as management, chemistry and engineering. On the other hand, teaching CT within any particular discipline/epistemology is less likely to transfer to everyday life than if it is taught in a more general way (Ennis, 1989). Another way of looking at it, though, is that RHET teaches one kind of CT, but leaves the disciplines with the responsibility of teaching their own epistemological CT later.

RHET-instructor said she brainstorms with students about how their learning RHET would transfer to their other courses – but is talking about it enough, when they have not had any “practice” applying CT to writing anything other than general interest topics (Ennis, 1989)? It is true that there are RHET courses at the 300-level with a disciplinary focus, such as Technical Writing, and Writing in the Social Sciences, but these are not the ones required of most students, and those who do take them would take them in their final or penultimate year. They are especially not required for students who come in with the weakest language skills and take all three introductory courses.

On the other hand: is it the mistake of the instructors in the disciplines that they are not helping students apply what they have learned in RHET and adapt it to the discipline's epistemology and CT needs, or is the kind of writing taught in RHET of little relevance and unhelpful? If some scientific-minded students find difficulty with the writing style of humanities/social sciences taught in RHET because they tend to organize their thoughts differently (Fox, 1994), it is likely engineering professors and professionals also require a very different kind of writing to that taught in RHET.

Benesch (2001) advocates embedding writing support within existing disciplinary courses for students who need it. Since a writing teacher is unlikely to know how to write a “good” paper in sociology or chemistry, and a sociology or chemistry professor does not know how to “teach writing” explicitly, a partnership may be the answer, and has been tried in some courses at AUC. Some AUC RHET instructors offer support to faculty in the disciplines who want to use writing assignments, and students in all courses can get support via the Writing Center (Elshimi, 2007), a drop-in or by-appointment service offered by the RHET department to

students writing papers in any class at AUC. However, this requires faculty and students in the disciplines to take the initiative, and presupposing an awareness of this need.

Another question, though, is the role of the RHET department. Is it merely a support or service department to the major disciplines? If so, then the specific needs of each department or group of departments may need to be met separately, e.g. by teaching students in engineering a different kind of writing in their RHET courses, that will be more helpful to them in their engineering courses. This is done in some US universities.

However, this limits RHET to an instrumental, short-term role. If the role of the RHET department is a more critical one, then maybe exposing students to writing outside their disciplines can have value unrelated to the instrumental value of the specific skills - for example, questioning media is useful for critical citizenship in general. Is it the role of RHET to question the status quo and to conduct critical needs analyses for students? This is made difficult by the hierarchical position of RHET within the institution (Benesch, 2001 makes this point about English for Academic Purposes departments, which share similar characteristics to RHET as well as AUC's ELI), which I discuss next.

7.4.2.2 RHET Marginalized?

There are two ways in which RHET is marginalized at AUC, and this may affect the transfer of learning. The first is in the way some of the disciplines perceive RHET. The second is the more subtle differential treatment of RHET instructors versus those in the disciplines.

As Osman said, some science/engineering students do not take RHET courses seriously. This may be a matter of personal interest, but there is also a structural reason. Most AUC students cannot declare (get admitted into) their major until they have taken some courses and achieved a good enough GPA to get admitted into the major. However, most engineering, science and business majors focus on students' "major GPA" (i.e. grades in courses relevant to the discipline) which excludes RHET grades. Departments do this since they perceive their students can do well in the discipline even if their writing/language skills are poor, and so choose not to punish them for it. However, taking such a stance makes students focus on their major courses/grades, and de-prioritize RHET courses, compromising their chance to learn critical writing and thinking.

The other, more subtle way in which the university culture reduces the value of RHET is through its treatment of the department as a whole, something not uncommon for English for

Academic Purposes (EAP) departments in the US (Benesch, 2001). Although the English Language Institute (ELI) is AUC's EAP equivalent, RHET is in a similar situation as a support department that teaches academic writing. Faculty at AUC's RHET department are non-tenure track and therefore called "instructors" and not "professors" even if they have PhDs and publish widely. This affects their salaries and benefits as well as prestige amongst colleagues (e.g. until AUC moved to the new campus, full-time instructors in RHET and ELI had shared offices, similar to part-time faculty in other departments). These instructors sometimes talk to me about feeling under-valued by the university. Recent improvements in this area include introducing a merit and promotion system aimed to recognize RHET faculty achievements and improve morale (Elshimi, 2007), and the instructor I interviewed says some recently hired RHET instructors are given assistant or associate professor posts.

Having said this, my experiences as a CLT staff member, I have found RHET instructors amongst those most passionate about student learning and interested in their own professional development as teachers, and this status difference does not seem to reduce their passion. It does, however, seem like a potential area for critical action by the teachers themselves. Additionally, the vast majority of AUC RHET faculty are full-timers, unlike many core courses at AUC, and RHET departments in the US (Elshimi, 2007), which indicates their importance to AUC. Also,

One final possible reason inhibiting the potential of RHET may be related to cultural issues in academic writing, which I explore next.

7.4.3 Challenges and cultural issues of teaching thinking through writing to non-native speakers

How fully can habits of thought like those learned as social practice from infancy be taught to older children or adults in a more or less formal learning environment, and how would someone thus taught perform vis-a-vis the "natural" acquirers? (Atkinson, 1998, p. 135).

Atkinson suggests that teaching CT to native speakers of English cannot be equated with teaching it to students who have had much less exposure to CT in academia and elsewhere; they are also face the additional novelty of writing and thinking in English (Fox, 1994).

AUC students may have trouble transferring RHET learning due to their initial lack of readiness *before* they even start studying RHET, and thus what is learned is more difficult to internalize

or retain. AUC already offers more RHET courses than US universities (Elshimi, 2007), which might be because most AUCians are second-language learners. Some retention issues may be related to linguistic and/or cultural readiness of students to learn to write, and therefore think, in English (Kaplan, 1966).

What follows are some examples of ways in which linguistic difficulties can hamper learning from RHET, how linguistic difficulty can impact upon readiness to think critically, and how cultural barriers may limit students' freedom to think critically in class discussions. I do not mention them in a deterministic manner, but in a cautionary manner: these situations would not apply to every student in a RHET class, but one would need to question them for those who are less familiar with American/Western education, and less accustomed to expressing themselves in English⁸⁶.

7.4.3.1 Differences in Linguistic Abilities within the Same Class

The main problem is one the RHET-administrator recognizes: despite efforts to ensure students in each RHET level have similar linguistic abilities, achieving suitable placement is problematic. RHET has been working to improve the placement of students (Elshimi, 2007) but the problem is bound to persist, since students who come into college with weaker English continue to have weaker English throughout university (confirmed by RHET-administrator, and several faculty in Bali & Carpenter, 2009)⁸⁷.

Differences in the language abilities of students within the same class affect their comprehension of readings before critically analyze them, and their ability to write coherently before writing critically. Floyd's 2011 study found that it may also distract the instructor into giving more feedback on grammar and form than on criticality. There is also research that shows that students who are Western-educated (Nelson, 1992) or are more familiar with using English in their everyday lives (Fox, 1994) are at an advantage in American writing classes over students less familiar with writing in English. My interviews showed that all students from American-style schools were more familiar with research, academic writing, and some aspects

⁸⁶ I do not discuss here the issue of whether CT is a Western concept because I have discussed this in the second chapter.

⁸⁷ One recent graduate told me how she took private lessons during high school to help her achieve a higher score in TOEFL, the English placement exam for AUC, and was able to score higher than her level and get into RHET instead of IEP. The result was that she spent the first year of AUC not understanding a single word uttered by native-speaking professors at AUC. Her situation is not unique, as another student told me her colleague used to get all her first-year course notes translated into German (the language she had used in school).

of CT than their counterparts for whom RHET was the first exposure to academic and critical writing.

Although none of the students I interviewed mentioned linguistic/cultural difficulties with RHET, there was evidence from Bali and Carpenter (2009) that linguistic issues were perceived by RHET instructors and persisted with students beyond RHET and into their third and fourth years of AUC. For example, a SAPE professor says students do not understand texts that are “a bit more sophisticated” and that s/he feels students read slowly and “need to translate in their minds from English into Arabic”, so much so that s/he wonders “how they succeeded in their English entrance exam”.

7.4.3.2 Persistent Linguistic Weaknesses Affecting CT

An engineering professor says that around 70% of third/fourth year students “will use some Arabic in any discussion regardless of how much you try to enforce English. About 20% cannot hold a discussion in pure English.” Also amongst advanced students in political science: “They have issues understand[ing] undergraduate text books aimed at their level. [They] find it difficult to read critically, delineating the core arguments from details within the text”. A history and a biology professor both claim that students struggle with longer readings, the biology professor feels this is due to their lack of training in English reading. The history professor finds this affects their critical reading: “I have found they struggle [with] understanding an author's larger argument rather than just picking out facts” (all quotes from Bali & Carpenter, 2009).

Weakness in language may also lead to cultural issues, such as difficulties understanding subtleties in texts (Kaplan, 1966; Chandler, 1995). A SAPE professor (Bali & Carpenter, 2009) said:

One of the biggest problems I have is that students don't understand the straw man concept; they frequently critique the author for making exactly the opposite argument that the author was making, based on the author's straw man. This occurs at all levels, but especially the lower ones. And they hate reading in general. I have to enforce it through a variety of disciplinary measures.

RHET-administrator recognizes that the majority of AUC students are not avid readers and that second language learners have more difficulty reading critically as they may miss subtleties of tone for example. There is also research that suggests that second-language learners' CT is hindered by the difficulties of reading in the second language, particularly when it is orthographically different from their native language (Floyd, 2011; citing Koda, 1996, 2005)

which is the case for Arabic. Critical reading is part of what students are “trained to do” in RHET, but there is no time to encourage wider reading. Other core curriculum courses, often designed and taught by RHET or English language instructors, are offered specifically to first-year students to help develop their reading among other academic skills.

7.4.3.3 Cultural Aversion to Conflict in Discussions

It is often the case that students from a non-Western background are not used to using CT in the classroom but are more familiar with CT in social contexts (Fox, 1994), although this can be considered different from academic notions of CT. Recognizing that Egypt is a more oral culture (Hall, 2011 generalizes this to Arab culture), RHET-administrator said that most RHET instructors involve students in discussions “creating the environment for them to express themselves” because “students are often more willing to be critical verbally than in writing”. Teachers recognize that students can have critical discussions informally with friends, and to transfer this to the formal context of class, “some teachers intuitively do that by encouraging debate in class before writing” which is a formal process and thus more difficult for students. However, in the liberal arts chapter, I showed that not all students were comfortable participating in class discussion during their first years at AUC, so this pedagogy is not necessarily an equalizer.

Although students I interviewed were positive about their experience with in-class discussions in RHET, in several confidential mid-semester assessments, students have told me they avoid expressing opinions in opposition to their instructors’ for fear of upsetting them. Some have even said that the instructors vehemently criticize them when they express dissenting views. I have also observed this firsthand. Whenever I discuss this with the instructors, they almost always say they had been playing “devil’s advocate” to push students to strengthen their arguments or to support their opinions, and that students had merely misunderstood them. When I told RHET-administrator about this, he also thought instructors were probably playing “devil’s advocate”.

The issue here is not in the use of “devil’s advocate” as a pedagogical strategy, but in the students misunderstanding it, and the instructor not sensing the unintended silencing effect it has on students. Some students are simply uncomfortable with conflict (Grundy 1987), and when instructors become aware of this, they can work to remedy the situation, for example by clarifying to students that a certain amount of conflict in the classroom is desirable (Browne & Freeman 2000) and that they should not be intimidated by the instructor’s questioning of their

arguments. Several instructors in Bali and Carpenter (2009) observe student reluctance to express dissenting views:

Students at the 200-level are often diffident, and, even when they have things to say, hold back in fear of displeasing their instructor, when the slightest communication is often better than none at all. – English and Comparative Literature professor

Students at all levels are not comfortable with expressing ideas or opinions of their own. They do not want to "risk" any new ideas - even when that is the purpose of the discussion. – Biology professor

A political science professor puts it down to confidence:

The challenge is instilling a sense of self-confidence and comfort in the students so that they feel at their ease in participating.

Some of my own observations of RHET classes gave me the impression that instructors sometimes felt too strongly about certain topics, and were not merely playing devil's advocate, but actually trying to push a certain agenda. A possible explanation is that instructors may sometimes prefer to take a stance advocating social justice instead of merely calling for multiplicity or relativism of views in the classroom. Brookfield (2007) suggests that this might be a pedagogically better stance, as opposed to allowing for equal weight to all viewpoints and running the risk of allowing an unjust dominant discourse to continue without sufficient critical examination. The problem here is: who is to judge whether the instructor's "social justice" stance is the "correct" one (impossible) or that it is valid for the students, given that several of the RHET instructors come from a different (American) culture (26/43 are American, according to AUC Factbook, 2008-2009) and their advocacy of certain widely-held liberal and social justice values in America may go against widely-held Egyptian or Muslim values? Encouraging students to question their own values is helpful to CT, but having the instructor take a strong stance in any one direction (sometimes with a paternalistic attitude), given the power relationships in class, and given some students' discomfort with dissent, can result in silencing students or even oppressing them, rather than promoting social justice. Dialogue should not be automatically understood as either equalizing or empowering, and instructors should not forget about power imbalances in class (Ellsworth, 1989), such as those between teacher and student, and differences of power relating to gender, nationality, social class and even religion. I return to the topic of dialogue in cross-cultural settings in chapter nine.

7.5 Conclusion

I have shown evidence that RHET has influenced students' CT development, in terms of its design and classroom practices which resonate with much of the scholarship on developing thinking through writing. However, this potential can be limited to developing an instrumental CT. Despite this, some instructors have been able to incorporate emancipatory orientations in their courses, especially via CBL at AUC (see Bali & Balkenbush, 2009; Amer, Elshimi, Bali, & Balkenbush, 2009), discussed in the following chapter.

I have also shown that not all learning in RHET transfers beyond these courses, and questioned whether this might be due to the decontextualized teaching of writing, or due to the lack of emphasis on writing in the (especially professional) disciplines. There is also the question of the marginalization of RHET amongst AUC departments. Finally, I raise linguistic and cultural issues related to developing thinking through writing for non-native speakers, especially when some teachers are not familiar with students' native language (Hall 2011). This is discussed further in chapter nine.

8 Experiential Learning in Authentic Contexts

8.1 Overview

This chapter explores the role of authentic learning experiences in CT development. I use the term “authentic learning” here to refer to learning that is experiential (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984) and situated in real-life (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Lave & Wegner, 1991) or simulated contexts (Herrington & Herrington, 2006) rather than to mean learning that is directly relevant to students’ lives, although both meanings may coincide in one experience. Authentic experiences commonly occur in real-life environments such as extracurricular community service or work internships, but classroom-based academic courses can incorporate authentic elements such as community-based learning, role plays, and real-life case studies. Such experiences often present students with realistic complex situations that promote CT development (Facione, 1990), and offer opportunities for using CT in practice (Freire, 1970; Barnett, 1997).

Several studies connect CT development in college with extracurricular and work experiences (e.g. Kuh, 1995; Tsui’s multi-institutional study 2000, 2002, Gellin’s, 2003 meta-analysis of studies). However, given the diversity of extracurricular activities and work experiences, and the variation in the depth of each student’s involvement with them, it is implausible to generalize on their impact on learning (Kuh, 1995).

Therefore, I use students’ self-reported gains in CT to illustrate how *particular* extracurricular activities and work experiences have helped *them* develop CT. I also use contrasting student experiences to identify potential inequalities of access to good quality experiences. I suggest that incorporating more authentic learning in academic courses is a way to increase access to good quality experiences, and I describe three ways in which authentic learning has been incorporated in Political Science, Mechanical Engineering and Rhetoric & Composition.

Having shown a variety of authentic experiences and their impact on some students, I discuss some of the strengths and weaknesses of each approach in promoting learning and CT, and identify potential areas of improvement that would broaden student access to good quality

learning experiences. Not only do authentic experiences vary in the dimensions of CT they emphasize, but they also differ in their orientation and the kind of CT they promote.

Finally, I share research that supports the notion that political civic engagement in adult life is influenced by apolitical engagement in youth, and that therefore promoting participation in extracurricular activities would be a positive step towards building critical citizenship in AUC students.

8.2 Authentic Learning and CT

This chapter's theme evolved from students interviewed who mentioned the impact of extracurricular activities and summer internships on their CT, and I describe research in the US connecting such experiences with CT development, focusing only on experiences relevant to AUC's context⁸⁸. Since both extracurricular activities and work experiences offer authentic learning contexts, I explore the theoretical underpinnings of authentic learning, and its connection with CT.

Recognizing that different students will be impacted differently by authentic experiences, I explore particular cases of CT development via authentic learning experiences, namely: community service activities, Model United Nations (MUN), and internships. I also explore how three instructors from different disciplines have integrated authentic learning in their classes.

8.2.1 Extracurricular Activities and CT

Extracurricular involvement is an essential feature of a liberal arts experience (Pascarella et al., 2005). Like other liberal arts colleges, AUC provides a variety of student-run extracurricular experiences, including student government, community service clubs, simulation conferences, academic clubs and cultural and sports activities (AUC Student Development, undated). In order to participate in these activities, students need to take the initiative to apply⁸⁹. They may learn about the different activities from on-campus booths, flyers, campus publications, or word-of-mouth. To become involved, most activities require students to go through an interview process, whereby more experienced organization members in leadership positions interview applicants and select those deemed most suitable for roles/positions within the

⁸⁸ So for example, I do not deal with Greek clubs or sororities/fraternities because they do not exist in AUC

⁸⁹ Student-led extracurricular activities and student government are supported by AUC's Organization of Student Activities (OSA), efforts to secure employment outside AUC are supported by AUC's Career Advising and Placement Services (CAPS), and efforts to integrate community-based learning in academic courses are supported by AUC's Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement and Center for Learning and Teaching.

student-run organization, although some additional training on the particular skills is usually offered within each activity.

Students' participation in extracurricular activities and work experiences has been correlated with intellectual development in general, and CT development specifically (e.g. Kuh, 1995; Tsui's; 1998, 2000 multi-institutional study, Gellin's 2003; meta-analysis of studies). Given the diversity of these experiences and students' roles within them, they naturally promote different learning outcomes, and achieving these outcomes would differ according to the level of each student's engagement with the activity (Kuh, 1995; Gellin, 2003). For example, participation in simulation conferences such as the Model United Nations can improve CT through debate (e.g. Hill, 1993; Brookfield, 1987) and role play (e.g. Lechuga, Clerc & Howellett al., 2009, Brookfield, 1987), both of which develop the "ability to take on the perspectives of others" which cannot be developed fully in abstraction (Brookfield, 1987, p. 104). Both of these elements can also be adapted for in-class experiential learning. Community service activities can promote CT by improving students' social and political awareness (Tsui, 2000) and exposing them to different viewpoints (Perry, 1981). Such experiences can occur in classrooms by immersion in authentic environments (e.g. Lechuga et al., 2009) such as service learning (e.g. Kezar & Rhoads, 2001). Such an arrangement could help develop "authentic critical thinkers" who are able to make connections between theoretical coursework and its wider implications (Tsui, 2000, p. 437).

8.2.2 Work Experience and CT

In terms of work experience, opportunities for on-campus part-time work include teaching assistantships and administrative support to AUC offices. AUC's Career Advising and Placement Services (CAPS) office also helps students explore a variety of summer and winter internships in local and multinational organizations, and can help them with their resume-writing, interviewing and job-search skills.

Several studies found contradictory results on the relationship between CT growth and work during college. Some found that work was most helpful when it was career-related and involved higher-order activities (Gellin, 2003), and others found on-campus work to have a more positive impact on CT than off-campus work (Kuh, 1995; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998).

It is difficult to interpret these results without knowing the nature of work students participated in and the amount of time they invested. CAPS staff told me they differentiate

between a “summer job” which is likely to demand low-level tasks and “summer internships” which require higher-level professional work and provide more opportunities for students to learn. At AUC, few students work off-campus *during* the semester, whereas several in my sample talked about how their summer internship experiences affected their learning, and one talked about a teaching assistantship on campus. Although workplaces and work supervisors are unlikely to have the goal of developing CT in the same way academia does (Boud, 2001), democratic workplaces can be more conducive to CT than those demanding blind obedience from employees (Brookfield, 1987). Although CT is needed within any organization in order to improve it (Boud, 2001), workplaces are likely to encourage CT only up to a limit (Barnett, 1997), more likely encouraging instrumental CT that promotes profit-making goals rather than questioning of the organization’s structure or promoting social emancipation.

8.2.3 Developing CT via Authentic Learning

CT proponents recommend the development of CT via ill-structured⁹⁰, complex and realistic problems (Facione, 1990), learning CT via immersion in disciplinary (McPeck, 1990) or real-life contexts (Ten Daam & Volmen, 2004), and preparing students to become “actors in the world”, not mere thinkers (Barnett, 1997, p. 103). In doing so, it is important to combine action with reflection and theory with practice without sacrificing one for the other (Freire, 1970; Barnett, 1997). Authentic learning contexts thus seem suitable for developing CT.

Barnett asserts that higher education needs to treat students as “actors in the world, not just as thinkers” (p. 103), whereas current curricula at best include poor integration of theory with practice. He critiques the three models of criticality in higher education: the first focuses on critical thought purely without application which he considers “no liberal education at all”; the second focuses on “competence” which comes from the world of business and only values critical reflection where it improves productivity and effectiveness but is really no critical action at all; the third is “reflective practice” which is an improvement on the other two models but overemphasizes practice and downplays knowledge.

Authentic learning theorists describe how authentic learning takes place, but differ on some aspects of its characteristics and how it transfers. I take a brief look at these differences in order to gauge the characteristics of authentic learning experiences that would promote CT.

⁹⁰ Ill-structured problems can be defined as “complex and controversial problems that are vexing and for which solutions cannot be known with completeness, certainty, or correctness” (Love & Guthrie, 1999c, p. 42)

Constructivism deems context essential, not merely helpful, to learning of any kind (Brown et al., 1989; Lave & Wegner, 1991; Grabinger & Dunlap, 1995), whereas traditional education ignores the “real world” and the process of learning that occurs via “transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). Learning in a classroom context divorced from reality risks teaching students the culture of the classroom rather than that of the world (Brown et al., 1989), whereas learning via immersion in a realistic context helps learners observe the practice of others and become eventual participants (e.g. Lave & Wegner’s 1991 concept of “legitimate peripheral participation”). Applying this to CT, learning to use CT in abstract classroom contexts may not help students transfer this learning to their personal, professional, social or political lives.

Some (e.g. Lave & Wegner, 1991) believe the best model is to immerse learners in real contexts to learn implicitly from more capable peers in communities of practice, whereas others believe that realistic simulated and facilitated environments can also offer rich authentic environments (McLellan, 1994). Whereas Lave and Wegner (1991) would argue that direct facilitation is not needed, others (e.g. Barnett, 1997) would argue that this emphasizes action while ignoring reflection and does not connect practical with theoretical knowledge. Although individuals can reflect independently, it may not happen spontaneously, and would not have the same impact as doing so with a facilitator and peers to help connect theory with practice, and compare each individual’s experience with those of others. For example, students in work-based learning could benefit from opportunities to both regularly record their personal reflections, and periodically reflect on their experience with peers and a facilitator (Boud, 2001).

There is also the issue of transfer. Although some would dismiss the question of transfer altogether as redundant (Bowden & Marton, 1998 cited in Boud, 2001) or consider it a naturally-occurring process when immersed in authentic contexts (e.g. Lave & Wegner, 1991), other research suggests that transfer does not occur automatically (Perkins & Salomon, 1989; Bransford et al., 1999). Transfer can be promoted either by exposing learners to diverse experiences in some depth (Perkins & Salomon, 1989 call this “low road transfer”), or by developing students’ metacognition, helping them decontextualize principles from a few real-life problems and then recontextualize them in new situations (Kolb’s 1984 “experiential learning cycle”; Perkins & Salomon call this “high road transfer”).

It would seem that the type of learning targeted would affect the need for abstraction and reflection. More vocational or technical knowledge (e.g. driving, sewing), may conceivably be achieved via immersion with little facilitation or reflection, but higher-order knowledge that has a theoretical component (e.g. medicine, engineering, sociology) is more likely to benefit from interaction between theory and practice. Although learning can occur in each of the phases of Kolb's (1984) experiential cycle: "concrete experience", "reflective observation", "active experimentation", and "abstract conceptualization", combining all of them is more likely to promote critical and creative thinking (Kreber, 2001) and support transfer. If an authentic experience is not facilitated, it is likely to lack abstract conceptualization tying theory with practice, and observation may not be reflective. It is also possible that in non-educational situations, only limited experimentation is allowed because of the risks involved in experimenting during a real-life internship, for example.

The coming section explores student and instructor accounts of authentic experiences at AUC. The discussion section will analyze and compare the experiences further in terms of their bridging of theory and practice.

8.3 Authentic Experiences outside the Official Curriculum

Before delving into case studies of authentic experiences, I share two anecdotes that show differences in AUCians' approaches to extracurricular activities.

[ANECDOTE 1] I recently heard a speech by a student about to graduate with a degree in Electronics Engineering from AUC. The student was the recipient of AUC's staff-faculty scholarship⁹¹, and was describing his experience at AUC. The entire speech focused on extracurricular community service activities, how they impacted his learning and how he has been inspired by his colleagues in these activities. He did not mention academia or liberal arts education at all. This student's experience is similar to Kamal's in the first case study below. He is a science-major who came from an Egyptian high school and seems to have benefited tremendously from extracurricular experiences⁹².

[ANECDOTE 2] AUC's oldest student newspaper, "The Caravan" contained a cartoon in which one student comments that classroom-based learning does not prepare

⁹¹ By definition, this scholarship goes to students from Egyptian high schools who require financial assistance. It is a full scholarship covering the student's tuition fees throughout their full period of study at AUC.

⁹² AUC's Development Office (which collects donations for this scholarship and organized the event) may have edited his speech, but my experience with previous speeches given at AUC for various purposes is that the administration rarely, if ever, edit for content, and instead just edit for grammar and clarity. It also occurs to me that they would have wanted to add something about academia, but they did not.

students for the real world; extracurricular activities are the only place where meaningful skills can develop. The second student responds: "I only joined because they were giving away free cookies, then I discovered this could boost my CV. It's also a great way to meet chicks." (Imam, 2010 p. 5).

The contrast between the two students above, and between student 2 and the scholarship-recipient in anecdote 1 shows how different students' goals are when participating in activities (if at all), and how this can impact the kind of learning they achieve through them. Students who take activities less seriously can also impact on their peers' learning in the same activity.

8.3.1 Developing Social Awareness via Extracurricular Activities in General

For Kamal, a computer science major who studied Thanaweyya Amma in Tanta, the most important influence on CT was participation in diverse AUC extracurricular activities, encompassing fund-raising, public relations, and community service:

Truly, before activities, I could not initiate a conversation, couldn't make my own point of view in a conversation, but after activities, I had communication skills ... it was ok to go and know new people to direct and control [a] conversation. In activities you are so exposed to so [much] stuff. Academic life alone won't work at all in real life. With activities you ... define the way you deal with the problem and handle it.

Even though Kamal seems to be emphasizing communication skills rather than CT, he is highlighting the importance of communication and confidence as steps towards interacting with others, developing CT, and presenting his point of view clearly.

Exposure to diverse people in activities also helped him develop a better understanding of different world views, as he started to understand "*people can react to different and specific situations*"

Fundraising improved his ability to make persuasive arguments, and activities in general improved his open-mindedness and ability to solve problems in real life because they provided exposure to a variety of situations.

Kamal said he intentionally participated in a variety of activities because "every activity adds to the people I know and adds to my experience". For example, working with orphans and teaching 7-12 year olds was "exciting to know the best way to teach kids and make them interested in what you say", and helped him develop the ability to adjust his message to his

target audience. This experience also improved his capacity to take critical action on a larger scale as he dealt with orphans and tried to influence their values and character development.

Before AUC, he felt he had few resources besides family to draw upon, but activities helped him use resources and meet personal goals, and he feels computer science “is not about programming at all – it’s about communicating with [a] variety of people in real life – this is why activities are very important and add to my experience”. He recognizes the value of skills learned in activities for transfer to his major although such skills are not developed in courses.

Activities helped develop Kamal’s communication skills, argumentation skills, and ability to understand diverse individuals and viewpoints, but most student organizations conduct interviews before accepting members. Kamal said he came into AUC without communication skills and was rejected by 5-6 different activities because he did poorly in interviews. When I asked Kamal in a follow-up email interview about what made him persist when others would have given up after two or three rejections, he simply said that after each rejection:

It did not disappoint me because I knew I lack[ed] basic communication skills. I knew that I had to acquire minimum communication skills that would qualify me to move to the next step (joining extracurricular activities). So this was the motive for me "feeling that there is more to accomplish.

For me, it was not just about joining an activity, but rather it was about a challenge that I could reach up to this higher level of comm[unication] skills where I would initiate conversations, blend in, interact and have my own charisma in the community I am in. Each time I had been rejected in an interview, I have looked back and dugged [sic] for the reasons of the rejection.

So it was his capacity and willingness to reflect on his own communication skills, viewing rejection as a challenge rather than a disappointment, learning and reflecting on reasons for rejection. This attitude helped him persist until he started getting accepted. However, if extracurricular activities are meant to develop students’ confidence and communication skills, how can interviews which require them also be pre-requisites to participation?

If all students lacked these skills, interviews would be a fair mode of selection. However, some students had previous extracurricular experiences that helped develop communication skills, understand different worldviews and gain some of the experiences Kamal only started to gain in university. The accumulation of these experiences may have provided some students with the social/cultural capital to enable them to enter AUC activities more easily, whereas Kamal had to acquire this knowledge the difficult way: via rejection in interviews. I next compare Kamal’s experience with others in my sample.

8.3.1.1 Comparing Kamal's Experience with Other Students'

Whereas Kamal intentionally diversified the activities he participated in, Osman focused on a particular activity (MUN) and reached a leadership position there. The breadth of Kamal's experiences has helped develop different aspects of his CT as he applies it in different contexts and deals with different kinds of people. Fundraising by meeting multinational company managers offers a markedly different experience from teaching young orphans. In contrast, staying within one activity as Osman did offers more depth of experience within that relatively narrow field, and taking a leadership position taps into other aspects of CT and learning.

Other students mentioned extracurricular activities, but not with Kamal's and Osman's passion. Looking more closely at their situations, some like Yasmine seemed to be having fun with her friends in extracurricular activities, but not feeling an impact on CT, especially that she had experience with community service before joining AUC. Yasseen worked with the Student Union but found it helped him with time management and teamwork more than any aspect of CT.

Students who had extracurricular experience before AUC remarked on them helping develop CT early on (Nassim, Lina, Sandy and Yasmine). Those pre-AUC extracurricular experiences equipped students with communication skills and CT that could facilitate their plans to join AUC activities. Some research shows that students with high school extracurricular experience are more likely to participate during college (McNeal 1998), and this could be the case for AUC. First, students with high-school extracurricular activities are likely to do well in interviews because of their experience and confidence, and second, their interviewers are likely to look favourably upon them with their past experiences. They are also more likely to have friends who participate in AUC activities, encouraging them and possibly helping them get accepted (e.g. Yasmine joined some activities because her school friends were leaders in them). The longer experience with extracurricular activities such as MUN or community service has also allowed some of these students to reflect on the impact of these activities. For example, Lina decided to move beyond simulation experiences like MUN and move towards activities that have direct impact on real communities. Yasmine was able to reflect that even though community service activities help her connect with different social groups, it is still not as big a difference as she would like to make in society, but is something she is used to doing on a personal level without needing the framework of a student activity.

So some students joining activities may have had different motivations (e.g. fun more than learning) and easier access (e.g. because of past experience with interviews) than Kamal, and have thus been less impacted by AUC activities. Other students, however, opt not to join activities at all, and it is to their case that I now turn.

8.3.1.2 Students Who Avoided Extracurricular Activities

The two main reasons mentioned by students for avoiding extracurricular activities are lack of confidence despite recognizing the benefit; and disillusionment about the usefulness of activities coupled with cynicism about the social dynamics of AUC student organizations.

Kenzy talked about her reluctance to participate in extracurricular activities:

I've never been involved in any activities but everybody tells me that it really matures people...I was afraid that those activities need lots of meetings and participation, so I was afraid that at a point I would not be able to do what I'm supposed to do, so that's why I didn't participate. Actually I was afraid to not be very good.

Unlike Kamal's persistence in applying for activities despite several rejections, Kenzy, who has less confidence in herself, would not even apply at all⁹³. She avoids them, afraid she would not be able to balance study and activities, and worries she would not be a good enough participant. Kamal, on the other hand, recognized his lack of communication skills, and that activities were a good way to develop them.

On the other hand, Noha expressed scepticism about the value of extracurricular activities at AUC, questioning their social dynamics. In the pre-interview questionnaire, she wrote:

I usually get impatient with AUC activities; I get frustrated at times from the stereotypes of presidents/ leaders of different student clubs. During winter and summer breaks I usually help out at camps.

This, despite the plethora of community service clubs at AUC, her experience planning/leading camps outside AUC and Noha's self-reported "I would love to be involved with NGOs and humanitarian work", which she actually did go on to do. When asked in a follow-up interview two years later (after her graduation) about her frustration with student clubs and their leaders, she explained:

I honestly did not have too much respect for student leaders in most clubs in terms of their leadership skills...I now can not [sic] say that i have given this area a fair chance but i never got the feeling that these clubs were efficient enough, or were free of

⁹³ More on Kenzy's lack of confidence in the internship section.

buraucracy [sic] or love of power. It seemed that friends were clustered in clubs for the sake of hanging out together as opposed to getting the work done. That i think is still clear in the student union, which i feel is all about showing off, campaigning for your friends, being powerful...etc....

In other parts of their interviews, Lina and Sandy also referred to the cliquishness of AUCians in general. At a panel discussion that took place in 2009, several international students talked about how the cliquishness in certain extracurricular activities was a barrier to their participation in some of them, such that some activities were dominated by international students whereas others were dominated by Egyptians. Yasmine and Hossam both referred to joining activities where friends were already members or leaders, and had no complaints about cliquishness – although this may be because they were part of the clique, and part of the dynamic that turned Noha away from activities altogether.

My undergraduate personal experience with activities is that certain kinds of activities seem to fit more easily with certain kinds of students. For example, Student Union members were mostly Egyptians with a wide social network in Egypt, and those networks were involved in campaigning for Union elections, although non-leadership positions did not require elections. I found the SU quite cliquish because the majority of members were friends and had similar backgrounds which were different from mine. On the other hand, entrance to MUN is via interviews by more experienced members, who were mostly people who had lived parts of their lives outside of Egypt and perceived themselves to be more culturally hybrid than Student Union members. Because MUN is a conference-type activity, student leaders and members change annually, although the same students often continue to apply for different, often progressively more senior positions. This again offers room for cliques to develop, but also competition among veteran members for leadership positions. Other activities, particularly community service activities have a greater diversity of members and are more open, but some, for example the “Help club”, are known to approach community service from an Islamic stance, and so non-Muslim members or even less-observant Muslims are not easily welcomed.

Therefore, access to activities can be limited by students’ initial lack of confidence and communication skills, their poor interviewing skills, or actual or perceived cliquishness and power dynamics within activities.

Having shown Kamal's and other students' experience with extracurricular activities in general, I now turn to look at Osman's experience with the Model United Nations activity in particular.

8.3.2 Developing Political Awareness via Model United Nations

The Model United Nations (MUN) is an "experiential education program" (Muldoon, 1995, p. 28) in which students simulate actual UN bodies, role-playing different countries as "delegates" discussing/debating real or fictitious international issues. MUN is often included in political science or international relations courses (e.g. Raymond & Sorenson, 2007; Krain & Lantis, 2006; Chasek, 2005; McIntosh, 2001; Travis, 1994) but is sometimes a student-led extracurricular activity (Muldoon, 1995 mentions several extracurricular MUNs) as is the case at AUC's Cairo International Model United Nations (CIMUN) and the American International School in Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Several students I interviewed mentioned MUN's impact on several dimensions of their CT. MUN can promote "a deeper understanding of (and empathy for) the complexities of the global problem solving process" (Krain & Lantis, 2006, p. 399) beyond theory learned in classes. Debate can strengthen argumentation skills and the preparation process can improve students' research skills and political literacy. Moreover, students become exposed to different perspectives and worldviews, by representing a country different from their own, and negotiating with other countries' delegates, all of which involves CT (Brookfield, 1987).

At AUC, a large number of students can take delegate positions (representing a country in a council), and a smaller number of more experienced students ("Secretariat", usually a team of three per council) take responsibility for recruiting and preparing delegates, as well as leading the councils during the conference. Another group of students are responsible for organizing the conference in terms of logistics, fundraising, public relations, etc. This section focuses on the delegate and Secretariat experience, since the organizing experience is similar to Kamal's experience in other activities.

Cairo International Model United Nation's (CIMUN) initiating faculty advisor (hereafter referred to as CIMUN-advisor) at AUC talked about how empowering and pedagogical the experience was for students as they became independently responsible for the conference:

To a lot of Egyptian students particularly, learning is painful, unpleasant work. It means to have to memorize a lot of crap, even if it's relevant, it's relevant crap...[In MUN]

you've turned it around. That's why I say, it's good teaching, it's a good pedagogical exercise. I don't decide, we [the students and I] decide what we talk about. The "we" after a while [becomes "they"], I didn't even have to attend; [the students would] just tell me what they decided... I trusted them and they trusted me to protect them [from AUC administration].

8.3.2.1 Effect of MUN on Osman's CT

MUN was the greatest influence on Osman's (mMENG2br) CT development: he had climbed the CIMUN ladder since joining AUC, and was a "Secretary-General" (the highest leading student position) at the time I interviewed him.

An engineering major, Osman joined MUN to pursue his interest in political debate. MUN gave him a range of skills he would not otherwise have developed within his own major, an outlet that for developing research skills not used in engineering; honing his skills at finding and critically evaluating information beyond RHET classes.

As a delegate, he started to assess other people's arguments, noticing assumptions made in debates, and questioning them, often cross-checking facts and discovering how other delegates sometimes invented material, or de-contextualized facts. MUN helped him make stronger arguments as a delegate representing a country, while peer-teaching as a secretariat member taught him to try to present arguments in "as unbiased a way as possible but make sure delegates don't follow the line of thought you're following – put them on a path [so that] they question facts and assumptions made, and make their own opinion". This forced him to reflect on how he was presenting information to his delegates, and how he should present it in order to help them develop the skills they needed.

Osman considered high-school a relatively "closed environment", whereas MUN has helped him see different world views: "you listen to many diverse opinions, you start identifying trends, [and can understand] if people from another background will be inclined to another idea". Interacting with foreign delegates who attend CIMUN conferences increased this exposure, as did traveling to the National MUN (NMUN) which includes students from all over the world.

Representing countries he did not agree with helped him become more open-minded:

In MUN especially when you're in a situation representing a country, [and] you do not agree with their policies; [and you are] trying to know why [they] have a certain stance/agenda and you start accepting different views.

MUN also helped him recognize his own biases, especially when he was secretariat and realized how different people had different “inclinations towards certain reforms, agendas” and this caused many “heated debates”.

CIMUN-advisor emphasized the importance of MUN in helping students see hidden agendas not only of others, but also of themselves. For example, Osman talked about how being secretariat of economic councils helped him:

[We] talked about [how] certain textbooks and authors will be extremely pro neo-liberal theories, etc. and like we started questioning if these policies – promoted everywhere – why they contributed to crises like the Asian economic crisis. We found out, especially [in] economics, all [actions are] in the benefit of developed countries and taking back to developed countries.

CIMUN-advisor highlighted the importance of MUN-related “transferrable skills: ability to debate, organize, propose your thoughts, speak extemporaneously – all of these things were useful”, but he also emphasized the importance of letting students solve their own problems creatively, and the importance of learning to work as a team, recognizing that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”. He also stressed how the building of self-confidence in one’s own abilities through participation in something like MUN can reflect on capacity for transformative action beyond MUN. Osman agrees: working in teams helped improve his meta-cognitive skill of self-correction, and active involvement in MUN helped him balance his time between academic and social activities. He also found that MUN has improved his ability to deal with everyday problems:

In MUN you are always facing a new problem or new issues that you have to tackle, nature of tasks or challenges required are different; especially if [you are the] sec[retary]-gen[eral], it’s more managing people rather than research; if anyone’s behind it, what is the reason, if they need help, assistance, focusing on how to improve heads, secretariat; [it’s a] challenge to solve these problems.

And beyond all of this, he saw a clear connection between MUN and his capacity to make a difference on the macro-level:

[My transformative] capacity increased tremendously [at AUC] especially through MUN. [I] was attending a training [where an MUN alumna was] talking about how we are supposed to be active, MUN is the way we are becoming active; not oriented that much through civil society but making a difference at the level of university students.

Osman joined MUN because of his interest in political debate; as a secretary-general he has worked on improving political literacy and awareness of other students. CIMUN’s advisor

maintained that CIMUN is one of the largest in the world (around 400 participants), has been expanding to allow more students to participate, and has supported several similar organizations such the Model Arab League (MAL) to widen student access to the conferencing/modelling experience.

8.3.2.2 MUN at School but Not Beyond

Nassim, Sandy and Lina had experienced MUN-like activities at American International School (AIS) in Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Sandy had a “Model League of Nations” experience in school, where she represented Germany “and made it seem a victim of war” which helped her recognize and evaluate hidden agendas.

Nassim (mBADMam) had five MUN experiences at school, including one experience as an organizer. He mentioned how being a delegate (representing Israel in his first conference) helped improve his ability to tolerate different points of view, and his capacity to recognize his own biases:

I just think I'm always aware that there's a lot of perspectives and I always talk through my own perspectives – I'd understand why I am supporting Palestine versus Israel. I think it's my participation in MUN a lot – during school especially. Because in MUN you'd be a delegate for a country [while] all your beliefs might be against that country, but when it comes to defending that country you have to forget your own personal beliefs – understand and defend its perception as if it's your own – take me away from my own culture and beliefs and understand where another's beliefs come from.

When organizing the conference, he learned from holding the responsibility, because it was a student-run conference with “minimal teacher intervention”. That in itself helps develop student autonomy and responsibility.

He also feels MUN has positively affected his capacity for transformative action (though he recognizes this is inward-focused rather than externally focused on society as a whole).

I think it's [the willingness] to make a difference and having new experiences – feel the more diverse experiences [you have] in life, the better person you [will] be, the better view of the world. I can be like closed between only my house and my university... I think it's the opportunities around me and the fact that my nature would push me towards these opportunities. [What has influenced this, among other reasons, is participation in] MUN – trying to bring your beliefs and influencing others to accept them.

However, Nassim did not join MUN at AUC because he was unsure of the quality of the experience at AUC and did not want to “spoil it”.

Lina had several MUN experiences at school, which she said developed her skills at evaluating and making logical arguments. Her first MUN experience gave her the courage to speak publicly, and then as she repeated the experience, she eventually became less defensive and able to communicate better and develop the cognitive skill of self-correction. CIMUN-advisor mentions how he knew people who came into the program terrified of public speaking but left it confident and comfortable at public speaking. Although public speaking is not part of CT per se, confidence in speaking publicly supports one's ability to express oneself critically. Lina did not continue participating in MUN when she joined AUC because, she says,

The most beneficial clubs in AUC are the ones that take action to implement ideas to help society... rather than MAL/MUN [where we are] debating and [reaching a] resolution and in the end nothing [happens].

Whereas Osman believes he is making a difference by improving students' political awareness via MUN, Lina feels she needs to move beyond this into action in the wider society and actual communities. Osman himself mentioned NGO-type activities as a post-graduation goal. Is it possible that earlier experiences of MUN can help students gain confidence and start thinking of the wider society earlier? Also, note how Nassim and Osman's multiple MUN experiences and leadership positions increased the influence of MUN on them beyond just the delegate experience. This also implies that earlier MUN experiences give more space to "growing" within MUN and benefiting further. Kamal, who failed several interviews before getting accepted into any activity, joined several diverse activities instead of growing in any particular one – although he mentions this as a choice, the "delay" in getting accepted may have limited his chances at becoming a leader in any activity.

Other students' MUN experiences had less of an impact on their CT, so it is not a "given" that participation in MUN will necessarily impact CT strongly.

8.3.3 Developing CT in the World of Work via Internships

Internships offer immersion in an authentic learning environment which is relatively safe compared to a real job. Students have opportunities to apply what they have learned in real-life professional situations, potentially interacting with diverse people, dealing with ill-structured problems, and learning new skills. AUC students can obtain an internship via personal contacts, the help of instructors, or by applying to one of the vacancies announced by CAPS. CAPS office support includes job search and self-exploration workshops, as well as one-

to-one help with interviewing and resume-writing skills. CAPS staff told me they not only help students find vacancies with employers, but also offer to help employers to set up internships.

Of all the students interviewed, six mentioned internship experiences during the interview, and one mentioned it in a follow-up interview. Others did not mention internships⁹⁴. Below, I focus on particularly positive and negative internship experiences only.

Issues of quality of and access to internships emerged, and my interviews with staff from AUC's Career Advising and Placement Services (CAPS) explore the limits of their offerings to AUCians.

8.3.3.1 Student Experiences with Internships

Osman had a positive internship experience in Procter and Gamble Egypt's plant/factory, which helped his capacity in using resources to grow as a person. He was responsible for a project to "cut costs for the warehouse department – they gave me a figure of 1.9 million pounds". He said he "faced many challenges", including needing to modify plans due to logistical issues with implementation.

The amount of autonomy given to Osman in this internship and the complexity of the tasks assigned to him enabled him to apply CT and creative problem-solving in an authentic context. I myself interned and later worked at Procter and Gamble and the multinational places a lot of emphasis on the personal development of employees, including coaching interns. Access to such internships is limited, however, by the company's notoriously long and rigorous recruitment process, even for internships, as they often later hire interns for full-time jobs⁹⁵.

Nassim had two internship experiences. He secured his first internship experience via personal contacts, and consisted of menial tasks. The second was at Egypt's Ministry of Finance, where he found it good that he "was allowed to read a lot of reports concerning Egypt's economy... and the monetary policies and doing summaries and analysis and interpretation of all these. He says he did not seek out this second internship as it was not announced on the CAPS website. Instead, he thinks the CAPS office or one of his professors selected him and a "few of [AUC's] good students" to apply. He says "I don't have an amazing CV; only worked once

⁹⁴ note that I started probing about internships explicitly after a few students mentioned them spontaneously; those interviewed earlier were not prompted about internships

⁹⁵ I personally worked for P&G for two years, and knew of them long before that in my experience at CAPS

before that” but thinks it might be his educational background or a recommendation from his professors.

His experience highlights differences in learning experiences between different quality internships. It also shows that prestigious internships are not always equally “open access” for all students to apply. Although Nassim believes he does not have an amazing CV, I worked at the CAPS office myself and from interviewing him, I know the combination of extracurricular activities at school, the quality of his high school, and his previous internship all could have given him an edge over other students, if CAPS were asked to pre-select students for internships, as some employers request.

Noha secured an international internship while visiting relatives in the US. Her relatives worked at the company and helped her get the internship; the fact that she had US citizenship facilitated the logistics of working there. Her manager constantly prodded her to question rather than accept order, and she says how “my self-esteem and confidence in my own intelligence was limited because of education I had as a younger person”, but that the internship helped improve this. She said she was always inquisitive but did not always make an effort, but the internship improved her disposition to act on her curiosity versus her previous education which had discouraged it.

Noha’s experience shows that it was her own personal ambition to take advantage of her stay in the US by looking for internships, and her fortune to have the personal contacts to enable this. The quality of her internship was partly due to the intercultural learning involved, and partly due to a manager who encouraged her criticality.

Kenzy did not apply for any internships through CAPS “I don’t like interviews, or believe that I really do bad at interviews”. She had one unremarkable internship at a friend’s father’s company. Her friend told her “let’s go and just try, and that’s why I did the internship. Otherwise I wasn’t going to do it” of her own initiative. She is fortunate to have had a friend with the family contacts to provide such an internship.

Kamal, a computer science major like Kenzy, emailed me about his fortune in securing an internship in what he considers one of the top computer companies in Egypt, and he recognizes supply of internships is much smaller than demand. Having overcome his fear of interviews via his wide experience in extracurricular activities, Kamal had an advantage over someone like Kenzy. Kamal had also previously worked on-campus as a teaching assistant to

his favourite professor, a part-time work opportunity open to academic achievers, even if they have poor interviewing skills.

8.3.3.2 How AUC's CAPS Office Helps

The few student experiences outlined above show a potential for CT development in good quality internships, but that not all students have access to experiences where complex tasks are required, or work supervisors encourage CT. Those coming with more social capital (including personal contacts) that help them secure internships, or cultural capital (confidence/experience doing interviews, extracurricular experiences that attract employers, and the confidence and disposition to take "initiative") to pursue internships are at an advantage. Even then, quality of internships vary, and those with better social/cultural capital may have better opportunities in securing better internships (e.g. Osman, Nassim and Kamal); on the other hand internships acquired via personal contacts may not be of high quality (e.g. Nassim, Yasseen and Kenzy).

AUC's CAPS office "is committed to providing quality service to students, alumni and employers in the areas of career planning and employment" (CAPS, undated), and as such, this mission does not aim to develop CT, except in the area of thinking critically about career. However, it is their role to provide opportunities for students to gain good quality internship experiences. This could be done by increasing the pool of internships available to ALL students, improving quality and diversity of existing internships; improving "recruitability" by helping prepare students for interviews, etc.; and attracting students who would not naturally (of their own initiative) apply. These are the areas I interviewed two CAPS staff members on.

In terms of increasing the pool of internship opportunities, CAPS recognizes that demand for internships will always be greater than the supply offered through CAPS. Recognizing that many students will use family contacts, CAPS helps students improve their networking skills to create opportunities via faculty and professional contacts. However, CAPS does not proactively seek internship opportunities abroad because of visa and work-permit issues, as well as logistics of travel/accommodation costs, and the difficulty of taking responsibility for a student traveling alone. They do, however, have a career resources library that students can search for material on international job searching.

One of the CAPS administrators told me she felt that "AUC students from different educational backgrounds [are] used to waiting for things to happen to them" and that is why it is important

to offer them “introductory minimal experiences” where they either meet professionals on campus (called Career Mart), or observe a professional for a day or two in their work environment (Job Shadowing).

CAPS also provide optional consultation with companies to help them organize internships, and shares student feedback from previous internships with the same company. To enhance students’ learning after internships, especially when they have not gone well, a CAPS member discusses with them what may have gone wrong and what the implications are for their career or their future with the particular company and help the student to think “critically”⁹⁶ about the experience. Of course, the above is only done routinely for internships secured through CAPS, so that, assuming CAPS are able to improve quality of internships offered, the quality of opportunities secured via personal contacts remains questionable.

To improve student preparation for internships, CAPS have included a workshop for all incoming students at the FYE (First Year Experience) in which students practice creating their first resume. Students are free to seek CAPS advice at any time regarding the quality of their CV on a one-to-one basis with a staff member or a trained peer. CAPS also offers workshops and one-on-one support on career self-assessment, job search, and interviewing. To adapt to students’ schedules, CAPS has started offering parts of some workshops online. All internships are announced online, and since not all students are proactive in seeking help, CAPS looks at student CVs before activating their online account and calls them in for one-on-one advice before sending the CVs on to the organizations offering internships.

CAPS recognizes some students will not realize they need help until they are seniors, so it offers a last-opportunity condensed “conference” for those about to graduate, and ongoing support for alumni.

Even though I do not believe it is the role of CAPS to promote CT development, the post-internship discussion can help students reflect on the quality of their experience. However, CAPS staff would not be able to continue the discussion into the connection between theory and practice in all fields. This is where some of the academic authentic experiences can help (see section 8.4).

⁹⁶ Even though my interview with CAPS was targeting what opportunities they provide and the quality of them, one of the CAPS participants constantly tried to show how CAPS directly influences CT.

8.3.4 Summary of Extracurricular and Internship Experiences

Some students felt extracurricular activities and internships helped develop some aspects of their CT, and this seems to have occurred simply by immersion in the authentic context (as Lave and Wenger), but are there ways the experience could have been more educational? There was no planned reflection to enable students to decontextualize what was learned and recontextualize it to new situations and make links between theory and practice. It does seem, however, that some students were able to transfer and generalize what they learned (e.g. generally recognizing their own biases). It also seems that the value of the extracurricular or work experience varied depending on the level of each student's engagement with it, and peers' seriousness in the activity. The kind of CT developed may be limited to instrumental CT: trying to convince other people with one's argument in an MUN debate or in a fundraising meeting; working in a multinational to problem-solve within the company's existing structures. Peers in activities and mentors or supervisors in internships are unlikely to have CT as their main goal, so productivity, efficiency, or other kinds of learning and processes may take priority.

For example, received wisdom can affect quality of extracurricular experiences. Letting veteran MUN students train the next generations has great value in terms of building their autonomy and confidence, and helping them reflect on their own experiences in order to train the next generations. However a student leader may only be relying on "past experience and tradition" and would not be able to bring in other knowledge or experience outside his/her own MUN experience if they have never studied international relations (Muldoon, 1995, p. 30). In such cases, students may be learning political literacy while focusing on process versus knowledge (Muldoon, 1995; Lister, 1994). Muldoon found that AUC's CIMUN veteran students focused more on playing the game than on the substance of the discussions, a potential risk in any role play. Osman mentions his experience of other students making up facts to support their arguments, and I remember from my own experience people who did this eloquently.

Extracurricular student organizations, including MUN and the Student Union are hierarchical organizations, replicating some of the inequalities of hierarchies in the real world. This is beneficial in its simulation of reality, but may also promote the general acceptance of hierarchy as a way of life so that students refrain from questioning such hierarchies, unjust as some of them may be. The same can apply for some internships, if students fit themselves to

the organization structure and standards without questioning (Brookfield, 1987), or develop only instrumental criticality that benefits the company (Barnett, 1997).

Another area of development is equalizing access to authentic experiences: Activities and internships have similar barriers to entry: interviews, initiative, and past experience. Studies show that students with high school extracurricular experience are more likely to participate during college, as are students of higher ability and socioeconomic status (McNeal, 1998), and this occurred for most students I interviewed. My student interviews showed issues such as motivation, confidence, time management, and difficulty in getting into activities because of interviews or cynicism about cliquishness and power issues in activities.

Academic authentic experiences could potentially address these issues.

8.4 Classroom-Based Authentic Experiences

One way for an institution to encourage extracurricular experiences and improve CT development in them, is to incorporate similar experiential learning in academic courses (Kuh, 1995; Gellin, 2003). It can help solve several issues already identified with extracurricular activities and internships, but introduces a different dynamic.

First of all, there are fewer barriers to access, since there would be no interviews intimidating students with poor communication skills. Incorporating authentic experience in courses would also offer these experiences to students who would not have taken the initiative themselves, exposing them to a new experience which might encourage them to take initiative later if it helps them gain confidence, develop skills or recognize potential benefits.

One of the major flaws of non-academic experiences is the variation in quality and in students' ability to reflect critically on the experience to deepen the learning and encourage transfer, whereas this may fit more naturally within academia with a reflective, intentional instructor. After learning this in classes, students may later do this independently in other experiences.

Incorporating the instructor's experience, and adding academic credit modifies the dynamics substantially. On the one hand, the instructor's maturity could emphasize learning more, and could produce more chances for less-prepared students than would a student-led experience. However, the power of the instructor in the classroom potentially reduces the amount of student autonomy. Because of other course requirements, the experience would most

probably be less authentic or shorter than a complete authentic experience would be (e.g. an internship which immerses students in authentic work environments for 2-3 months, or participating in a year-long activity) but it would incorporate the elements of reflection and conceptualization that could help make it a more meaningful learning experience to more students, and promote transfer.

I use examples from some faculty I interviewed, where they described ways in which they felt their teaching style developed CT⁹⁷. The first example of community-based learning (CBL or service learning) in RHET is a good example of a reflective academic extension to social awareness in extracurricular community service clubs, promoting critical action; the second example in political science incorporates realistic case studies and role play, a good academic alternative to political awareness developed in MUN, developing argument skills with an emancipatory focus; the third example in engineering includes realistic case studies and field trips as a possible academic extension to career-awareness gained by internships, developing complex problem-solving. In all three cases, the instructor deepens the experience for the students than the non-academic alternative, but few instructors at AUC incorporate such methods⁹⁸.

The new core curriculum (see chapter six) includes a capstone that would cover either some work experience or research experience; and another capstone that would cover community-based learning or intercultural learning. However, since these are designed to be capstone courses, students are only expected to take them in their last year at AUC. The coming examples are not part of the capstone requirements.

8.4.1 Social Awareness via CBL in RHET

Although RHET courses inherently contain elements of understanding various perspectives for counter-argument and persuasion, RHET-instructor goes beyond that. She often picks themes related to diversity and dialogue, and often involves her students in community-based learning (sometimes also called service learning). She says this has a lot

⁹⁷ I did not prompt for authentic learning experiences; they came up naturally in the interview as ways of developing CT; however, I knew in advance that some instructors taught in this way

⁹⁸ The marketing instructor I interviewed also spoke of case studies, and has been working on collecting rich data for Egyptian-based marketing cases to be used in courses instead of international cases. There is other evidence of use of role play at AUC (e.g. History, see Mason 2009), problem-based learning in mathematics (e.g. Derby-Talbot 2009), and helping students connect physics to real-life problems (Abdel Rahman 2009). However, these cases were presented as innovations still being refined, and are not the mainstream at AUC. CBL is much more established (reviews found in Bali and Balkenbush 2009, Amer et al., 2009).

to do with interacting with people very different from the students, so we interact with refugee communities, underprivileged Egyptian communities...In order to just talk, hold conversations with these people, [students] have to be sensitive, to prepare ... before we enter a community, how to project ourselves, what language to use because we're not using English, power discrimination.

She feels transformative action and experiential learning are not separate from teaching:

Learning is not just about academic development – it's academic and social development. That's why student do brilliantly in all these Student Conferences⁹⁹.... So much learning happens there, so much motivation and enthusiasm that I found was quite divorced from what we do in class and we call learning. I have tried to integrate the two... marrying academic with co-curricular, social development. They love it, it makes sense.

She tries to help students see their development in three ways: “social, academic, personal” by using Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle in her classes, constantly emphasizing reflection, and helping students connect their community experience with academic and personal development. The instructor clearly has an interest in student empowerment and raising students’ social awareness not only theoretically, but practically. This is done by taking students out into real communities, and promoting student engagement and action to better the conditions of those communities, not just write about them.

Although there is scepticism about the academic rigor in service learning in academic circles, the benefits are becoming more known (Kezar & Rhoads, 2001; Amer et al., 2009), and of course depend upon the way the experiences are planned and implemented. Since CBL courses are now one of the capstone options of AUC’s new Core Curriculum, this should widen the range of students who benefit from them, if only at the senior level. The presence of the Gerhart Center provides pedagogical, logistical and financial support for instructors interested in pursuing CBL.

8.4.2 Political Awareness via role play and case studies in Political Science

This American Political Science/International Law instructor (POLS)¹⁰⁰ echoes some of the sentiments of CIMUN-advisor; he believes

⁹⁹ Such as MUN; but she also holds academic student conferences for students to present their research as in a real academic scholarly conference

¹⁰⁰ This instructor was very eloquent and so this case study retains much of his interview verbatim to show his emphasis on empowering students

[students] come in and are completely confused ... [they] lack self confidence about their own abilities... I don't care honestly if they remember what was taught in [the course]...I would like to see confident well-rounded, critical people who go out and do whatever they choose to do when they leave the university – that's how I think we can measure if we're doing a good job.

He feels it is more important to raise students' "confidence about their ability to acquire knowledge" and "allow them to realize they have capacity to do things." He wants AUC students to "take responsibility for themselves in ways they don't always do, [to take] ownership of their own educational process."

His focus is on empowering students to own their learning, not simply learn content. He encourages criticism of power, because

*All of us experience the hand of a dominant force in negative ways, [but we] need to be able to confront domination and look at it and say, 'you did that not because you have the right, or because you are better than me', I want that from [my] students. And of course **students today are very willing to criticize power and American power**, [but I teach them that they] need to control it, not just [take it out in] anger, [it is] not productive... **let's look [at it] critically in a...particular way that is productive [and] constructive**... [to] make arguments based in law, not opinion... I feel emotionally about it too... it's clearly wrong, [but if you go] to a court of law and [just] say 'this is wrong' – you'll be thrown out immediately.*

This shows he has an emancipatory outlook in making students aware of power conflicts, and helping them channel their anger against social justice in productive ways.

He thinks his subject matter (law) lends itself to teaching CT, although not everyone who teaches law teaches it that way. He avoids textbooks that give students "the law" and instead gives his students nothing but (real) cases, without commentary, then asks them to read the case and prepare a legal brief. In class, he questions students about the reasoning of the court, and what changes would have occurred had some facts changed, encouraging students to deal with "ambiguities, nuances". He also sometimes involves students in mock trials, assuming roles of lawyers/advocates and judges, and says that students love immersing themselves in roles. He will often have students represent positions different from their personal views, because in real life "you can't choose your client, choose positions you like, yet you must zealously represent these clients, [they] deserve every bit of representation, as much as the person you side with". He found some average students who perform brilliantly in role-play, where he makes them work extremely hard, but they enjoy it and find it less painful than direct questioning by the instructor.

Seeing behind the obvious and reading between the lines is what students are “explicitly tasked to do”, they need to analyze a case “in terms of biases, prejudices, knowing who the judges are, knowing they are very wealthy, white males [for example]”.

Understanding the “other” point of view is important, because international lawyers need to work on understanding judges and the power balances between states. He asks them “to look critically at this case: would this case have been different had it not been the US but Maui?... [I want them to] sort of grapple with those kinds of things ... Some people love it, [when there are] no right/wrong answers, some hate it [because] it’s too ambiguous.”

He sees variation in student readiness to be critical – some implicitly understand what is asked of them, while others can become more critical with practice and guidance, and others really don’t understand, but he is “not sure if they don’t know what is [being] asked or there is a... reluctance to be critical” for fear of questioning the authority of judges.

Some students are not comfortable expressing themselves – some want to simply repeat what’s been given to them , are comfortable staying close to the text, don’t want to venture on their own ...no one made them feel confident enough to say their view even if others may not agree.

But he has seen students who started out completely silent but became quite confident. Noha is one such student who has benefited from this instructor’s teaching style and his availability outside of class for further support.

8.4.3 Awareness of World of Work via Field Trips and Case Studies in Engineering

The professor of mechanical engineering I interviewed believes “engineering is about solving problems” and any engineer must “make sure you criticize things, don’t accept [anything] at face value. It’s what engineering is all about”. He believes “most of the jobs that our students are targeting, they will emphasize critical thinking...innovation, which in my opinion you can’t do without critical thinking” and feels his role is to prepare students for these careers rather than focus on technical knowledge and skills.

To develop students’ ability to think critically in real-life contexts, he designs class projects around his current consultations with clients in industry to engage students in authentic problem-solving relevant to the topic of the course. One of his students (Osman) considers him one of the best teachers he has had because of the way he brings in his industry experience in

class, helping students learn from his international consultations and compare reasons for projects failing in various countries. Osman says that most other teachers emphasize numerical problem-solving without connecting theory with practice, but this professor's emphasis on the latter "makes a major difference in every engineer".

By bringing in complex ill-structured problems and asking open-ended questions, the professor faces student resistance where he says some students complain "why is he asking us questions? We are here for him to teach us" and others who say "we are 400-level [about to graduate], you shouldn't put me under pressure – just give me what I need to learn and let me do what I have to do", but he says these are a minority, and that most students appreciate his pedagogical style. He feels

A key factor in [students] accepting or getting used to [learning this way] is if you relate [what you're doing in class] to their future career, to practical real-life application, and try to do that a lot. Before I force them, I make sure they see the benefit.

For example, he takes students on field trips. He told me how surprised students were when a Human Resources manager told them the company looks for graduates with innovation and teamwork skills, but that grades were not very important. In another course, he makes sure students learn "factory talk" so they can communicate with blue-collar workers which is not easy for privileged AUC students.

This professor is emphasizing CT, but it seems to be an instrumental kind of CT that would help students fit into the existing structures of the world of work: to meet the requirements of employers, and "handle" their subordinates (blue-collar factor workers) in their future careers.

Another professor of Construction Engineering said he teaches "very applied fields –if you teach theory it's just useless. You have to give theory and how we apply it", and so in his contract management classes, he asks students to bring real contracts from industry to analyze, and learn about understanding others' points of views by understanding contract negotiation.

Although student interviews showed that few engineering professors incorporate rich authentic activities in classes, all engineering students are required to take a one-credit course that involves internship. In both CENG 497 ("Practical Training") and MENG 497 ("Industrial Training"), which, according to the Course Catalog, involves a student reporting, presenting and evaluating an eight-week (or more) training experience.

However, I have observed one of these classes, and it consisted of students presenting a summary of their accomplishments in the internship and answering some questions, with little reflection. Conversations with several engineering professors confirms lack of reflection in the course, and a student told me how some engineering majors faked an internship certificate and presented a summary of an internship they had not actually experienced. If this is true and these students were not caught, it implies lack of depth in looking at each student's presentation.

Another issue with the Industrial Training course is that, even though it is a required course, AUC does not have formal relationships with industry partners to plan the internship experiences of students. Students seek internships¹⁰¹ through CAPS, personal networks, or the help of their instructors' personal contacts. The quality of the experience will thus vary depending upon how much emphasis the employer puts on interns' learning, and the lack of reflection in the course itself does not help students compare experience and critically analyze the quality of their experience. The post-interview reflections mentioned by CAPS staff may help students reflect on their personal goals, but cannot help them connect their internship experience with their academic learning.

8.4.4 Summary of Authentic Learning in Courses

Although community-based learning (CBL) is becoming part of the liberal arts curriculum, having CBL courses as optional capstones may be late in students' university life to promote further extracurricular activities beyond courses. The Gerhart Center's support for CBL may encourage more instructors to use CBL, or help those who already use it, in courses. The instructor interviewed had individual and social emancipation as part of her pedagogical outlook, and was able to fit CBL within RHET courses that do not necessarily lend themselves to this pedagogy.

The POLS instructor showed how his own critical stance has filtered into his teaching, and how he uses authentic experiences and role plays in class to help students view the complex interactions in international courts. He does not stop at the reality of the cases, but questions on students on how the situation would change if circumstances were different.

¹⁰¹ I was once told that Architectural Engineering students at AUC who lack personal contacts suffer from difficulties in finding appropriate internships. Even though CENG told me students are not allowed to do the industrial training at their own parents' firms, students with engineer parents have access to their parents' friends' firms, whereas others have no such access.

The “Industrial Training”¹⁰² course in engineering is a graduation requirement for all engineers, but has not been structured in such a way as to manage the quality of the internships or the reflection after it. The instructor interviewed incorporated authentic experiences in his classes, but they seemed to target an instrumental form of CT.

Although academic authentic learning experiences were suggested as ways to overcome access and quality limitations of extracurricular/internship experiences, the discussion section explores these limitations further, and compares the learning experiences outside and within academia for developing CT.

8.5 Discussion

The descriptions of students’ experiences show how community service activities can promote social awareness and capacity to communicate with people coming from different backgrounds, with community-based learning as an academic parallel. Experiences such as MUN have the potential to develop students’ argument skills, research and recognition of hidden biases/agendas as they become more politically aware, similar to some political science courses that involve role play. Internship experiences can potentially help students improve their capacity to solve ill-structured problems in an authentic context, and engineers are required to reflect on an internship experience, albeit superficially done. In what follows, I compare the quality of authentic learning occurring in the case studies, and I discuss whether participation in such activities numbs or promotes transformative action.

8.5.1 Quality of Experience – how authentic is the learning?

Although all case studies in this chapter refer to some form of learning situated in an authentic context, they are not equally immersed in the situated context, nor do they equally develop learning, and particularly CT. Important aspects in the scholarship on situated/authentic learning include the importance of reflection and abstraction/articulation (Herrington & Herrington 2006, Herrington & Oliver 1995, 2000), to promote transfer to other contexts, the combination of which can promote CT when combined with experimentation with concrete experiences (Kreber, 2001). Moreover, authentic experiences are expected to involve a degree of coaching/modelling, collaboration and engagement with multiple viewpoints (Herrington & Oliver, 1995, 2000; McLellan, 1994), again aspects which can develop CT.

¹⁰² It has a different name in each engineering specialization, but all are similar.

Community service, CBL and internships involve immersion in an authentic context, whereas role play and case studies are simulations and authenticity depends on the complexity of the simulation. In extracurricular activities, there is coaching and expert modelling by peers and sometimes by community experts, whereas in any class environment, this may be done by both the teacher and peers, and in an internship this may or may not occur with older colleagues. In the case of internships and extracurricular experiences, the quality of coaching may vary as this is not the main aim of the experience, as opposed to when it is part of a class. Reflection, abstraction and articulation are often characteristic of classes, where it is important for students to recognize the relevance of the authentic exercise to the theory learned in class and to their learning – but almost never in activities or internships. Collaboration is often involved in all authentic experiences, although in internships and case studies, collaboration may not necessarily be explicitly included in the design. All the experiences except internships will usually involve integration of multiple roles and perspectives, although some employers who involve interns in multi-functional teams can achieve this.

The closest cases to Barnett's model of critical being (1997) are the RHET and POLS instructors who show interest in social justice and emancipation, integrating developing the student's criticality about knowledge, self and the world. However, internship experiences and case studies seem limited to an instrumental kind of action (problem-solving), and most extracurricular experiences, lack explicit self-reflection.

While academic experiences have the benefit of teacher as expert model and the potential advantage of including reflection and articulation, doing activities within a class can reduce student gains in autonomy unless the teacher intentionally promotes it. Although in-class experiences may be less immersive and shorter-term, the benefit of guiding students through decontextualizing and recontextualizing may be the key to promoting transfer of learning (Perkins & Salomon, 1989).

8.5.2 Numbing or Encouraging Transformative Action?

Activities can promote CT through social awareness (e.g. via community service clubs) and political awareness (e.g. via MUN) (Tsui, 2000). Whereas Osman felt that MUN was his way of making an impact on a small scale by improving other students' political awareness, Lina felt MUN was relatively useless since it was not making a difference in the lives of real people whereas community service was more helpful, and Yasmine recognized that even community

service had only a small impact. Political literacy activities can risk increasing students' "sense of impotence to affect major issues, such as atomic weapons" (Lister, 1994, p. 69) and rouse "feelings of powerlessness towards human rights issues" (Lister, 1994, p. 70). But even Lina's point about making a difference in local communities is missing something, because community service activities that focus on philanthropy and volunteering may be insufficient for civic engagement without adding opportunities for political engagement (Colby, 2008). Osman's sense of satisfaction with merely affecting the AUC community seems to stop short of full-fledged political engagement. Although none of the students I interviewed mention this, AUC students have often led strikes, sit-ins and walks to the American embassy to protest US foreign policy in Palestine and Iraq. Despite this, Lash (2001) critiques AUC's elite students for their limited engagement with political issues, and critiques the administration for limiting/suppressing it. He mentions how AUC students are more likely to rally against increases in tuition and grievances over quality of food on campus than people dying in neighboring countries or injustices in Egypt itself. Even when AUC students rally for political reasons, their behaviour often seems to be mere "verbalism" or mere "activism" without sustained reflection (as Freire, 1970 would have claimed).

AUC is promoting social engagement via CBL in two ways: first, the newly-established Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement supports instructors in developing CBL courses (Bali & Balkenbush, 2009; Amer et al., 2009; Bali & Bossone, 2009), and second, CBL courses are among the options for "capstone" courses required of students within the new Core Curriculum (AUC Catalog, 2009).

These are positive steps, but leaving CBL to the capstone level may not be the best time. If students had a chance to experience CBL earlier in their university years, they could benefit from the improved awareness, confidence and reflective skill earlier, and might be encouraged to later participate in more activities (anecdotal research shows students who participate in CBL say they are likely to continue with community service afterwards). Also, once students have learned to reflect on their community experience within the framework of a course, it is hoped that they would transfer this to community experiences outside academia.

Given the importance of political civic engagement in Egypt's current context, I extend my argument below.

8.5.3 Community Service as a Prerequisite to Full-fledged Political Civic Engagement

For a revolution to succeed, a number of factors have to come together. The government must appear so irremediably unjust or inept that it is widely viewed as a threat to the country's future; *elites (especially in the military) must be alienated from the state and no longer willing to defend it*; a broad-based section of the population, spanning ethnic and religious groups and socioeconomic classes, must mobilize; and international powers must either refuse to step in to defend the government or constrain it from using maximum force to defend itself (Goldstone, 2011, quoted in Ardıç 2012 p. 13– my emphasis).

Ardıç (2012) posits that all four of these conditions occurred in Egypt (and though he wrote this in 2012, the same conditions occurred again in the summer of 2013). I emphasized the part about elites, because, beyond the military, AUC graduates are among Egypt's elites who have been (for the most part) disillusioned by the Mubarak regime, and joined people from various classes and perspectives to revolt in 2011 and 2013 (Muslim Brotherhood members not involved in the latter, of course). In this section, I show how *apolitical* engagement such as described throughout this chapter has contributed to eventual political civic participation of AUCians in the revolution.

8.5.3.1 Where is the Critical Action? (revisited)

I have already explained in chapter six why I believe none of the students I interviewed talked about student activism as a form of critical/transformational action. I showed that such activism has historically existed at AUC, and that post January 25, the AUC administration responded to the changing context to widen/loosen its freedom of expression policy.

But critical citizenship can develop as a result of participation in apolitical civic pursuits such as community service. Kamal, Yasmine, Lina and Osman all had strong engagement but mentioned nothing about politics. Yasmine and Lina both saw that some of the activities they were doing previously were not making enough of a difference to society, which may have provided motivation to go further later in their lives. Osman saw that promoting awareness on campus was one form of transformational action.

This section explores how adult civic engagement can be influenced by apolitical community engagement and critical exploration of justice issues in classes. I will briefly show both international theory (Westheimer & Kahne, 2006; Kahne & Westheimer, 1998; Flanagan, 2006), and primary research reported about youth in Egypt (Shehata, 2008; Assaad &

Barsoum, 2010; Population Council, 2010; El-Taraboulsi, 2011) and the Arab World (Underwood & Jabre, 2010; Mercy Corps, 2012) which supports the thinking that young people's participation in even apolitical civic or volunteer activities, predicts future political engagement and active citizenship of the kind involving demonstration and advocacy. I will then give examples of AUCians for whom this has occurred.

8.5.3.2 What the Research Says

Historically, theories of democratic education focused either on promoting CT on social and political issues, or experiential learning – but a combination of both, involving CT with situated action is expected to more holistically prepare learners for citizenship (Westheimer & Kahne, 1998). If the aim of developing CT is to prepare students for critical citizenship, then education should prepare students for active participation in society, building not only thinking, but also agency (ten Dam & Volman, 2004). Research shows that engagement in community organizations (even apolitical ones) predicts future civic engagement (Flanagan, 2006) and Arab World research confirms this (Underwood & Jabre, 2010; Mercy Corps, 2012). Promoting internal (or self-) efficacy is known to encourage political participation. Participation in civic associations promotes self-efficacy and social trust as participants form supportive community bonds, commitments to social causes (Kahne & Westheimer, 2006; Flanagan, 2006) and develop useful skills that can be transferred to political action (Underwood & Jabre, 2010; Mercy Corps, 2012). Self-efficacy can be encouraged via traditional or experiential learning experiences (Kahne & Westheimer, 2006), but promoting it without questioning structural and social justice issues can limit the criticality of the experience. External efficacy (belief that government can or does do well to improve the country) can also promote political activism when people are critical of their government's actions (Kahne & Westheimer, 2006) and in the case of Egypt, it has historically been negative (Assaad & Baroum, 2007; Shehata, 2008). Some of the reasons spurring the Egyptian January 25 revolution include violations of human dignity by police, and blatant rigging of parliamentary elections (El-Taraboulsi, 2011).

Research on Arab youth in 2010 showed that active Arab youth focused more on charitable or apolitical volunteer work, rather than political action to influence government behaviour (Underwood & Jabre, 2010), much like the AUC case studies in this chapter. Until recently, Egypt has had low levels of civic engagement, even on the level of volunteering – only 4.9% of youth ages 10-29 participated in any group or organization (Population Council, 2010), lower than their Arab counterparts in countries like Kuwait, Morocco, Yemen, and of course Palestine

and Lebanon (Mercy Corps, 2012) who constantly encounter urgent causes for activism. Egyptian youth's lack of political activism can be explained by its suppression by the regime, forcing youth to either use the internet as an outlet for their political voice, or risk arrest and police violence by protesting outside university campuses (Assaad & Barsoum, 2007; Shehata, 2008). The roots of the 2011 uprising can be found starting with support for Palestine in the early 2000s and Iraq in 2003, and then more recently with the April 6th 2008 movement and non-ideological groups that demonstrated against Mubarak's regime such as Kifaya (Shehata, 2008).

Research in the Arab world (Mercy Corps, 2012) indicates a strong connection between youth's previous participation in (apolitical) community service or civic activities, and adult political activism (including all four of these activities: voting, participation in campaigns/rallies, petitioning, and demonstrating/protesting). Political efficacy (belief that one can influence change) was connected with civic group membership as well as political activism (Mercy Corps, 2012). Though the relationships were not proved causal, theory and logic would lead one to believe that youth's participation in civic groups improves their later capacity for political participation (Mercy Corps, 2012). Civil society, even when apolitical, has provided a starting point for young Arab leaders, as initial voluntary opportunities exposed them to ideas and involved them with communities, all of which helps build critical consciousness, which can later motivate them for political action (Underwood & Jabre, 2010). Involvement in community groups also improves self-efficacy and even collective efficacy, as youth start gaining confidence in their ability to effect change, and later transfer this into wider political action (Underwood & Jabre 2010, based on Bandura, 1997). Because of this, experiential learning is deemed most appropriate for promoting citizenship (Underwood & Jabre, 2007).

8.5.3.3 What about AUC?

This chapter has shown how students' criticality has improved via participation in extra-curricular activities and some instructors' use of experiential activities in their classes. I have shown research on Egypt and Arab world youth for whom apolitical civic engagement leads to future political activity. I would now like to share some examples of AUCians making that leap.

El-Taraboulsi (2011), writing a few months after the revolution, gives examples of three Egyptian youth organizations which first, were precursors to the revolution, and second, had many members who became politically active during and after the revolution. Reading her

report, I noticed that two of the three organizations mentioned in the report were founded by AUCians.

1. Alashanek ya Balady (AYB) started as a community service club at AUC with social development goals (such as one of the activities Kamal participated in) and later became a model franchised beyond AUC. They focus on “sustained civic engagement and strategic social development” to alleviate poverty and other social problems, countering the more widespread charity model in Egypt (El-Taraboulsi, 2011, p. 17). AYB members participated in the revolution as individuals, and after the revolution responded by helping those who lost their jobs (especially those wounded during the uprising) via coaching, training, and loans to start small projects.
2. Nahdet el-Mahrousa (NM) NGO works on empowering young Egyptians by “incubating innovative projects” in various social development areas such as health, culture and education, with the end goal of promoting Egyptians’ active participation and sense of belonging (El-Taraboulsi, 2011, p. 16). I was once a board member of the NGO, and I know that it was founded mostly by AUCians¹⁰³ who were active on campus in activities like MUN, AIESEC, etc., and until now, the majority of elected board members are AUCians¹⁰⁴.

El-Taraboulsi (2011) highlights the apolitical activities of both organizations and says the members participated in the revolution in an “individual capacity”. Being an NM member, I know that many of the most active NM members were very active during the revolution and in protests beyond. After the revolution, NM responded by holding Salon el-Mahrousa sessions (a space for critical discussions bringing together policy-makers, academics and youth) on topics such as civic education and capacity building (El-Taraboulsi, 2011). In addition to these face-to-face sessions, NM has always had an

¹⁰³ In fact, many of the founders of NM had initially started their civic engagement via an organization similar to AYB above, called Fathet Kheir (FK), which gave micro-loans targeting underprivileged women in a particularly impoverished area in Cairo. Some of these members (joined by others not in FK) felt they wanted to make a different BEYOND just helping the poor in one community, and thus started NM. The one considered the “idea” behind both these initiatives is actually the same person. Many members remain affiliated with both organizations.

¹⁰⁴ The large number of AUCians is probably attributable to personal contacts. When I joined NM, I knew half the people there from AUC anyway, some of them close friends. New members usually entered by a referral system, and as an active member, I recruited many people for NM, most of them AUCian, since my study and workplace always included many AUCians (study/work at AUC, and previous work at a multinational which employs mostly AUCians).

email discussion forum with several special interest groups, where members have extensive critical discussions.¹⁰⁵

My point here is not that AUCians are more active than non-AUCians, but that AUCians engaged in apolitical activity became politically engaged citizens as the country's situation required political activism beyond their previous community development work.

Having said this, the low civic participation of youth in Egypt before 2011 implies the majority of participants in the demonstrations were doing so out of lack of external efficacy - i.e. criticism of the government and its blatant corruption and lack of respect for human dignity (as confirmed in El-Taraboulsi, 2011; Ardiç, 2012). So the conclusion for Egypt and AUC is that a largely uneducated and oppressed population with largely excluded youth (Assaad & Barsoum, 2007; Ardiç, 2012) can go on to protest without prior civic experience. However, prior civic experience predicts civic participation and therefore is a good thing to encourage whenever possible – especially for elites such as AUCians who, without this, may be disconnected from the wider community of Egyptians (and in fact, many who do not participate in community service or youth organizations are like this). I also expect that while anyone can be angry enough to protest, this activism is not the same thing which is needed now, post-revolution, to rebuild Egypt. Those with prior experience in community service have more awareness, negotiating experience and self-efficacy, which may be needed to negotiate with policy-makers as well as work on the ground for a better Egypt. Assaad and Barsoum's (2007) emphasize the centrality of civic participation for including youth in Egyptian society.

8.5.3.4 Sensitivity of AUC's Position

Citizenship education, like moral/character education, risks crossing the line towards indoctrination, even if it is indoctrination oriented towards social justice positions (although proponents sometimes do so unapologetically as mentioned in e.g. Kohn, 1997; Westheimer & Kahne, 1998,). It is thus controversial to suggest that a foreign institution be responsible for developing Egyptians' citizenship. It would be akin to the US exporting and imposing its version of democracy in Iraq.

¹⁰⁵ Participation in NM has personally improved my own CT, especially in the sense of questioning hidden agendas and questioning values and exploring social justice issues. Being part of a community of people working towards change in Egypt (even apolitical) definitely gave me a sense of optimism, safety, and motivation to continue working for a better Egypt, and as we started to see the fruits of our work, this gave us a sense of self-efficacy – we were able to effect change, on whatever scale. Several NM members who were studying in the West have returned to Egypt to have a more active role in its development. I believe some of them might not have been optimistic about returning to Egypt without the hope that NM provides.

Given AUC's American identity (regardless of individual professor's identities and affiliations), and given also Mubarak's regime's restrictions on political voice in general, AUC's pre-2011 position on student activism is understandable. Limiting citizenship engagement on campus to mainly apolitical student activities and community-based learning, with little political demonstrations is understandable. In addition, there are still opportunities for raising political awareness, albeit via particular courses, usually in the political science discipline, which may not be accessible to all students (e.g. the "seminar" course mentioned by Welsh, 2011 is most likely a senior-level course with political science pre-requisites and inaccessible outside the major).

Even now, post 2011, with an Islamist government in power, AUC's position is difficult. The new government is widely criticized by the Egyptian public for lack of meaningful reform, but even more so for continuing infringements upon human rights, and yet this government remains supported by the US. Individual faculty are free to act and react as they see fit, but it is understandably risky for AUC as an institution to take a more explicitly active role. Nor should Egyptians ask it to. But Egyptian individuals within AUC have shown willingness to embrace this responsibility and role over the years.

8.6 Conclusion

Moving beyond literature on correlations between activities and CT, I have shown case studies of development of CT in authentic learning contexts, including via extracurricular activities, MUN and internships. Problems with these experiences are barriers to access and quality issues, including lack of reflection and abstraction may limit the learning students gain. One way of surpassing both is to include more experiential learning within academic curricula, and I shared three such practices as CBL in RHET, role play in POLS, and case studies in engineering.

While non-academic experiences offer more depth and time of immersion in an authentic context than do academic versions, the quality of coaching/scaffolding varies, and often lack the reflection and scaffolded abstraction needed for transfer. On the other hand, academic experiences may not, for practical reasons, be completely authentic, but the intentional inclusion of reflection and abstraction may improve transfer (Perkins & Salomon, 1989).

Since students have unequal access to extracurricular learning experiences, including more of it in curricula can help develop their skills and recognition of the benefits so that they may

independently choose to increase their social or political awareness afterwards. Including authentic learning within curricula is also essential to ensuring students' CT transfers into real-life contexts of their personal lives, careers and citizenship. Developing student reflection early in college will enable them to better transfer learning in academic and extracurricular experiences alike. AUC's inclusion of CBL and internship-related courses as "capstones" just before graduation is important, but starts this too late for most students, and I would recommend including more authentic learning in earlier courses.

9 Intercultural Learning

9.1 Overview

In previous chapters, I showed how exposure to diverse disciplines was a factor in some students' CT, and how discussion of different viewpoints in courses (e.g. RHET) and activities (e.g. MUN) helped open students' minds. This chapter discusses how direct interaction with different cultures helped develop students' CT. The experiences mentioned in this chapter go beyond the exposure to the American education afforded by AUC to all students, and into a more general notion of intercultural learning.

This chapter focuses on how intercultural learning experiences have influenced some students' critical thinking development. I start by briefly outlining the roots of the terms and concepts used regarding globalization and intercultural learning in educational discourse today, showing how differently it is viewed from neoliberal, liberal, humanistic and critical, postcolonial viewpoints. I highlight the relationship between critical thinking and intercultural learning in previous research, and summarize three models of intercultural maturity that will be used to analyze students' intercultural experiences.

AUC's core curriculum encourages and offers experiences of intercultural learning, but their potential to develop critical thinking varies widely. I share case studies of individual students' academic and non-academic experiences that emerged in my interviews with them, and discuss limitations of each experience.

First, Yasseen's experience with cross-cultural dialogue via Soliya is described, and supported by additional research on other AUC students' experiences with it (Bali & Bossone, 2010). I discuss several limitations of Soliya as a learning experience, including power issues caused by the use of Western technology less available to Arab students; the use of the English language and the pedagogy of dialogue, both of which empower students who are more familiar with them. I provide examples of how my own experiences as a Soliya facilitator and facilitator-mentor bring out these and other power issues and question how the design and implementation of the program could be hindering students' capacities to benefit from the interaction.

Second, I discuss Noha's experience with a Comparative Religion course and how the instructor viewed it in our interview. I discuss the limitations of such a theoretical course on developing deep intercultural understanding.

Third, I share Lina's experience with an International Exchange course at the American University in Paris and show how AUC students have unequal access to this kind of enriching experience. Interviews with administrators responsible for enabling such exchanges showed how the process privileges some students over others.

Fourth, I share Noha's experience with an international internship, and the difficulties in replicating the benefits of the experience to other students.

Finally, I share how some students' criticality benefited from interaction with diverse others on the AUC campus itself, but show the rarity of such interactions and lack of opportunities for deep, meaningful, interaction.

In conclusion, having shared some of the benefits of intercultural learning to CT development, I discuss some of the common limitations of intercultural learning at AUC, and recommend some institutional changes that would help all students' CT benefit from intercultural experiences.

9.2 Intercultural Learning, Multiculturalism, Globalization and Internationalization

9.2.1 Globalization, internationalization – drivers for intercultural learning

Globalization and international education discourses seem to follow one of several different directions (Smith, 2003; Matthews, 2002). The first emphasizes globalization as a manifestation of neoliberalism, an extension of capitalism (Smith, 2003), emphasizing competition and commercialization of education (Matthews, 2002) and the attractions of bringing international students (Skelton, 2005). In this sense, globalization is spoken of as inevitable, and has been considered by critical theorists as a kind of exploitation, a new imperialism that globalizes poverty and inequalities (McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2001), provoking cultural resistances as certain marginalized groups feel their identities are threatened (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002). This is seen

especially with regards to global influences on education policy in Third World countries by organizations that control funding such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (Smith, 2003). This is because even though globalization seems to imply a flow of capital, knowledge and culture in all directions, it has mostly resulted in culture flowing from the West (particularly the US) to the rest of the world, and has been economically beneficial to the US/West. Educational institutions react by seeking to develop “global citizens” who would be able to function successfully in multinational corporations (Smith, 2003). Others have reacted to this phenomenon with resistance and nationalistic tendencies (Said, 2001a), but this can also take the more self-reflexive form of a postcolonial approach (Nayar, 2010; Said, 2001a).

There are more positive connotations for globalization as an opportunity for “humanistic dialogue” that seeks to create “sustainable human futures” (Smith, 2003, p. 35) and international education as “transnational connectivity, interculturalism, and reciprocal view of individuals and knowledge” (Matthews, 2002, p. 367). Although complete equality in such interaction/dialogue is not possible (e.g. because of asymmetries of power involved in the use of the dominant language), partial understandings can still be positive and attainable (Burbules, 2000; James, 1999). Partial understandings can even be desirable, where a partial understanding can be both “biased” and “incomplete” covering both connotations of the term “partial” (Ellsworth, 1989).

Postcolonial theorists such as Edward Said and Homi Bhabha have spoken about these phenomena as potentially positive, despite colonial influences. For example, at the AUC commencement address in 1999, Edward Said said:

The world we live in is made up of numerous identities, numerous ideas, lives, philosophies interacting, sometimes harmoniously, sometimes antithetically. Not to deal with that whole... is not to have academic freedom. We cannot make our claim as seekers after justice, if we advocate knowledge only of and about ourselves, knowledge only that is approved by a team of referees who decide what can and cannot be read. Who then will referee the referees? (Said, 1999/2007, p. 32)

Elsewhere, Said (2001) builds on this point by recounting his refusal to set a Palestinian curriculum that focused on affirming national identity (a kind of resistance to colonialism and globalization) without critically examining a more holistic worldview.

The various views of globalization and international education have highlighted the need for intercultural learning. Globalization from the neoliberal view requires universities to produce employees who can collaborate in a multinational work environment and travel the world for business, which requires a degree of intercultural competence. Universities also seek to attract international students for economic benefits and so must consider the impact of increasing diversity on the education offered. The increasing influx of international students to universities in the US, UK and Australia, among others, has been cause for rethinking pedagogical practices and their impact on these students, while trying to maintain standards of excellence (Skelton, 2005). On the other hand, a country like Egypt, which used to have only one foreign university, AUC, now has universities with affiliations in Britain, France, Canada and Germany, with more to come. As previously mentioned in chapter six, the impact of implementing a Western education in an Arab country can be complex, and raises issues of whose values are promoted by such an education.

From the humanistic and postcolonial view, the options for intercultural interaction have been expanding and are opportunities for learning about the human condition and individual growth, as well as a questioning of power structures, identities, and potential for social justice and critical action. The next section explores the terms intercultural and multicultural learning.

9.2.2 Different Conceptions of Multicultural and Intercultural Learning?

Although the terms multicultural learning and intercultural learning seem similar, their connotations can be quite different. Multiculturalism is often used to refer to the movement which started in reaction to racism in the US, and which attempts to enrich curricula with the cultures and experiences of minorities such as African-Americans, Latinos and Asians, sometimes also including other minorities such as women and Lesbians/Gays/Bisexuals/Transsexuals (LGBT) (Webster, 1997). In contrast, the “inter” in intercultural refers to interaction across diverse cultures that do not necessarily live side by side (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). In this chapter, I use it to refer to any experience, even if not in a formal learning context, that involves interaction with a culturally different “other” (following Gorski, 2008). Egyptians at AUC interact with international students who are mostly Arab or American, but may be from elsewhere. Egyptian AUCians are themselves culturally diverse: some are binational with a non-Egyptian parent or have

lived outside Egypt for long periods of time; some Egyptians¹⁰⁶ are Coptic Christians and the proportion at AUC¹⁰⁷ is slightly higher than the national average, plus there are Catholic and Protestant students; AUCians have different educational backgrounds that affect their worldviews, and a small percentage of AUCians are less privileged socioeconomically than the majority of their colleagues.

What follows are brief descriptions of the different models of thinking about attempts to bridge differences among different cultures. Many of the models originate from a US perspective, but can be modified to apply to other contexts. In an AUC context, the “dominant” culture varies according to the situation, as I will show throughout this chapter.

Those who emphasize **pluralism** or the “**melting pot**” ideal of the US may desire a peaceful harmonious outcome from including all students’ identities in the curriculum, but wish the end result to be one uniform American culture (Webster, 1997). This reduces the significance of cultural differences and foregrounds the dominant culture (Burbules, 2000), seeking to “assimilate” all to that dominant culture (Skelton, 2005) and has sometimes been termed “conservative multiculturalism” (Tomalin, 2007). Others prefer “**liberal multiculturalism**” (Tomalin, 2007; Burbules, 2000 calls it simply “multiculturalism”; Webster, 1997 calls it a “**salad bowl**” version of pluralism) which preserves and celebrates each individual’s cultural identity while all work together side-by-side (Webster, 1997), and emphasizes inclusion (Tomalin, 2007). These two views implement their pedagogy normally by including non-white versions of history and social sciences in the curricula, attempting to bring in non-Eurocentric views (as in Nussbaum’s, 1997 model of LAE), and celebrate difference in the classroom by bringing students’ own cultural experiences (Webster, 1997; Gorski, 2008). However, such inclusion can often be essentializing, forcing students to choose one culture over another if they are bicultural or transcultural (Webster, 1997) and may reinforce cultural stereotypes or make the non-dominant culture more exotic (e.g. Gorski, 2008 talks about presenting ethnic food and dance out of their cultural contexts). These stances seem to be tolerant of difference while avoiding any questioning of the dominant culture and its oppressive structures (Burbules, 2000).

¹⁰⁶ Official statistics known to be underrated so I do not cite them. Generally believed to be around ten percent

¹⁰⁷ I could not get the official statistics on this, but it is observable

Other stances include “**globalist**” or “**human-rationalist**” views that emphasize not only difference but also similarities in all of us as “humans” but such discourse assumes consensus is achievable in the end (Webster, 1997). In contrast, “**cosmopolitanism**” recognizes that not all differences can be reconciled or even understood, but while doing so, it can often limit the possibilities of engagement and critical questioning of different others (Burbules, 2000). Finally, “**critical multiculturalism**” focuses on how inequalities and oppression are affected by racist discourses and institutional practices (Giroux, 1997; Tomalin, 2007), seeking to create new cultural spaces and forming new identities and cultural practices that challenge hegemonic principles (Giroux, 1997). This is similar to “**anti-racism**” which seeks to highlight and challenge covertly racist or unjust practices in pedagogy (Skelton, 2005).

Two concepts often mentioned by critical authors on multicultural or intercultural learning are Giroux’s “border pedagogy” and Bhabha’s notions of “hybridity” and cultural “Third Space”. The use of spatial metaphors allows the visualization of other concepts such as “marginalization” and “centrality” (Jones, 1999).

Giroux introduces his notion of “border pedagogy” as follows:

Border pedagogy is attentive to developing a democratic public philosophy that respects the notion of difference as part of a common struggle to extend the quality of public life. The notion of border pedagogy presupposes not merely an acknowledgment of the shifting borders that both undermine and reterritorialize different configurations of culture, power and knowledge; it also links the notions of schooling and education to a more substantive struggle for a radical democratic society. It is a pedagogy that attempts to link an emancipatory notion of modernism with a postmodernism of resistance. (Giroux, 1991 p. 51)

The notion of borders between cultures can then be used to critique the conditions of domination that may have created those borders, understand the historical and social factors that influence them, and to then create pedagogical conditions that enable students to become “border crossers in order to understand otherness in its own terms” (Giroux, 1991 p. 52) and create new spaces that encompass cultural diversity and produce new identities.

Bhabha prefers speaking of cultural “difference” rather than “diversity”, and developed the term/concept of “hybridity” which maintains that each culture is not “pure”, that individual identities often comprise a combination of cultures, and that communication between cultures

occurs in a “Third Space” in which cultural difference is articulated, and which may have colonial or postcolonial influences (Bhabha, 1994; Bhabha, 1995). Lash (2001) considers AUC itself as a “Third space” between Egyptian and American culture, giving AUCians a cosmopolitan, hybrid worldview. Edward Said (1999/2007) articulates a similar view of AUC:

[O]ne of the innovations of an American University in Egypt is precisely that it encourages its students to experience not only their culture and traditions, but another set as well. This, I believe, is deeply enriching, perhaps unsettling, and the very opposite of homogenizing learning into only one approved form. (p. 32)

The term “intercultural” is sometimes viewed as more comprehensive than “multicultural” because it includes cultural interaction with both local and international “others” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005), and because some consider it to include intercultural interaction outside of formal schooling contexts (Gorski, 2008). I use “intercultural” here because multiculturalism seems to have connotations for specific kinds of programs in the US, and because I am referring to a much broader understanding of interaction between cultures.

Having said this, educators and researchers working in the fields of intercultural and multicultural learning often reference each other freely, because where multiculturalism tends to discuss interaction between white dominant majorities and minorities in the US, or other countries with large minorities, interculturalism encompasses similar power relationships between ex-colonized people and ex-colonizers or neo-imperialists (e.g. international students in the UK; Egyptian students at AUC). Although the specific contextual variables differ, many of the abstract concepts of difference and power are similar in any cross-cultural interaction.

Several authors have commented on the different ways in which inter/multicultural situations can be dealt with in educational situations. Tomalin (2007) suggests that those with a “conservative multiculturalism” stance use more didactic pedagogies that forefront the dominant view, whereas “liberal multiculturalists” have more student-centred approaches and seeks to incorporate students’ diverse cultural backgrounds into the classroom, while treating identities as fixed. “Critical multiculturalism” has a transformative purpose that goes beyond “liberal multiculturalism” in seeking to encourage critical engagement with issues of inequality and power, while treating identities as reconstructible. This latter view seems compatible with Giroux’s

“border pedagogy” and Bhabha’s “hybridity”, as well as Edward’s Said’s (1999/2007) view of the academy’s role:

...inside the academy...we should be able to discover and travel among other selves, other identities, other varieties of the human adventure. But, most essentially, in this joint discovery of self and other, it is the role of the academy to transform what might be conflict, or contest, or assertion into reconciliation, mutuality, recognition, creative interaction (Said 1999/2007, p. 33)

Intercultural situations can occur outside pedagogical contexts, in informal interactions, and can occur in pedagogical interaction without being recognized as such. Achieving intercultural understanding is difficult, if not impossible, without exploring the historical roots of the relationship between the communicating cultures (Said, 2001b). Intercultural experiences that do not have social justice as their end goals are likely to be unintentionally colonizing (Gorski, 2008), and even those with social justice goals still risk disempowering or disenfranchising the less-dominant participants, since the dominant members of the group are usually the ones who initiate and set the terms of the interaction (Jones, 1999; James, 1999; Gorski, 2008; Burbules, 2000; Ellsworth, 1989). I will explore these issues in more depth when discussing web-based cross-cultural dialogue (Soliya).

Some feminist poststructuralist educators have critiqued critical multiculturalism using their actual, situated experiences, and highlighted the complexities of applying the theories into practice to achieve actual emancipation (Ellsworth, 1989; Gore, 2003; Jones, 1999), for example concluding that those suffering one kind of oppression may never truly understand the oppression of another (Ellsworth, 1989), and that the less dominant others may sometimes find it in their best interest not to get into dialogue with the more dominant members of their culture as it can result in exploitation or be used for surveillance (Jones, 1999) (the extreme case being when dominant members engage in intercultural dialogue for the purposes of espionage). Individuals can also have both dominant and marginalized aspects of their identity at play in various contexts (Ellsworth, 1989). This is particularly relevant for AUC, as an American female instructor has the dominance of the US culture and power of being the authority in the classroom, but her Egyptian male students have the dominance of masculinity; also, Muslim students are the dominant majority in their own country, but the opposite in a Western setting.

For the purposes of this chapter, I refer to intercultural learning as any interaction between AUC students and students they considered, in our interview, to be from another culture. Such interactions range from the informal interaction with culturally-different others in Egypt or abroad, whether that be a person or idea of a different nationality, religion, ethnic origin, or even a person from one's own country, religion and race who has a very different background and way of thinking. Such experiences can range from informal as meeting international students in Egypt, to international exchange experiences, to structured cross-cultural dialogue. Not all of these interactions have intercultural learning or social justice as their goals. In sections 9.4-9.6 I will describe students' different experiences and how they impacted their critical thinking, while also critiquing the limitations of each experience. Before doing this, however, I will elaborate further on the relationship between CT and intercultural learning.

I have already tackled issues related to AUC itself being a bicultural institution offering an American education (chapter six) in the English language (chapter seven) in Egypt, and so this chapter will tackle intercultural interaction outside these two basic aspects of an AUC education.

9.3 CT and Intercultural Learning

The majority of students who mentioned the impact of intercultural experiences on their critical thinking referred to how it helped them recognize and understand different world views, recognize their personal biases, and become more open-minded. A few said intercultural experiences helped them question religious authority and media. Even though the majority focused on only a few aspects of critical thinking in my definition, these aspects, particularly the understanding of different world views, are central to critical thinking development.

Even though evaluating different world views does not appear directly in the Expert consensus on the definition of Critical Thinking (Facione, 1990), Richard Paul's (1994) definition of "strong sense" critical thinking centres around the capacity to incorporate diverse world views in one's thinking, and considers egocentrism and sociocentrism as signs of uncritical thinking. King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) definition of intercultural maturity considers immaturity in cognitive intercultural development akin to Perry's "dualistic thinking" and King and Kitchener's pre-reflective thinking— models which I have previously shown contain common elements with

definitions of critical thinking, whereas the most mature person would have the “ability to consciously shift perspectives and behaviours into an alternative cultural worldview and to use multiple cultural frames” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 576). While some agree with Paul (1994) that CT requires the teaching of multiple perspectives and increasing students’ sensitivity to different contexts (e.g. Pithers & Soden, 2000), and empirical research shows correlations between experiences with diversity¹⁰⁸ and CT (Pascarella, Palmer, Moye, & Pierson, 2001; Laird, 2005), this may be insufficient if the exposure to diversity does not involve actual critical engagement with diverse others (Lee, 2005). Moreover,

[C]riticality is a function of collective questioning, criticism, and creativity, it is *always* social in character, partly because relations to others influence the individual, and partly because certain of these activities (particularly thinking in new ways) arise from an interaction with challenging alternative views. (Burbules & Berk, 1999, pp. 61-62, italics in original)

Whereas criticality needs this exposure to diverse views (Brookfield, 1987), individuals who are never exposed to diverse world views are less able to understand them:

Individuals who have received largely monocultural socialization normally have access only to their own cultural worldview, so they are unable to construe (and thus are unable to experience) the difference between their own perception and that of people who are culturally different (Hammer et al., 2003, p. 423).

This seems to imply that exposure to diverse views without exposure to diverse people would not succeed. Interacting with culturally-different individuals exposes one to such alternative views, but to make these encounters critical, Darder (1997) recommends a cultural critical pedagogy whereby

Students can learn to make problematic their views of life; search for different ways to think about themselves; challenge their self-imposed as well as institutionally defined limitations; affirm their cultural and individual strengths; and embrace the possibilities for a better world. (p. 342)

Edward Said (1999/2007) similarly critiques the teaching of a conformist ideology to the exclusion of others, and prefers having students become “travelers” across cultures while thinking critically and experimenting with different traditions and understandings. Said is himself the product of a

¹⁰⁸ By “experiences with diversity”, this means courses about diverse cultures, workshops on diversity, interaction with diverse people

colonial education, and in a position to recognize that nationalized curricula in Arab countries were a reaction to previously colonizing curricula that emphasized superiority of Western cultures. However, he finds such nationalistic models dogmatic and resistant to questioning and scepticism, potential tools for state hegemony, while a more open approach to discovering other cultures promotes more desirable critical thinking and autonomy.

However, universities will often expose students to these various perspectives without emphasizing conflicts, and this masking or denying of conflict is in itself an imposition of power (Burbules, 1986) – a kind of inclusion that neutralizes conflict by showing plurality. It can be perceived as a neo-imperial mode of control applied by including differences in a non-threatening way, reducing differences to culture but not politics, removing space for resistance and struggle based on legitimate conflicts (Hardt & Negri, 2000, cited in Nayar 2010).

Combining all of the above implies that intercultural learning is both a factor in developing CT and indirectly an element of CT – for what is “understanding of other world views” and “recognizing one’s own biases” but ways of interacting positively with other cultures? But it is also a factor in developing CT, because how would one develop these abilities without exposure to other cultures? One can do it via exposure to different viewpoints, possibly even within one’s own mind (dialectical/dialogical thinking) but one can do it so much better by authentically engaging these other viewpoints as expressed by real people who hold them in all their complexity. Exposure to diverse viewpoints can initially lead to an “anything goes” attitude, similar to Perry’s level of “multiplicity” - but deeper engagement with different cultures is needed to go beyond simple relativism (Nussbaum, 1997) and to more critical understandings of difference (see models later in this section). Students unreflectively exposed to different cultures can fall into normative and descriptive vices, which exaggerate similarities and differences among cultures, without understanding them deeply (Nussbaum, 1997). Moreover, if intercultural learning is seen as just a way to develop understanding of different worldviews, without questioning power differences, then it is like liberal multiculturalism and may develop only an instrumental CT.

But since intercultural interactions almost inevitably involve unequal partners (Said, 2001) with asymmetrical power and access (Burbules, 2000), this means that differences in cultural capital (Jones, 1999) and “asymmetrical capacities” in dealing with intercultural situations lead to

“asymmetrical opportunities to engage in intercultural criticism” (James, 1999, p. 599). However, conditions of power asymmetry can themselves foster critical thinking of both the dominant and marginalized individuals, particularly if these power differences are made explicit (see Soliya case study).

Asymmetry in intercultural interaction occurs on both macro and micro levels. On the macro level, the individuals who are “dominant” in society have more power, so for example white males in an interracial dialogue have more power which often translates to more confidence and domination in dialogue than females or individuals from minority races or immigrants. On the micro level, the language and format used for dialogue gives power to some groups rather than others. Granted, in most instances, those are the language (Agabria & Cohen, 2000) and terms (Jones, 1999) of the dominant group, but may not always be so. On the other hand, the less dominant participants may have some power in the sense that they often have the personal experience needed in the dialogue (Jones, 1999), can dominate conversations by “talking back” (Agabria & Cohen, 2000), or can individually have strong or eloquent personalities. Again, the same person can have both a dominant and minority position in the same context, e.g. white female teacher with male students of colour. Particular individuals who are cultural hybrids or have more cultural capital are more capable of understanding different worldviews and so may be able to gain more from intercultural interaction.

This is why looking at models of intercultural maturity would help in the analysis of the development of CT via intercultural learning. Even though the three models I discuss focus mostly on developmental psychology without necessarily discussing sociocultural aspects in depth, they are useful in providing a partial understanding of individuals’ experiences in intercultural situations, if used critically (Guilherme, 2002), and they have parallels with CT development.

Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman’s (2003) “Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity” builds on Bennett’s (1993) model which assumes that as “one’s experience of cultural difference becomes more complex and sophisticated, one’s potential competence in intercultural relations increases.” (Hammer et al., 2003, p. 423). In this model, individuals move from ethnocentric stages (similar to Paul's, 1994 "weak sense CT") to ethnorelative stages (similar to Paul's, 1994 "strong sense CT"). The ethnocentric stages involve a person starting out at "denial" (seeing "other" as

distant and even less human) moving to a stage of us/them thinking, which can manifest in either "defence" (defending one's own cultural against others), or "reversal" (being overly impressed with other cultures), then reaching a stage of "minimization" that trivializes differences among cultures or romanticizes the "other". Ethnorelative stages move from "acceptance" of multiple viable worldviews, to "adaptation" in terms of incorporating different worldviews in one's thinking and behaviour (similar to Bhabha's notion of hybridity), and finally "integration" as one becomes able to move in and out of different cultural worldviews, belonging to none (similar to Said's world travellers).

King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) "Developmental Model of Intercultural Maturity" shows how maturity in intercultural competence involves three dimensions: cognitive development (which builds on King and Kitchener's model of Reflective Judgment and Baxter Magolda's model of cognitive development, discussed in chapter two), intrapersonal (metacognitive) and interpersonal development.:

1. The cognitive dimension of intercultural competence requires questioning, and the ability to understand different worldviews;
2. The intrapersonal dimension requires metacognition, questioning of personal biases, engaging challenges to one's own views, integrating aspects with one's own identity
3. The interpersonal dimension requires engaging with different others without judgment, and going beyond this into meaningful interaction, appreciation for difference and willingness to work for rights of others.

The three dimensions are intertwined, such that it is difficult to reach a higher level of cognitive development if one has not started to mature on the intrapersonal level. For example, it is difficult to develop a full awareness of different perspectives when one is not aware of one's own values. Similarly, increased maturity in the interpersonal dimension helps develop the other two dimensions as interaction with different people raises awareness of different worldviews and makes one question one's own biases. Bakhtin's (1961) statement below seems to confirm the connection between understanding oneself through interaction with others:

I am conscious of myself and become myself only while revealing myself for another, through another, and with the help of another (quoted in Emerson, 1983, p. 257).

There are some clear parallels with Hammer et al.'s model – for example, the final cognitive stage is similar to Hammer et al.'s final “integration” stage; the first intrapersonal stage sounds like “denial” and the first cognitive stage sounds like “defence”. However, this model goes beyond Hammer et al.'s in reaching a final interpersonal stage that shows a willingness to engage in social action for others.

Byram's model (cited in Byram, Nichols & Stevens et al., 2001) of "Intercultural Communicative Competence" was initially developed for teaching culture with foreign languages, and its definition encompasses knowledge, skills and values of intercultural competence that are components of CT. It is not strictly developmental, but shows different dimensions of intercultural competence, including attitude, knowledge, interpretation, interaction, and critical engagement. It stresses critical thinking aspects such as open-mindedness, understanding different worldviews, understanding one's own biases, and critical action. The model was initially intended for the teaching of culture via teaching language learning, and has the capacity to focus on a critical approach to intercultural interaction (Guilherme, 2002), which I find more intentional than Bennett's and King and Baxter Magolda's model described earlier. For examples, Byram et al., (2001, p. 7) write:

It is not the purpose of teaching to try to change learners' values, but to make them explicit and conscious in any evaluative response to others. There is nonetheless a fundamental values position... which acknowledges respect for human dignity and equality of human rights as the democratic basis for social interaction.

This section has discussed the theoretical relationship between CT and intercultural learning. The following sections turn to the practice of intercultural learning and its influence on CT at AUC.

9.4 Intercultural Learning at AUC

AUC already situates itself somewhere between Egyptian and American culture (discussed earlier in chapters one and six), but it also clearly recognizes the need for intercultural learning. First, one of the possible capstone options in the core curriculum is described as “International Perspective” and encompasses video-conferencing, international exchange and other courses that explore various cultures. "Cultural Competence" is also one of AUC's overarching learning outcomes:

AUC graduates will have an understanding and appreciation of Egyptian and Arab culture and heritage, as well as an understanding of *international interdependence, cultural diversity, and consideration for values and traditions that may differ from their own*. In addition, AUC graduates will have an aesthetic awareness of the various modes of human artistic expression and will be able to *collaborate effectively in a multicultural context*. (AUC Mission and Learning Outcomes, undated, italics mine)

This description seems to take account of the intrapersonal aspects of King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) model by foregrounding developing understanding of students' own Egyptian and Arab culture before introducing aspects of diversity. Most of the tone seems to imply a liberal multiculturalism that focuses on appreciation of other cultures, but the last part using the term "effective collaboration" has a slightly neoliberal tone which I interpret to suggest multicultural understanding as a means to an instrumental end, such as success in a multinational corporation.

I will focus this chapter on ways intercultural experiences develop CT. The following opportunities for intercultural interaction are available at AUC:

Academic:

1. "Arab World Studies" requirement for reflecting on their own culture.
2. One of the capstone options is "International Perspective", which encompasses advanced-level options of #2 and #4 below, as well as video-conferencing dialogue courses.
3. "International World Studies" requirement. Students can take courses that discuss other cultures (e.g. comparative religion) but not necessarily include people of other cultures in the classroom. See section 9.5.2.
4. Local students can participate in intentional activities or courses that expose them to people of other cultures (e.g. video conferencing courses, OneAUC programs, Soliya - see section 9.5.1). In these situations, the majority of "others" are Americans and interaction would be in English.
5. Local students travel on an international exchange program where they learn for a summer, semester or year abroad. By their senior year, 20% of students have done this (National Survey of Student Engagement [NSSE], 2010), although this number includes international students, most of whom are at AUC after having studied in their home country. The majority of these programs are in the US, but there are a few in Europe, Canada and Japan. See section 9.5.3.

6. Local students interact with international students in regular classes, although I will show that such interaction is limited, and international students are rare in the most popular disciplines for Egyptian students.

Non-Academic:

7. Local students can interact with international students spontaneously, although we will see that this is rare (as is the case everywhere in the world, see 9.6.2), even in the rare occasion that these students are encountered in courses.
8. Local students may travel to do a summer work internship abroad, but these opportunities are very few at AUC, as CAPS have explained (section 9.6.1).
9. Interaction with diverse students who are not necessarily non-Egyptian – different social class, religion, ways of thinking. According to Institutional Research (2010) 45% of AUC students say they “frequently have serious conversations with students who are different from themselves in terms of their religious, political, or personal belief” (p. 2), although this does not necessarily mean the “different” person is very different culturally. The majority of international students are from the US or another Arab country, with a few from other countries.
10. There are some on-campus activities and events such as “International Day” and “Ramadan around the World” (which are mostly “exoticizing”), and longer-term activities such as “conversation partners” and “Bridge”. I have worked on some of these with faculty, and we found them difficult to maintain if they are not formal elements of courses.

The next section will discuss students’ experiences with each of the above and how they perceive it has developed their CT. In addition to student interviews, I have included interviews with administrators at AUC involved in intercultural learning, a faculty member, my own experiences in participating in some of these activities, and other research at AUC that has explored aspects of these experiences (e.g. Bali & Bossone, 2010).

9.5 Academic Intercultural Experiences: Soliya, Comparative Religion and International Exchange

9.5.1 Soliya

I start with Soliya and give it more space in this discussion because it is the most structured and intentional of the intercultural experiences included, and it is also a scalable one in the sense that it does not require the cost or time of travel. It also develops almost all aspects of intercultural competence and maturity, as opposed to other experiences mentioned in this chapter.

Soliya is an NGO which uses video web-conferencing to facilitate cross-cultural dialogue between students in the US/West and Arab/Muslim world. The program is constantly evolving, but in this section, I refer to its design during 2006-2009, during which I conducted my thesis interviews and participated in Soliya as facilitator, coach, and facilitator-trainer (the latter two roles gave me insight into other facilitators' struggles as I observed and trained them). At this time, Soliya's mission statement was:

Soliya seeks to develop a global community of young adults who individually and collectively use new media and communication technologies to promote understanding and empathy within and between their societies. Using the latest in “social media” technologies and cutting-edge methodologies, Soliya is providing a new intercultural generation of young adults with the skills, knowledge and relationships they need to develop a nuanced understanding of the issues that divide them. By offering unique training, tools and opportunities to convey this understanding to their broader communities, Soliya is empowering these young adults to play a constructive role in creating a more informed, just and peaceful global society. (Soliya Mission, undated)

Participants are usually around 8 students, half from each region of the world, each participating in a university course or extracurricular activity which has Soliya as a component. Students meet in their cross-cultural groups once a week for two hours throughout the semester, with two facilitators, one from each region. Students mainly discuss issues of identity, culture, politics and religion. As the program evolved, two “strands” arose, one focusing more on academic/political issues, and the other less academic and more personal. Each semester, there are different options for cross-cultural and individual assignments/projects.

The greatest influence on Yasseen's critical thinking was his participation in Soliya. Yasseen became a participant as part of a Mass Communication course he was taking – he had not known before registering for the course that Soliya would be part of the requirements, so feels fortunate that he stumbled upon this experience. As his first intercultural exposure, it changed the way he looked at others. Even though Yasseen had travelled outside Egypt beforehand, he did not mention this as an influence on his CT or knowledge of other cultures. Soliya influenced him so much that he has decided to become a facilitator himself.

Soliya helped him evaluate different worldviews. For example, the exposure for the first time to someone who “didn't believe in God”, and being in a situation where he could listen to her views and express his own with mutual respect. He says it “made a big difference” because before AUC he was “not exposed to many people”. Now he feels more exposed to people from different backgrounds and views, and has learned to respect them. Although he felt the AUC system helped develop open-mindedness, the Soliya experience expanded his horizons beyond that, “I think Soliya did something big for me!”; even though it was “just in a course”, it impacted his personal growth.

The Soliya dialogues helped Yasseen improve the soundness of his arguments as he expressed himself in front of people with diverse views, but more importantly, he felt it helped him understand his own biases as well as others'. He started to understand his own stance towards Palestine and Israel, and noted how other students tried to be objective beyond their personal biases. He was surprised to learn that a woman in his group did not support the Iraq war even though she had herself served in the US army.

Yasseen was able to develop in terms of intercultural sensitivity (Hammer et al., 2003), possibly starting from a lack of understanding of different views to an acceptance of differences with respect. In this sense his criticality has increased relative to himself, but there was no evidence of his developing a criticality of questioning the context of such an intercultural dialogue or that the experience has spurred him towards action in the broader context. Other AUC students' experiences showed different perceptions, and I present some of them next.

Bali and Bossone's (2010) study of students attending Soliya as part of a Journalism course, showed that half-way through the semester, the majority of students participating in Soliya

improved their abilities to express their opinion to people of other cultures (74%), understand different worldviews (67%), and listen/learn about other cultures (63%). Students in that survey complained of technical difficulties accessing Soliya and did not feel their learning improved in all expected areas (e.g. only 26% started understanding their own biases). However, by the end of semester, student reflections on the Soliya experience were more positive, as some students said (Bali & Bossone, 2010 p.19-20):

[Soliya] provided me with an idea of how other people around the world view certain important issues...sometimes the media... is very biased.

Another student talked about Soliya's impact on her open-mindedness:

I learned that when we take more space to explain the good intentions, we have better opportunities to show up the thing that will never be achieved in narrow-mindedness discussion.

Another student talked about her improved acceptance of diverse views, and understanding of politics:

I've learned ...how to expand my knowledge through listening to other people's view[s] and opinions. I have become more tolerant and respectful to others point of view even though I disagree with them. I plan to read more about politics to widen my knowledge and get more involved in activities that include politics in the future.

Whereas some students praised the technology, others identified how it can become a barrier.

However, this student still found Soliya "one of the most useful experiences" of his life, because:

I was able to understand many concepts in different cultures and civilizations and to make new friends.

On the long-term benefits of Soliya, one student said:

It really opened my eyes to how complacent we have become to the society we live. I hope to do my part in creating more awareness further down the line in my academic career, and not just because I am forced to take part in a program for a class but because I want to do something.

This last student's response shows s/he had taken the learning in the sessions beyond friendship and understanding, even beyond theoretical knowledge, and into the realm of social action.

My own multiple roles with Soliya have been largely positive but have also heightened my awareness of difficulties of achieving the program's mission of promoting more peace and justice in global society.

Soliya has a flexible but intentionally-designed program which provides facilitators with a curriculum that includes a variety of activities to choose from in order to meet the interests of their particular group of students. Soliya is the only experience in this chapter that involves all aspects of intercultural competence (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005), as it first tackles the intrapersonal aspects by exploring identities, biases and identifying power issues; it also focuses on the cognitive aspect via readings, discussions and activities around cross-cultural themes; and conducts this all in a process that develops interpersonal maturity via dialogue, and reflection on the process itself and the conditions that foster fruitful cross-cultural communication. Facilitators are trained for several weeks on the use of the technology, the skills of facilitation, and ways of addressing the inevitable power differences in such a diverse group. Soliya has the advantages of allowing people from different countries in the world to meet without travel costs, and to meet in a safe environment that is intentional to cross-cultural understanding – therefore it does not require students to have the personal courage to approach another person to talk about deep-seated and controversial topics.

The following situations highlight potential issues in intercultural dialogue in Soliya, based on my personal experiences.

9.5.1.1 Discussion of the Veil

In a discussion I was facilitating, we were all shocked when one of the Muslim male participants stated his belief that Muslim countries should have laws requiring women to wear the veil (head-covering) in public. It was refreshing for someone to not be “politically correct” but shocking for me because this person’s views on everything else had seemed liberal and rational; it was also disempowering as a Muslim woman not to be able to respond to this (which I considered unjust and irrational) since I was supposed to maintain neutrality as a facilitator. Thankfully, the Muslim female students (some of whom wore the veil) in the group were able to respond eloquently and keep the discussion going. This was an interesting situation, because whereas in most situations, students from the less-dominant Arab/Muslim side are likely to form coalitions (James, 1999;

Agabria & Cohen, 2000), the coalition this time changed to “Muslim females” arguing with “Muslims males”. In some ways, this must have been a great educational experience for the Western students, witnessing firsthand this controversy which regularly occurs in Muslim societies. It was also positive that despite male dominance in societies worldwide, the female perspective was heard, and the women were not shy about expressing themselves. In other ways, it was a situation where the Western students “learned” from the Muslims, in a kind of “spectacle” way, without participating to clarify issues, which might have reinforced stereotypes of males oppressing defiant females based on the discussion between three females and one male (there were no other males to counteract this person's views); whereas the Muslim students are unlikely to have actually learned much from the discussion. Also, some Muslims would have felt uncomfortable discussing this in front of a non-Muslim audience, and I can imagine that the male student’s awareness of the audience may have restrained him from expressing his views fully. In retrospect, we, the facilitators, could have taken the issue further beyond the veil specifically and into a broader discussion of gender, or the relationship between church and state, and making parallels between this discussion and ones relating to e.g. abortion in the US, or comparing the male students’ suggestion to the French case of banning the veil in schools. Such an abstraction might have included the American students more and allowed them to participate without necessarily offending the Muslims. We also could have asked the female students how they felt when they heard their male colleague make his statement, rather than just focus on their rational response to it. Because this was a spontaneous topic, we as facilitators had not planned it and so gave students space to express their views freely.

9.5.1.2 Discussion of Homosexuality

In a session I was observing in which the Arab facilitator was absent, there was a discussion about homosexuality, I noticed that the Western-educated Arab students, more comfortable discussing this topic than the rural Arabs who had less exposure to it, were discussing the issue with sensitivity and talking about it in a rational, politically correct manner. Whether this tolerance/acceptance was genuine or not, I could not tell. On the other hand, two Arabs from more rural regions were speaking from the perspective that homosexuality is a sin, and one of them kept repeating “we deny this act”. Although in English, this appears to be saying “we say this act does not happen”, as a native Arabic speaker, I understood that the student was actually

translating from Arabic an expression which actually means “we (Muslims) reject the morality of this lifestyle”. As the discussion continued, these students kept repeating “we deny this act”, getting misunderstood, and themselves misunderstanding what the American students were saying, without anyone mediating to clarify. In this sense, the differences in participants’ worldviews and variations in linguistic abilities limited understanding. A further frustration in the discussion came up when one of the Western-educated Arab students asked “why is homosexuality OK for adults but not for children?”, and the American students were unable to explain fully. This conversation showed how controversial topics may need more time and preparation than was possible via Soliya; it also showed how each individual participant takes on the burden of representing a point of view they may not be able to extemporaneously present clearly to other participants.

9.5.1.3 Misunderstanding by Facilitator

I was observing a session where one student was typing (not speaking) that she did not understand one aspect of what was being said by the facilitators. When the (Arab) facilitator started re-explaining, another (American) student wrote “ditto”. The Arab facilitator stopped explaining and went on to another topic.

When watching this recording of the session, I was surprised by what happened and I asked the facilitator why she stopped explaining after the American student wrote “ditto”. She said she had never heard the word “ditto” before, and thought (given her French educational background) that he meant “avant dit” (i.e. you have already said this) rather than “I also” did not understand. I told her that I myself learned the expression from watching the film “Ghost”; I imagine those who are not exposed to American pop culture will miss the subtleties of such expressions that are unlikely to be part of any formal teaching of the English language. This example highlights the problems of having a facilitator who is less familiar with the language or culture. Soliya’s policy of having a facilitator from each region can be helpful in reducing these issues, but not all co-facilitators are comfortable critiquing each other during a session; there are also times when one facilitator ends up facilitating alone. Also, sometimes the Arab/Muslim facilitator does not speak Arabic (e.g. are from Pakistan or are of Arab origin but were raised in the West) and so misses some subtleties related to how native speakers of Arabic speak English (as in the previous example).

9.5.1.4 Quiet Student

In one of the groups I was facilitating, we had an Asian student who lived in an Arab country. No matter how much we tried to involve her in the discussions, her participation was relatively low. My co-facilitator and I were concerned that because she did not identify with either side of the “conflict”, she felt excluded from the conversation. However, in mid-semester feedback, that student said she felt she was learning from the discussions and enjoying the sessions. In a sense, we felt that possibly her learning style was more reflective than active; or she was shy about participating, and we were glad she felt she was benefiting from the program. On the other hand, we felt it was unfair to other students that she was learning from them, but they were not learning from her; they were being open about their thoughts and feelings and she was not. Although silence is often seen as a kind of disempowerment, it can be a form of resistance, an intentional withdrawal, or a preference for learning by listening (Li 2004). This poses difficulties in dialogue situations as to how to “deal” with silence not as a problem to overcome, but as a nuanced but difficult to clarify position a student takes that needs to be respected, but which limits the dynamics of learning through dialogue for both the silent person and their colleagues.

9.5.1.5 Discussion: Issues with Soliya

Although Soliya offers opportunities for developing CT by interacting with culturally different others in depth, it has several disadvantages that limit its potential by creating inequalities among participants. I will mention the most obvious and important ones, although there are more. These can be summarized as: technical access issues, the use of the English language for communication, and, most importantly, the power issues involved in using the Western pedagogy of facilitated dialogue.

First of all, use of technology can increase the gap between the haves and have-nots (Starkey, 1998), even though the differences are on a continuum (Warschauer, 2003). As students mentioned in Bali and Bossone (2010), technical difficulties can limit some students’ participation, such that they miss parts of, or entire sessions; or, if they had problems with mics/headsets, communicating in writing rather than speech, which limited their involvement in discussions. The students facing the most technical problems are, of course, those from universities with fewer resources, often in the Arab/Muslim region. This empowers the Western-region participants and the well-funded (often Westernized) Arab institutions over the others. It also indirectly empowers

those familiar or more comfortable with using technology for communication. Soliya is aware of how technology impacts the dialogue and facilitators are advised to make the impact of technology explicit, for example by discussing the discomfort of using a new technology at first, and by making efforts to include those with technical difficulties.

Second, the fact that English is the common language between participants, but is also the language of the “dominant” side (American) means at least half of the participants are expressing themselves in their second or third language, on controversial and emotional issues. This immediately puts them at a disadvantage and can hinder understanding. It also introduces cultural and linguistic capital issues, as those Arabs with better English and more exposure to the American culture are more able to have a conversation with the American students than others (as seen in the examples of the homosexuality discussion, and the facilitator who misunderstood “ditto”). Having an Arabic-speaking facilitator often helps¹⁰⁹, but as the program has expanded to include European and Muslim countries, the number of native languages has increased beyond English and Arabic. This issue is exacerbated when the Arab/Muslims facilitators themselves are less fluent in English. The fault is not with the facilitators, of course, but with the design of the program, which reflects the global need to speak English for spontaneous intercultural dialogue to take place. Although the organizers are aware of these issues, and how they further empower the native English-speaking participants, the solution is still elusive.

Not only do those with linguistic difficulties have difficulties understanding, but by not expressing themselves clearly enough to be heard well, their empowerment is truncated:

...what is most significant to the other’s movement across the rocky terrains and borders of difference, and into the centers of power, is not the *telling*, but the *hearing* of stories. Most important in educational dialogue is not the *speaking voice*, but the *voice heard*. (Jones 1999, p. 307, italics in original)

The example of the students who “deny” the “act” of homosexuality is one such instance of a student expressing herself but not being heard.

Third, beside technology and language barriers, there are other power issues with Soliya, as with any dialogue situation. The facilitation format is a Western pedagogy more familiar to Westerners

¹⁰⁹ (e.g. when I facilitated I used to state that Soliya is a “bilingual” forum and anyone can speak Arabic and have their speech translated – although this introduces translation accuracy issues)

and Western-educated students (e.g. AUCians) than those not previously exposed to the process. Besides the obvious power of the Western students, the Western-educated Arabs need to also realize they have more power and voice in the discussion than those with less intercultural experience. I once had a student from an Egyptian public university who asked for permission every time before talking. Even if one decides that facilitation seems to be the most appropriate pedagogy¹¹⁰ for the purpose of the program, one must recognize that pedagogies are often not culturally neutral (Skelton 2005). We need to recognize that participants in any dialogue are never on equal grounds, and so dialogue is not a utopia (Said, 2001; Burbules, 2000; Jones, 1999; Agabria & Cohen, 2000):

any framework for intercultural education that does not have as its central and overriding premise a commitment to the establishment and maintenance of an equitable and just world can be seen as a tool, however well-intentioned, of an educational colonization in which inequity and injustice are reproduced under the guise of interculturalism. (Gorski, 2008, p. 517)

Even though Soliya's mission is clearly oriented towards promoting such a just world, I have shown that the process itself contains inequalities and power imbalances. As Soliya facilitators, we often asked ourselves and each other:

1. Do we (Soliya) exclude those who will be disempowered because we fear disenfranchising them through the process? But this seems unacceptable, because wouldn't that disempower them further by not giving them voice at all?
2. Do we (Soliya) include them despite the difficulties, and try to "help" them deal with it better? (for example by translating to Arabic; providing access to better labs or technical facilities)

However, I feel we should be asking: what is it about the way we are doing this and our intentions for doing this that result in these inequalities, and is there any way to modify that such that the power balances are shifted? As is frequently pointed out, dialogue can be colonizing, since it is inherently on some group's terms and interests, giving that group power over others (Burbules, 2000; Jones, 1999; Gorski, 2008; James, 1999; Joseph, 2008). Opening dialogue to the colonizer

¹¹⁰ Coming from a Western education background myself, I have not come across a more appropriate pedagogy that would achieve the same purpose, nor do I as a teacher use any other.

can be conceived as a tool for "surveillance and exploitation" by the colonizer even if it sounds benign (Bhabha in "The Location of Culture" p. 98 cited in Jones, 1999).¹¹¹ The actual processes of dialogue serve to perpetrate inequality:

Critical intercultural dialogue is possible only if the participants satisfy three criteria: they must adopt an attitude of openness towards each other's cultural perspectives; they must come to understand each other's perspectives; and they must communicate under conditions which they mutually can accept as fair. Only when these criteria are satisfied can members of one culture criticize the practices of another. (James, 1999, p. 590)

The question is: what kind of preparation of students, and modifications to the Soliya program itself, need to be done to increase the students' participation and benefit while reducing the potential harm of placing them in such an unequal, potentially colonizing, dialogue situation?

9.5.2 Comparative Religion

Noha¹¹² felt a core curriculum option she chose in Comparative Religion with instructor COMPREL helped her ability to assess arguments. She said this was

because they were so many different religions we were studying at [the] same time we would always reach [a point] at the end, no matter how hard you argue, that's just the way it is; you'll have to accept it, kind of; you can always argue one way and the other way; [but] you just learn to accept that there is no right answer.

Even though what Noha says seems to be an incomplete critical thinking (stopping at a kind of multiplicity or relativism according to Perry's levels of intellectual development), the fact that she is referring to this with respect to exposure to different religions and her capacity to grow to accept them and their beliefs shows some growth in cognitive intercultural maturity and acceptance of different worldviews, although she does not explicitly show questioning of her own biases (part of intrapersonal intercultural maturity). The course seems to be focusing on Byram's "knowledge" and "understanding" aspects but not other aspects of intercultural communication affecting behaviour and engagement.

¹¹¹ Separating into uni-cultural groups is one solution (Jones 1999), and even though Soliya do this sometimes, it creates technical difficulties and forces people to identify with one cultural group over another - whereas some people are bicultural (e.g. the product of Western and Arab parenting or upbringing).

¹¹² Noha is herself an evangelical Christian - a minority within a minority of Orthodox Christians, and when asked about questioning religious authority, she said she was never raised to necessarily ever request advice from a religious leader.

I found this core curriculum course a potentially interesting one, with an intercultural theme, so I interviewed the instructor (COMPREL) to learn about his experience teaching Comparative Religion to AUCians. COMPREL felt that all liberal arts courses should target critical thinking development. Through his particular set of courses, the instructor said that understanding “the other” is “the main thing”, and that seeing behind the obvious is “essential to the humanities” in general. He also emphasizes clarity of arguments in student papers, and spent class time on developing students’ questioning of meaning and form of primary texts related to various religions, and to look at secondary texts and “not to just take it for granted”. He addresses the question of “orientalism” and Western scholars of Islam and that despite the years of scholarly training and research conducted by some of these scholars, it “doesn’t mean they are above questioning”.

COMPREL told me that students at first were expecting someone to be preaching a particular religion, but since he taught different world religions, and explained the difference between Theology and Comparative Religion, they eventually realized he was preaching none. He also told me that students often felt the class was a place to preach or defend their own religion, and, coming from various majors and various levels of critical thinking could be problematic in overcoming religious bias:

I say that [this is the] academic study of religion, introducing to what principles of that are, and that it's like any other area of inquiry just like zoology – zoologists are trying to understand different forms of animal life not trying to determine if zebras are better animals than elephants ... it's judgment free, no one can be completely objective but as much as possible not trying to promote any particular religious viewpoint or anti-religious [view]. I came in prepared knowing it'd be fairly new. With Islamic studies, mostly taught by Muslims to Muslim students; the same mostly with Coptic studies with some exceptions. If students thought of religious education they'd think of ... a more theological approach that was ... defended.

I find the analogy with zoology misplaced, because it suggests that one can approach the study of religion with neutrality similar to the study of zoology, when (evolution aside) zoology is unlikely to encourage students to question their deep-seated personal and community values. I understand how he is trying to explain to students to distance themselves personally from the subject of study in order to attempt objectivity, but doing so without first recognizing the depth of ingrained values and belief systems beforehand seems to limit the depth of his pursuit. When I

asked specifically how much self-reflection or metacognition occurs in the class, he said he thought it was

...a by-product of studying other religions, other cultures, you learn, it causes you to reflect about your own culture, and what you expect as given as this is the way things are – when you study other cultures who have other pre-suppositions about how the world is, it makes you reflect back on your own conditioning and what you assume ... implicitly but not so explicit.

Students' defensive behaviour can be explained using the intercultural maturity model (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005) and is an early stage in intercultural sensitivity (Hammer et al., 2003). It seems the instructor focused on the cognitive aspects of developing students' intercultural knowledge, without first acknowledging their identities and biases in depth, without explicitly helping them reflect on their own beliefs. The students' defensive behaviour can be explained by perceiving a threat to their own identity in the study of different religions by an instructor who comes from America, a country perceived to have negative stereotypes about Islam and Muslims.

The instructor admits that "you know the course is working well, [if] students are doing that [self-reflection] on their own". However, it clearly did not happen to all students, because even though he discussed the purpose of the course at the beginning of the semester, as the scholarly study of religion, he had to keep reminding them that this was not the place to "defend your faith", and that if they were "interested in debating relative truths", this was not the course for that. The students' need to defend their views about their own religion may indicate their feeling that knowledge of Islam has been silenced in the West and feel this is their chance to be heard, by a Western professor, in a kind of "talking back" (Jones 1999). They may need to be heard in a narrative different from rationality first (Ellsworth 1989), and not recognizing this need can be problematic and disempowering for students.

While this course has the benefit of extended exposure to different cultures/religions, and studying them in an academic way, it misses two important aspects of the intercultural experiences elsewhere in this study. First, unlike Soliya, there is no direct exposure to the people of the different cultures/religions being studied, so it may still run the risk of reinforcing stereotypes, especially if the course covers various religions in little depth (one such course is entitled "World Religions") unless the instructor helps students make deep connections. Of

course, exposure to one person from any culture (such as in Soliya) also runs the risk of stereotyping, in a different way. Second, it does not seem to directly build the intrapersonal aspects of intercultural maturity, so may be of less benefit to students who come into the course less confident in, or less reflective of, their own identities to begin with.

In some ways, by not including many students of another culture (except the professor himself, who has a privileged position of power and control) – does the course allow students more focus on the subject matter instead of defending their views? Or does the presence of a Western professor keep that dynamic in place?

9.5.3 International Exchange

Another opportunity for intercultural learning is international exchange programs, whereby AUC students travel to a university abroad for a summer, semester or year, and take a few courses there.

Lina had travelled extensively with her family, and was the kind of person who interacted and learned from her interactions during her travels. Whereas Hossam and Yasseen mentioned in their pre-interview questionnaire that they had travelled to several countries, neither of them mentioned the impact of travel on their CT. Lina, on the other hand, mentioned how she felt people from different social classes in Italy were not as well-defined as in Egypt, and that she felt comfortable interacting with Italians of different backgrounds, recognizing that “not all Italians are the same” and wanting to enrich her knowledge by talking to more of them while she was there.

Lina showed a developed intercultural maturity:

If you limit yourself to people from the same background as you, raised as you are, you won't appreciate that people can be different. It doesn't mean one is right and another is wrong. It's very important because it adds to your character. If you can see something from different perspectives, that's what is important.

Throughout the interview, Lina showed appreciation of diversity within Egypt, often mentioning how within AUC, students from different backgrounds and schools have diverse ways of thinking and that she relishes learning from that. She said she started questioning religious authority when she began to see how different Muslims interpret the Quran differently –within Egypt and her own social circle but more so by meeting Muslims from different countries. One of her opportunities to

meet non-Muslims and Muslims from different parts of the world was at an exchange program at the American University of Paris. It was a political economy course which she said involved much debate and discussion. Students in the course came from various countries, including Brazil, Israel, Spain and Lebanon, and she felt the discussion was enriched by the differences of opinion in the class. This interaction helped her appreciate and evaluate different world views.

There are three aspects of Lina's experience as an exchange student that I believe improved her learning opportunities. First, although she is an engineer, she chose to take a course outside her major which would involve controversial debates and discussions— hence enabling her to develop intercultural “cognitive” knowledge (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005) within an academic environment different and more diverse than her classes in engineering at AUC (classes that involve little or no discussion of controversial topics). Had she taken a science/engineering class, she would have missed the depth and richness of intercultural interaction about controversial topics afforded by a political economy class.

Second, Lina was already well-travelled beforehand, and had already developed an interest in people of diverse backgrounds and nationalities, and she mentioned learning from friends at AUC who are bicultural/binational. This potentially made it easier for her to interact with people from different cultures because she already had interpersonal intercultural maturity (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005).

Third, the above probably enabled her acceptance into AUC's exchange program. INTL & EXCH both said they were more likely to accept students into study-abroad if they showed more exposure to, and understanding of, different (especially Western) cultures.

Since students are not equally “intercultural mature” (e.g. as described by Hammer et al., King & Baxter Magolda), university coordinators need to work with students to help develop their intercultural maturity before, during and after study abroad experiences (Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004) to help students keep and build upon their newfound learning when they return to their own communities (Agabria & Cohen, 2000). AUC offers orientations to students accepted into exchange programs, and INTL talked about how some AUC students returned from exchange programs to participate in the “Friends of International Students” activity that sought to befriend international students and do activities with them. However, no sustained reflection on the

intercultural experience is done. Moreover, students who come to the interview with better intercultural capacity/maturity are accepted, rather than accepting students who do not have this and helping prepare them.

9.6 Non-Academic Intercultural Experiences

9.6.1 Noha & International Internship

Even though Noha was born in the US and had travelled to meet relatives in the past (the last time was 5 years before our interview), she was most affected by her experience doing an internship in the US at the time I was interviewing her. She started to “look at things very differently, look at people very differently and realize [that] not everyone is the same”.

When she talked about her capacity to understand different world views, she said she thought she “was exposed coz I used to come here [to the US] a lot but not as exposed as I thought I was”. Aside from maturity that comes with age, she attributes this change to interaction in the internship she was doing. She feels that getting “out of my comfort zone to interact with people” was a large part of it – such that she became more exposed than she had been three months before, where she was surrounded by friends in Egypt with “similar ideology” and not exposed to different cultures. She talked about how her manager in the US internship encouraged her to question authority and gain confidence in her own intelligence and capacity.

There are some indications that she felt she learned from US culture specifically, because she perceived it to be a more “open” culture. For example, she said how she learned from her US-based cousins whom she thought were “more objective, I am more traditional. Not better or worse, but they are around people very different from the people I am around”. Even though she explicitly says neither culture is superior to the other, she later suggests people in Egypt surround themselves socially with similar others, “as opposed to the US, where everyone is free to do whatever and people are just different and you just accept that.” She also said “The US belongs to every single person from every single race you can imagine, whereas Egypt belongs to the Egyptians” – all of which implies she was influenced by and was propagating a narrative that is commonly spoken/heard in the US, but rarely lived/experienced. It also implies a view of the US as

culturally superior, at least in the sense of openness to diversity. It seems that she learned to question her own beliefs, which is important, but that she seems to have accepted, with less scepticism, the incoming beliefs of American culture. In this sense, Noha's experience is different from previous ones because she got more in-depth exposure to one culture (although American culture can by no means be considered monolithic), but not the diversity of being exposed to several cultures and beliefs at once.

Still, her extensive summer in the US made her realize that she had not previously "made an effort to understand" others. She suddenly "felt I was extremely small here as opposed to back home; [there is] more to the world other than my group of friends". This experience has made her more enthusiastic about getting to know people in Egypt personally and in more depth, "understanding where they're coming from". She extends this to international students as well – beforehand, she had international students whom she considered friends but now realizes she had "never really made the effort to understand more about them".

One could attribute Noha's development from her summer internship experience to several factors (from the list mentioned by Tomich, McWhirter, & King, 2000): since she was living with relatives and was doing a summer internship, she had many opportunities to interact with those of the local (US) culture. Even though she is culturally different from Americans, she was Protestant Christian and a US citizen, which made her culturally more similar to more Americans than if she had been Muslim or Coptic Christian. Even though she only stayed for the summer, she had the in-depth experience of working, as well as the social experience with her relatives. She had also been somewhat prepared for the trip because she had been to the US several times previously.

In talking about her experience, it seems Noha developed in her cognitive intercultural competence as she became more aware of different worldviews, and in her interpersonal intercultural competence as she became more willing to understand the views of others. She seems to have also started improving her intrapersonal intercultural competence in her ability to question her own culture and values, but seems to have been slightly more "dazzled" by narrative on US culture, seeing it as an ideal - possibly a "reversal" stage in intercultural sensitivity. However, having lived in different countries myself, I recognize that it can take time to start seeing beyond the dominant narrative of one's host country.

As mentioned in chapter eight, such international internship opportunities are difficult to come by.

9.6.2 Interaction with Diverse and International Students: Rare at AUC

Two students I interviewed, however, felt their critical thinking improved from their interaction with international students at AUC: Gamal and Hoda.

One of the reasons I chose Gamal in my sample was that in one online discussion (on paradigm shifts in scientific thinking), he used the example of the movie “Bruce Almighty” to show how extremely religious people who were against the film were missing the positive message behind it. Since his view is not commonly held or expressed in Egypt, especially for someone that young, I asked him about that particular comment in our interview. The greatest influences on Gamal were two (separate) friends who came from different cultural backgrounds and were slightly older. Talking about controversial topics involving religion and politics with each friend helped him develop CT – for example, one helped him question religious authority so that he would read and explore beyond what was traditionally accepted. His interaction with foreigners in Egypt and when travelling abroad has helped him become more sceptical of media because “the way they [foreigners] see things is actually totally different” from himself. He became more able to understand various worldviews and understand his own biases by holding conversations about “serious issues” in politics and religion to help him understand people better. He feels these experiences have also helped him present his own alternative views. Throughout our interview, Gamal mentioned how he sought different viewpoints before making decisions – whether those alternative views came from asking diverse individuals or (less often) by reading/watching alternative sources (e.g. he compared the US version of CNN to the international edition we get on Egyptian satellite).

Hoda, who grew up in Kuwait and interacted with people from different nationalities there, felt she started to question media sources from political science courses, but more so from interacting with American students here at AUC. She says she got “very lucky” that one of her friends introduced her to one, who then introduced her to others. She has learned about history and politics from discussions with them, and she finds them “very easily approachable”. When beforehand she felt she was learning most from reading, she now felt she would learn better from travelling and interacting with different cultures.

Two things in common between Hoda and Gamal are first, their previous interaction with people of different cultures may have made approaching foreigners easier – i.e. they had previously some interpersonal intercultural maturity (as in King & Baxter Magolda, 2005); and second, they were willing and even eager to discuss controversial issues such as politics and religion with international students – i.e. they developed (but already had some) cognitive and intrapersonal intercultural maturity (King & Baxter Magolda 2005) as they sought to understand and analyze alternative world views while actively questioning their own biases, and integrating this new knowledge into their identities. For example, George talked about how he was and still is a religious Christian, but intercultural interaction enabled him to question religious authority and explore religion more deeply and openly. Neither Hoda nor Gamal came to AUC monocultural, and so they were able to benefit from intercultural interaction (Hammer et al., 2003).

9.6.2.1 The Problem

Several of the other students I interviewed talked about the benefit of interacting with AUC students who come from diverse backgrounds, but three (Mona, Lina and Sandy) pointed out that the majority of their own friends from school did not like to interact with AUCians who were very different from them in terms of social background. Although 59% of first-year students “report that their peers are friendly, supportive, and help them feel as if they belong” (NSSE, 2010), this leaves 41% who felt otherwise¹¹³. This problem is worse for international students, several of whom agreed on the difficulties of penetrating AUCian Egyptians’ social circle (Building Bridges Panel, 2008). In our interview, INTL asked the rhetorical question: “how many Egyptian students come here and get a new friend?”, and emphasized how “cliquish” Egyptian students are. This observation was supported by EXCH who suggested that people often look for others they know in any gathering instead of mixing with new people.

EXCH and INTL both seem to have a “deficit model” of AUC students, as if they have an inherent unwillingness to put in effort to interact with international students – when it could be any number of reasons, including shyness, lack of intercultural maturity (as defined by e.g. King & Baxter Magolda, 2005), lack of support within AUC to promote intercultural interaction (Tomich et al., 2000), warnings by parents not to interact with people who are socially different (not just

¹¹³ The way the question is worded is also a little misleading. “their peers” may constitute people ALREADY in their social circle (even first-year students come in with partially complete social circle) rather than strangers.

international students¹¹⁴), or a political aversion to making American friends (although this latter is unlikely).

In the previous chapter, it appears that Kamal was only able to meet new people via extracurricular activities – otherwise, he had not been interacting with people different from himself. My own experience at AUC agrees with these comments. I personally met many new people through extracurricular activities, but my friends from high school who came to AUC rarely ventured outside their social circle, making only superficial friends from their courses and sports activities, but for the most part, graduated with the same close-knit group of friends they had had coming into AUC.

The situation is even more extreme for international students. In the “Building Bridges Panel” (2008), a group of international students talked about how difficult it was for them to talk to Egyptians and how rarely Egyptians approached or befriended them. They also commented on the difficulties of joining extracurricular activities that somehow seemed to be exclusively for Egyptian/Arab students, and subtly unwelcoming towards foreigners. On the other hand, certain activities, such as Student Action for Refugees (STAR), are almost exclusively dominated by international students. Even international students who have Arab origins have told me they normally end up socializing with other international students unless they have local friends or relatives to introduce them to Egyptian/Arab students.

This lack of interaction with international students is not unique to AUC, however (e.g. Volet & Ang, 1998; Ippolito, 2007). This is not surprising given the complexity of factors impacting the adaptation of international students to host universities (Tomich et al., 2000), which include familiarity with host language, degree of cultural similarity between students’ own and host culture, and the friendliness/hostility of the host environment.

So if AUC students are not naturally friendly to international students, and extracurricular activities are subtly unwelcoming, the main avenue that remains, as INTL told me, is courses. Even when there are international students in classes, two faculty and several students said there was

¹¹⁴ I was once mentoring an international student (as part of an AUC program that matches staff/faculty mentors with students) who said she had been warned off mixing too much with Egyptians because the boys would take advantage of her, and the girls would be jealous of her. So it goes both ways - international students themselves may avoid getting too close to Egyptian students.

no spontaneous interaction between international and Arab students unless the professor intentionally forced them to do so (Building Bridges Panel, 2008). However, the majority of international students focus on studying Arabic language (which very few Egyptian students need to study), Middle East Studies (classes which are usually full of international students and very few Arab/Egyptians), or fields like International Relations and Political Science (these latter two are often a mixture of international and local students). In contrast, most of the science and professional disciplines have below average international students (i.e. less than 7.7%, the AUC overall - data in AUC Factbook, 2008-2009).

At a recent AUC university-wide planning forum, one of the recommendations was (email communication from the Provost):

Place more emphasis on diversity and expand International Day. Facilitate more cultural and language exchange for international graduate students so they become integrated. Holding some events in the evening would work with schedules better. Increasing scholarships will create full time students who have more time to be active within AUC. All students could be invited to events like the Thanksgiving dinner held for international students.

However, these suggestions focus on “integration” of international students (especially graduates) using relatively superficial types of activities. For example, the “International Day” of the type they suggest to expand is a half-day event where each country has a booth where they distribute food and trinkets, and possibly perform a song or dance routine – the kinds of activities that further exoticize unfamiliar cultures (Gorski, 2008). They also do not identify the root cause of lack of interaction between Egyptian and international students. The “conversation partners” idea (which pairs up international students studying Arabic with local students studying English) has had some success but has largely been unsustainable (unpublished survey conducted 2008). It does not tackle the issues of why Egyptians learning English and Americans learning Arabic who live in the same dormitories have difficulties talking to each other or even sitting next to each other on buses to and from campus. It does not recognize the benefits to Egyptians of interaction with international students – as one student said at the Building Bridges Panel (2008), it is a “waste of a benefit of an international university”.

9.7 Discussion and Conclusion

This section wraps up the threads of discussion from the previous case studies, and presents a conclusion for part III of the thesis.

Egyptians students at AUC get some measure of intercultural growth implicitly by being Egyptians studying at an American institution. Some students come prepared for this experience, as I have shown in chapters six and seven, while others start it at AUC. But there are other intercultural experiences, as I have shown in this chapter, that can be more intentional, and give students experiences with cultures beyond just the American culture, while helping them reflect on their own views and explore different worldviews beyond their own (more so than the diversity exposure afforded by liberal arts, rhetoric courses and authentic experiences discussed in previous chapters). I have shown how definitions and models of intercultural learning encompass several aspects of CT, so that intercultural maturity is a component of CT, and at the same time, intercultural learning is a way of developing CT. This creates a kind of cyclical relationship: those who have some intercultural experiences have better intercultural competence and cultural capital, which then serves to help them benefit from new intercultural experiences and explore them more critically.

Whereas more structured intercultural interaction is needed to develop students' critical thinking when interacting with different cultures, intercultural maturity is often a pre-requisite for getting access to intercultural learning opportunities – such as international exchange programs. Not all of these access limitations are institutional: students who have never spoken to an international student are less likely to approach one for an informal conversation. If they do, they are less likely to have a deeply meaningful conversation. Even in structured experiences like Soliya, students who had less exposure to Western culture could not participate fully in the discussion that was taking place in English, using a Western pedagogy of facilitation. They were in many ways disempowered, even after they had gained access.

My analysis of each of the intercultural opportunities has shown that students who start off with higher levels of intercultural maturity and confidence in their own identities are more likely to develop a critical approach to intercultural learning and to benefit more from intercultural experiences. Because intercultural experiences can be potentially colonizing, there are risks of

students feeling defensive and not benefiting from the experience (e.g. students who felt defensive in the comparative religion course), or of being uncritically impressed by the dominant culture in the interaction (e.g. Noha in her internship abroad, viewing US culture as superior to Egyptian culture, following the US narrative of pluralism without criticizing the reality). When there is no support for students undergoing intercultural experiences (e.g. no pre/post reflections for international exchange students), this is quite likely to happen.

For example, Soliya experiences can result in empathy developing without criticism, depending on the group, especially if the course instructor does not reflect on the Soliya experiences with his/her students and considering power issues that may affect their experiences¹¹⁵.

The combination of all of the above makes it seem that AUC offering a capstone opportunity for “international perspective” is too late for some students to start having intercultural learning opportunities. Currently, some of the core curriculum courses required for earlier years do contain intercultural components, for example, a freshman course entitled “Who Am I?” which explores identity in the context of difference; and another freshman course entitled “The Human Quest” which explores different worldviews. There are also, of course, other course options such as Comparative Religion (under International World Studies requirement) or Cultural Anthropology (as social science requirement) – all of which fulfil core curriculum requirements. However, the “capstone” option of “International Perspective” is not a requirement and some students may choose the alternative option of a “Community Engagement” course (which I have already argued is important and should also be started earlier in their AUC experience).

One step I have already taken to promote intercultural learning is creating the “One AUC” initiative (OneAUC undated) which is a loose partnership of several different extracurricular options at AUC that promote interaction between local and international students. We have worked together to include a booth in the “First Year Experience” so that incoming students can learn about the various intercultural opportunities on campus and choose the one that suits them

¹¹⁵ For example, one professor who teaches a video-conferencing course once told me about how disappointed he was by his Egyptian students’ eloquence and criticality in their discussions with their American counterparts. His solution to this problem the next semester was to make entry to his course “by instructor’s permission”, and to pick only the more mature Egyptian students with who seemed to be more eloquent speakers. He did not do anything to prepare students for the video-conferencing experience, or to help prepare them for this kind of discussion. He did not recognize, or help his students recognize, power issues involved in, for example, using English as the language of discussion. In this respect, Soliya facilitators are better prepared by making such issues explicit.

best. One of the activities is the “conversation partners” (mentioned earlier) and another is an on-campus version of Soliya called Bridge,¹¹⁶ which I co-facilitated for a semester. In most cases of extracurricular intercultural experiences, however, there is little room for intellectual reflection, so the impact of these experiences on the students is limited.

As is clear from the cases shown in this chapter, not all intercultural experiences help develop all components of intercultural maturity (using King & Baxter Magolda, 2005 and Byram et al., 2001). For example, some courses such as COMPREL may work on the cognitive/knowledge aspects without addressing identity issues, intrapersonal aspects, or skills for interacting with culturally different others – all of which may hinder some students’ openness to new cultural ideas, or limit it to a theoretical understanding without improving students’ actual capacity to interact successfully with culturally different others. Informal interactions may foster interpersonal intercultural maturity but without sufficient reflection to foster intrapersonal and cognitive aspects.

Intercultural experiences can be enriched via scaffolding with pre/post reflection to help students reflect on their intercultural exposure and to empower them to use the experience for their personal and social development. Not all students need the same amount of scaffolding for this, but for example, students with monocultural backgrounds can be encouraged to participate in a “conversation partners” or “Bridge Program” type of experience before applying for international exchange programs – which would then improve their chances of getting accepted. For students in science/engineering programs who are unlikely to come across any intercultural experience by coincidence, there should be some intercultural requirements earlier in their AUC years to possibly encourage them to seek more on their own.

Of all of the themes coming out of student interviews, I consider “intercultural learning” to have the most potential to promote CT, and if integrated within the liberal arts core curriculum, can have strong writing components to foster students’ research and writing skills, and can be

¹¹⁶ The “Bridge Program” which started as an alternative-to-Soliya meant to engage international and local students on cross-cultural topics. This program was part of a Journalism course, and the majority of students participating belonged to the course, although the second time it was run, I co-facilitated, and we invited others from the AUC community to add diversity. Although students were generally positive about this activity, they felt its benefit was limited because of the low number of international students who got involved (Bali & Bossone 2010). However, when the professor teaching the course left AUC, both Bridge and Soliya participation stopped, because both were components of the course that he chose to add, but other instructors could choose not to.

Chapter 9: Intercultural Learning

incorporated in some authentic learning experiences. For example, MUN has some intercultural components as students take on the points of view of leaders of a country different than their own.

If there were only one thing AUC could focus on to foster CT development for its students, I would recommend intercultural learning experiences to be expanded and deepened, in ways that would reach more students from different disciplines and backgrounds. Not only to prepare students to be employees in multinational companies, but to develop them as more critical, reflective and active global citizens.

Part IV: Discussion, Conclusion and Reflection.

This part concludes the thesis with chapter ten that draws threads of discussion across Part III chapters, and culminates in chapter eleven which summarizes findings, provides recommendations for AUC, and suggests wider implications of the study. It also reflects on limitations of the research, and provides suggestions for further research.

10 Discussion

10.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter draws common threads from Part III discussions to clarify key issues that have emerged from AUC's development of CT. As previously noted, this research is unique in offering an in-depth exploration of one institution's CT development practices. This has enabled discovery of how certain learning experiences influence CT, but also how they work differently for different students; it has also allowed me to uncover inequalities and power differentials within the context of the institution, something not generally explored in the literature on CT.

I ask critical curriculum questions to highlight the main issues that hinder AUC's potential for developing student CT. Integrating discussion themes from part III, I summarize these issues as revolving mainly around the provision of Westernized knowledge in a postcolonial context; reproducing inequality; and fragmentation of experiences that develop CT. I offer suggestions for addressing these issues, and share some glimmers of hope from within the AUC context.

10.2 A Broad Discussion of AUC's Curriculum

10.2.1 Asking Critical Curriculum Questions

I have shown in previous chapters that AUC's core curriculum takes a content-oriented approach to curriculum, and that otherwise (especially in professional disciplines), there is a direction towards a more technical-oriented approach to curriculum focused on measurable learning outcomes. However, individual instructors follow their own teaching philosophies, and can take process- or even critical- oriented approaches (e.g. POLS and RHET-instructor). In terms of developing CT, AUC has several learning opportunities, but their potential is not fully realized.

To organize the important discussion threads from Part III, I choose to gather the threads by approaching AUC's curriculum from a critical perspective, and ask questions that focus on how the classroom, institutional and sociocultural context affect curriculum in terms of both curriculum planning and implementation (question wording from Cornbleth, 1990, p. 197):

- a. *Whose knowledge is given preference?* Two kinds of knowledge are given preference at AUC: in the core curriculum and regular courses, as well as most intercultural encounters, Western-based knowledge and English language are given preference to local knowledge, and this privileges Westernized elites while also being potentially colonizing. Second, the prominence of professional disciplines, given the AUC curriculum structure, marginalizes other kinds of knowledge (as shown for the case of RHET and other core courses); additionally, students are often encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities for instrumental reasons (e.g. improve employability), and several such authentic experiences promote instrumental criticality only (e.g. internship at a multinational).
- b. *Who has access to which knowledge?* I have shown that certain students come in with more cultural, linguistic and social capital – e.g. experience writing in English, exposure to different cultures, social networks – that give them privileged access to certain opportunities, especially extracurricular ones, for learning at AUC whereas others have limited access to them. I also show how lack of cultural and social capital limits students' capacity to choose courses that may benefit them. Finally, professional disciplines have little room for elective courses, and tend to marginalize the few that students do take; therefore their students gain less exposure to liberalizing pedagogy.
- c. *In what ways does the resulting curriculum benefit certain groups and disadvantage others?* I have shown how students who lack cultural, social and linguistic capital are at a disadvantage even when they can access a learning experience (e.g. too timid to participate in class discussions; or disempowered to participate in the English language in Soliya). This “lack” is really not a divide, but a continuum of privileging, depending on which aspects (e.g. language, social networks) are relevant to the particular learning experience. In general, the more Western-educated an AUC student is, the more exposed to extracurricular and intercultural experiences, the higher their opportunity to improve their CT at AUC. While individual agency (e.g. Kamal's persistence to join extracurricular activities) can overcome this, the institution cannot depend upon that.
- d. *What conditions (beyond the immediate situation) shape selection, organization, treatment and distribution of curriculum knowledge?* I have shown how this is sometimes affected by external accreditation, or by economic reasons (e.g. AUC's need for part-

timers or young post-doc faculty for some core curriculum courses; student and parent preferences for professional disciplines).

One further question I pose throughout the chapters is: what kind of CT is being developed by AUC learning experiences? In most cases, it stops at an instrumental understanding of CT (except where individual instructors such as RHET-instructor and POLS take a more emancipatory approach), whereas Egypt's context requires a much more critical and active citizenry. Rather than simply taking CT as an ideal, and finding ways to adjust AUC's curriculum to develop it, I propose we need to step back and approach CT itself in a contextual manner (discussed further in the next chapter). The above-described approach would be useful for other universities to adopt, since it is often the case that universities' efforts to promote CT is hindered by demands of accreditation, technical approaches to curriculum, and lack of accounting for inequalities amongst students. The coming sections discuss the above findings¹¹⁷ in more depth, drawing upon possible approaches to resolving these issues. The main issues discussed are: Western knowledge in a postcolonial context; inequalities reproduced at AUC; and fragmented efforts to developing CT, given tensions between professional/academic disciplines, and difficulty integrating CT development across learning experiences in general.

10.2.2 Western Knowledge, Postcolonial Context

Offering an American-based curriculum in a developing country like Egypt with an Arab and Muslim heritage does not necessarily take account of students' own backgrounds and risks being (unintentionally) colonizing. This is partly because AUC's liberal arts curriculum focuses on content rather than process, without sufficient criticism of why particular knowledge (often Western) is privileged over other forms of knowledge. It is also partly due to an aspect of neoliberalism that ties in with globalization in that AUC's professional disciplines seek external accreditation¹¹⁸, which uses standards that will often not take Egypt's context into consideration in curriculum design.

¹¹⁷ Cornbleth critiques critical curriculum research for being too far removed from the reality of teachers, for recommending curriculum plans without being involved in implementing them. For this reason, even though I ask these questions and propose possible solutions in this thesis, I would prefer to later do this in a participatory manner, and recognize that by doing so, the goals and focus of my questions and responses are likely to be modified by the participants' own thinking and experiences (see conclusion chapter recommendations for further research).

¹¹⁸ Even though AUC also receives Egyptian accreditation, the US-based accreditation is the one that influences important curriculum decisions.

Students take only one or two courses focusing on Arab culture¹¹⁹, but largely ignore their local context and language in the majority of liberal arts courses and (often professional) disciplinary courses. For example, a liberal arts course may focus largely on Western literature and include only one or two examples from Arab/Muslim/Egyptian literature (e.g. previously-required Seminar 200 discussed in Lash, 2000). In the disciplines, few required courses are explicitly focused on the local context; the majority of readings are by Western authors; and the injection of local context into disciplinary courses is left to an instructor's own judgment and choice. For example, I studied Computer Science, where Software Engineering courses did not discuss issues of applying Information Technology in the Egyptian context, and where discussions of Intellectual Property Rights only discussed the pro-Copyright Western view without critiquing the impact of such policies and laws on the potential development of poorer Third World countries. Another example is the Journalism major, where courses involve examples from local and regional media, but there is only one course on "Reporting and Writing in Arabic", and it is an elective, not a required course¹²⁰. Historically, AUC has resisted the imposition of Arabization of its curriculum (Bertelsen, 2012), and such a move is likely to be considered a threat to its position in the region, but I believe infusing more of the language and culture relevant is needed for an anti-colonial stance.

Edward Said expresses his own feelings towards his colonial education: "I felt out of place. There was something that didn't correspond between what I felt to be myself and that kind of [colonial] education" (2001a, p. 281). Said also criticizes how a colonial education can make one more familiar with the colonizer's history than one's own, being "forced to concede that, although you were learning it, you could never be a part of it" (2001b, p. 264).

This insufficient integration of students' own culture could alienate students from the university's curriculum, and/or their own culture, and privileges students already familiar with American culture over students interacting with it deeply for the first time. In the end, if it succeeds, it may promote Westernized elitism distanced from Egypt's local communities. This distancing is compounded by AUC's move to the new campus far from the reality of downtown Cairo, and safely gated in from the outside community.

¹¹⁹ See appendix G. Arabic literature courses can be taken in Arabic or in translation

¹²⁰ I wonder if it is an elective because not all students are expected to be fluent in Arabic, or because it is seen as less important?

Other institutions offering Western-based education in developing and former-colonized countries, or offering Western-based education to international students from such countries, run similar risks. Any dominant culture institution that caters to non-dominant cultures faces the same issues. Research based in the US, UK and Australia (as shared in chapter nine) show the impact of intercultural learning in situations where students have ethnic/race differences within one country, or nationality differences when international students work with local students. The case within AUC is similar, even though the situation is different: local students being taught a foreign culture, where students and instructors each have identities on a continuum of hybridity between the local and foreign.

Shor and Freire (1987) suggest that one cannot ignore teaching the dominant culture, since it is needed to empower students to survive in the dominant socioeconomic environment. For example, Arab families value AUC for the English-language education it provides, which then improves career opportunities for graduates (Bertelsen, 2012), and they favour professional disciplines for employability (Russell 1994). Edward Said asserts:

There is simply no use operating politically and responsibly in a world dominated by one superpower without having a profound familiarity with the knowledge of that superpower, America, its history, its institutions, its currents and counter-currents, its politics and culture. And above all, a perfect knowledge of its language. (Said, 2004c, p. 170-171, quoted in Nixon, 2006, p. 350)

However, Shor and Freire (1987) suggest that the dominant culture needs to be dealt with critically and not exclusively. They stress the importance of also including students' own cultures in a critical manner that does not marginalize nor romanticize students' less dominant cultures. When Edward Said was asked to participate in developing humanities curricula in Palestine, he tried to create something "anti-imperialist and liberationist" using discovery rather than rote learning, but his recommendations were rejected in favour of a form of "national self-affirmation" which he considered "antithetical" to his interest (Said, 2001a, p. 283). What an institution like AUC needs is a more critical approach to content selection that is neither imperialist nor self-affirming, but critical of both the dominant Western culture, and the local cultures in Egypt and the Arab and Islamic world. One cannot ignore the value and power of an American education in today's work environment, but one must not allow it to wipe out students' connections to their

own cultures and their ability to integrate the two in a healthy manner that empowers them as global citizens.

With increasing internationalization, there has been recent research regarding the teaching of CT to international students, particularly those from Confucian-influenced cultures who come to Anglo universities (e.g. Egege & Kutiele, 2004; Vandermensbrugghe, 2004; Jones, 2005; Floyd, 2011). These researchers challenge the previously-held deficit-model approach which explains the difficulties of teaching CT to Chinese students as a product of their culture that emphasizes respect for authority, and which relies heavily on memorization in education (the same can be said for Egyptian schooling). Research in Australia especially (Egege & Kutiele, 2004; Vandermensbrugghe, 2004) calls for educators to recognize how international students unfamiliar with applying CT (e.g. the capacity to read in context, or unused to using CT in academic situations) are at a disadvantage in Anglo universities, and advocates a twofold solution: that Australian universities make the concept of CT clearer and more explicit; and that Australian academics become more “receptive towards learning practices adopted in other countries” (Vandermensbrugghe, 2004, p. 417) rather than adopt a deficit or assimilationist perspective (Egege & Kutiele, 2004). Moreover, Floyd’s (2011) study showed how Chinese students were able to demonstrate CT in their own language at a higher level than they could when asked to do so in English as their second language. She shows how, in a second language, issues of comprehension and reading speed (especially because of orthographic differences between Chinese and English – an issue applicable to Arabic) arise and hinder students’ ability to think critically. She emphasizes the importance of noticing the individual differences among international students – and this is the case for AUC students, as the spectrum includes those who have native/near-native fluency in English whereas others are new to studying in English. These issues relate to inequality produced at AUC.

10.2.3 Reproducing Inequality

Even though I have shown that AUC has learning opportunities in place for developing CT, issues of access and privilege remain. The core curriculum is approached from a content-orientation that does not sufficiently question the pedagogical and social values behind this content; the professional disciplines are approached from a technical-orientation that ignores students' local

context and limits CT to its instrumental value. Extracurricular learning opportunities, though not part of the formal curriculum, are available, but again, access and privilege issues remain. There is also little integration of the entire learning experience for students, no institutional effort to support students' development into critical citizens.

Liberal arts education, as applied at AUC, asymmetrically privileges students who have previously been educated in Western and English-speaking institutions. As shown in chapter six, the use of pedagogies that involve student discussion can be intimidating for students who are doing this for the first time, as well as those who are not confident in their spoken English. These students may struggle to participate in such courses, or they may target courses taught by Arab faculty, some of whom are part-timers, to avoid this pedagogy. By doing so, they increase their chances at success by following a more familiar pedagogy, but they lose their chance for a fully liberal education that would develop their CT. In addition, if they end up taking more courses with part-timers, they will have paid the same amount as their colleagues but learned from instructors that cost AUC less to hire.

The way the RHET courses are designed seem not to take enough account of cultural differences in writing, and that students with experience of writing in a Western institution are more likely to respond/adapt than those doing so for the first time and who may have weaker language skills in addition. Although AUC continues to require RHET and other liberal arts courses, the majority of students choose professional disciplines, which tend to marginalize these courses (as shown in chapters six and seven), and promote a more limited, instrumental CT.

For authentic learning experiences, especially student-run activities and internships, there is a level of cultural and social capital required prior to getting accepted. Examples include interviewing skills and previous experience with extracurricular activities or jobs – all of which make the student appear a better candidate. Such experiences also give the student more confidence, which would encourage them to apply in the first place.

In cross-cultural experiences, it is more difficult for a student to obtain an opportunity without incoming cultural capital, including previous cross-cultural experiences gained via family travel or having friends from different cultures. There is also insufficient support in terms of identifying power relations that may help students cope with difficulties in cross-cultural situations.

Moreover, despite the strong influence cross-cultural experiences can have on CT, a student may go through their entire AUC years without encountering much of this, beyond their interaction with the American culture of the institution.

It is known that incoming cultural capital affects students' abilities to adapt to university (Leese, 2010), and that students with different incoming capabilities will require different support to develop (Nussbaum, 2011). Tsui (2003) found that universities develop CT differentially, which perpetuates inequalities that already exist in students' schooling backgrounds. I have shown this to be the case for AUC in both curricular and extracurricular offerings. Other research has found that second-language and non-Anglo students have unique struggles with CT as it is culturally unfamiliar (Egege & Kutiele, 2004; Vandermensbrugge, 2004), and I have shown this also to be the case for AUC students, albeit to differing degrees depending on each individual's background.

All of these inequalities can affect students' ability to learn in the AUC environment and develop their critical thinking. Those with incoming cultural and social capital have more opportunities to develop critical thinking, and are more able to benefit from these opportunities as I have shown throughout part III.

In all these ways, AUC reproduces existing inequality in society, and does not attempt to adjust for these inequalities to help put students on a more even keel. Any institution which provides a Western education to students who have different levels of exposure to Western culture in general, and the language of instruction in particular, would potentially face similar inequalities. Cultural capital gained by having a Western education, and developed naturally in Westernized elite families, gives such students an advantage over their less Westernized counterparts. The latter need to either learn to adopt new values, and develop new skills, or risk receiving an incomplete or less successful educational experience. These points apply not only to Arabs facing Western culture in education, but any student learning in a dominant cultural environment different from one's own.

I suggest that such inequalities are inevitable when curriculum is designed without deep reflection about student differences, and without consideration being given to adjustment to these cultural and individual differences in each course and classroom. It also arrogantly assumes the

institution's culture¹²¹ is superior, and students need to adjust or assimilate, rather than attempting to modify the institution's approach to better reach students.

10.2.4 Addressing Cultural Relevance

The above issues can be summarized as consisting of two major issues: the first is the colonizing effect of the Western education AUC provides; the second is the struggles students face in order to succeed in this unfamiliar pedagogy of CT. There is a need to resist dominant "Eurocentric, racist, sexist and classist biases" in education via moves towards "multicentric knowledges, multiaccentual classrooms, plurality of voices, perspectives, and narratives" (Black feminist educator bell hooks cited in Asgharzadeh, 2008, p. 353).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) is an approach to consider when the teacher is faced with students whose "cultural, ethnic, linguistic, racial, and social class backgrounds differ from their own" (Howard 2003 p. 195). The term has been developed in the context of US schools, and has been explored mainly (by Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Howard, 2003; Irvine, 2010) in response to multiracial classrooms involving students of low socioeconomic class – but the thinking behind it is very relevant to the AUC context, with some differences. CRP flips the common perspective that students from different cultures need to be assimilated into the educational institution's (dominant) culture. Instead of taking a remedial deficit-based approach to assimilating students, CRP creates a more "synergistic relationship between home/community and school culture" (Ladson-Billings, p. 467). CRP "addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate" (Ladson-Billings, p. 469). Applying this to AUC would challenge the dominant American culture in the curriculum as well as the dominant views in Egyptian culture, and build on students' own cultural identities while encouraging them to challenge inequity in their institution and country.

In most US educational settings, ethnically diverse students are "expected to divorce themselves from their cultures and learn according to European American cultural norms" and have the additional burden of having to tackle academic tasks while "under cultural conditions unnatural

¹²¹ As I have shown throughout part III, the "institution's culture" is by no means monolithic. Faculty from different backgrounds and disciplines have different philosophies and pedagogies

(and often unfamiliar) to them” (Gay, 2002, p. 114). This is even more so for international students in American universities but who have had little or no direct contact with American education and culture (though they usually cannot avoid US pop culture through media). As I repeat throughout this thesis, AUC students are not equally distant from this American educational culture, and so need varying degrees of support in order to integrate. However, instead of only focusing on how to assimilate Egyptian students (and faculty) to American educational culture, adopting a culturally relevant pedagogy approach would take an anti-colonial stance, and work on affirming students’ own identities, meeting them using discourse that suits their home cultures and backgrounds. CRP focuses on promoting high-achievement in students who have developed cultural competence, and who are able to “understand and critique the existing social order” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 474).

To do so, teachers need to work on three dimensions (Howard, 2003): first, to become aware of deficit-based thinking about students of different cultures, and to question how this hegemonic mode of thinking might influence their own thinking and behaviour towards students; secondly, to help students use their own cultures as an asset for their learning; thirdly, to recognize that the dominant cultural mode in education is European-American, and to attempt to incorporate wider, more diverse teaching practices to respond to students’ own needs.

Applying this directly to AUC, it would imply incorporating elements of students’ own identities into the curriculum; being aware of the varying degrees of their familiarity with both Western pedagogy and CT. Instead of simply thinking of how to assimilate students to pre-existing conceptions of CT and what counts as “good pedagogy”, one would reverse the approach to re-interpret our understanding of CT to suit the Egyptian context, and to modify our pedagogy (without reducing academic expectations for achievement) to suit the diversity of the student body.

10.2.5 Addressing Fragmented Efforts

AUC's efforts to develop CT are fragmented in two ways: first, the disconnect between professional and liberal arts courses; and second, the lack of integration of all aspects of criticality developed in extracurricular and curricular offerings.

As previously discussed, focusing on a professional education tends to avoid questions of social change (Giroux, 2002; Apple, 1990; Shor & Freire, 1987), and it entails prioritizing the needs of the market and industry over more noble educational values (Apple & Juncgk, 2000; Giroux, 2002) that focus on individual and collective emancipation. Egyptian students and their families (like other Middle Easterners) are usually unfamiliar with liberal arts education, and prefer professional disciplines, in order to better graduates' chances at employment (Bertelsen, 2012; Russell, 1994) – and this is within their rights, especially given the high cost of an AUC education. Accepting that this professional focus is likely to remain the case, but trying to infuse a critical thinking that questions the status quo and inspires students to act for social change, requires a new way of thinking that incorporates this kind of thinking into academic subjects like professional disciplines and hard sciences that are not commonly taught this way (McPeck, 1990; Barnett, 1997; Shor & Freire, 1987). Currently, CT is mostly developed in core curriculum courses, where they are marginalized or ignored at worst, or seen as interesting but difficult to integrate into students' career focus at best. Therefore, efforts to develop CT in core courses, if successful, are not reinforced throughout university for the majority of students.

Peach's (2010) Socially Critical Vocationalism (SCV), previously described in chapter three, challenges the academic/vocational divide, and perceives that while higher education should have a civic purpose that enables students to become critical citizens, it should also enable individuals to become economically productive, benefiting themselves and their societies. This would be done via interdisciplinary courses that infuse social justice issues within professional disciplines, and using pedagogies that involve learning in authentic contexts.

Traditionally, questioning of social norms has not been a prerequisite to professional success (Vandermensbrugghe, 2004), and so adopting SCV is not expected to have instrumental benefits to students' careers. Having said so, there is hope that faculty may be motivated to explore the idea in various departments, especially at a time of much social upheaval in Egypt.

Barnett and Coate's (2005) proposed approach to curriculum could complement SCV, by focusing on a way of integrating all critical learning experiences throughout AUC. Barnett and Coate (2005) propose a curriculum-in-action, one that is not planned in offices but enacted in situ. I described

this approach in chapter three, the main features of which are the integration of the three dimensions of knowing, acting, and being into educational curricula.

10.2.6 Glimmers of Hope

Despite the fact that AUC as an institution does not approach CT development, or curriculum in general, in a sufficiently critical manner, there are glimmers of hope that can be taken forward. I have already shown that individual instructors (RHET-instructor, POLS) who have transformative goals, are able to implement these goals in their practice and with their students. I give below some further examples of positives at AUC that work towards making learning more culturally relevant to students, or to integrate learning better across the AUC curriculum.

Very recently, AUC has elevated support for Community-Based Learning (CBL), beyond previous efforts which had not been sufficiently supported. CBL courses have a clear focus on all three dimensions of learning: knowing, being and acting, as mentioned in chapter eight. They involve authentic action in authentic situations beyond the classroom; they connect this action with academic knowledge; and they almost always involve a large degree of reflection and personal growth. Barnett and Coate (2005) emphasize the importance of giving students space and time to engage with each of the three dimensions, because this engagement does not happen immediately or quickly. So students having only one or two experiences of something like CBL may be insufficient for them to grow in all three dimensions, especially that different disciplines tend to focus on one or two of the dimensions, rather than all three (Barnett & Coate, 2005). I would suggest that taking this curriculum approach would find ways of integrating students' learning in extracurricular experiences (e.g. internships, activities not taught within formal courses) with reflection on their learning.

CBL is one way of learning in authentic contexts that can also work towards SCV, as it involves experiential learning and connecting learning to community needs. It can also lend itself to the interdisciplinarity Peach (2010) suggests is needed for SCV. Currently, some AUC instructors in professional disciplines such as engineering have implemented CBL, but to what extent were they able to reflect with their students on social issues? As I have suggested previously, this is not normally what is discussed in engineering. However, an interdisciplinary approach may address this shortcoming. There is also evidence (Bali, 2011) that faculty in scientific disciplines at AUC

tried to integrate themes related to Egypt's revolution in their teaching (e.g. "scientific thinking" had students evaluate knowledge claims about Mubarak's fortune; a mathematics course had students creating an estimate of the number of people in Tahrir square), but these may still not delve deeply enough into questioning values and orienting students towards critical citizenship.

I have shown how RHET-administrator showed cultural awareness when he talked about engaging students in oral discussion about a topic before asking them to write about it, building on students' traditionally oral culture. Even though RHET-administrator said instructors avoid topics that are too close to students' passions, there are some instructors who seek to make learning authentic, and also to help students question their own beliefs and assumptions. For example, several RHET instructors (as presented in Mikhael et al., 2009) affirm students' native language and pop culture, by engaging their students in reading and writing about blogs by Egyptian commentators and activists. Institution-wide efforts increased after the January 25 revolution, when the university encouraged faculty to redesign courses (or create new ones) to incorporate revolution themes (examples in Bali, 2011). Later, there was also a "Cairo across the Curriculum" project, which supported incorporating themes about Cairo as a city into courses. I have not been able to assess the impact of these courses, but it shows that AUC is taking the general direction.

One example of trying to bring academic knowledge closer to students' contexts in a professional discipline comes from the management department's attempt to increase the creation of local business case studies. Tolba (2011) outlines how one of the ways of doing this is to have graduate and undergraduate students themselves produce such case studies either as part of degree courses, or as part of an inter-university competition. This approach creates new local content (knowing), while also teaching students a deeper criticality as they learn how case studies in their discipline are created while they themselves create one (acting and being). The approach is not necessarily "critical", however, and this is an area that needs development.

An example of a new course that might help students reflect backwards on their whole university experience is a new capstone course being piloted entitled "Integral Living". According to the description in the course syllabus for Spring 2013, students would "learn to analyze and connect apparently disparate ideas, from various disciplines and knowledge systems, into coherent meanings and concepts." There is emphasis on making connections between knowledge, self, and

society, to help prepare students for “challenges of careers that require interdisciplinary skills, and for their roles as responsible citizens in complex societies” (Holdijk & Elshimi, 2013).

10.3 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has asked critical questions of AUC's curriculum offerings, drawing upon discussions from part III. Taking a critical approach to curriculum in context is one way of addressing shortcomings of AUC's curricular provisions for CT development. I suggest AUC needs to implement curricula that challenge the dominance of Western knowledge, and integrates students' own cultures; that accepts the prevalence of professional disciplines, but systematically attempts to infuse a critical and social justice focus into the study of professional disciplines; and attempts to integrate students' learning in order to develop criticality of the whole person. This requires both an institutional approach, and a focus on sustained and reflective professional development of instructors beyond one-off trainings.

I use the following chapter to summarize the findings and contribution of this thesis, and provide recommendations for AUC (including for further research), as well as offer my reflections on the research process.

11 Conclusion

11.1 Chapter Overview

If doing a thesis is about one's journey as a researcher, rather than simply the end product presented, then the conclusion chapter is the most important part of the written end product, as it focuses on this process of growth, and the researcher's reflection on the journey. This chapter summarizes my key contribution to knowledge on critical thinking development at AUC and beyond. I also reflect on contextual challenges, limitations of the research and my personal growth as researcher and teacher. The final section provides recommendations for AUC as suggestions for further research which I hope will be conducted in a participatory and critical manner.

11.2 Summary of Findings

11.2.1 Introduction

While writing this chapter, I read an article in News@AUC (2013) about an AUC alumnus who had won an award for his published novel entitled "All is Permitted in Beirut". The novel tells the story of an AUC student who was a political activist (like the author himself), who later works at the US embassy (the author himself interned there once), then realizes there is a conflict between his political values and his work, since he is against US foreign policy. The activist in him takes over, eventually getting him into trouble at work, and he eventually resigns. This plot demonstrates the author's CT, his capacity to question and a social justice orientation – that he decided to publish these ideas as a novel; I have not read the book and wonder if the student critiques his own American education, and that the scholarship that funded it comes partly from the USAID (United States Agency for International Development). The article describes this alumnus' AUC experience: he had participated in extracurricular activities such as CIMUN and CIMAL (Cairo International Model Arab League), he took a study abroad and did a summer internship. These are some of the experiences I have found to promote CT. He was politically active on campus, although none of the students in my sample mentioned such activism in our interviews. However, one aspect of this student's background slightly contradicts my research results: he was a LEAD (Leadership for

Education and Development)¹²² student from the city of Mansoura¹²³. LEAD is a full scholarship awarded to students from government schools all over Egypt, so one might expect such students to have less incoming cultural capital than students who were educated in an American school in Cairo. However, a closer look at the LEAD program shows how this student is an example of the success of the program. From my informal interaction with LEAD program coordinators, I learned that the program requires LEAD students to participate in extracurricular activities and helps them get a study abroad experience¹²⁴, and they are given extra support and workshops throughout their studies at AUC¹²⁵. The goal is to produce citizens who will be active in their communities (LEAD, 2011). However, not all LEAD students are as successful as this student – and other government school students (whether scholarship recipients or not) are not given this kind of support. Moreover, other students who presumably come from more privileged backgrounds might still need such support but are not given it in the same way.

This research has shown that while AUC has plenty of learning opportunities with potential to develop CT. Student interviews indicated four broad areas of the AUC education that helped develop CT:

- a. the liberal arts education itself, including variety and content of particular courses as well as liberalizing ways of teaching;
- b. Rhetoric and Composition courses, which explicitly teach some aspects of critical thinking in the context of writing and research;
- c. learning in authentic contexts such as extracurricular activities, internships, simulations in courses, and community-based learning in courses; and
- d. intercultural learning experiences inside and outside the academic framework.

However, these efforts are often limited in three broad ways:

1. Students' access to opportunities and capacity to benefit from them are different, thus privileging certain students to develop criticality more easily than others;

¹²² Previously described in chapter one

¹²³ Though Mansoura is urban and a relatively advanced city, in Egypt, cities outside Greater Cairo and Alexandria are very different with completely different infrastructure, facilities, education, and culture.

¹²⁴ Though my interview with INTL showed LEAD students get a different, shorter, study abroad experience than “regular” AUC students

¹²⁵ I attended a few “debating” workshops that were given to them. Since all students in the room were LEAD students, there was little difference in their cultural capital (e.g. linguistic, debating ability) so potentially less embarrassment to speak compared to a regular class where other students might make fun of a LEAD student’s poor English accent (a LEAD coordinator discussed the issue of “accent” with me once).

2. Some of the learning potential of learning experiences is limited to an instrumental CT, not involving sufficient questioning of established traditions;
3. Several experiences lack the combination of action/reflection on knowledge that Freire (1970) deems necessary for a full criticality, and which Barnett (1997) emphasizes in his three dimensions of criticality: critical knowing, being, and acting.

Much of these limitations come from adopting a notion of criticality based on the North American conception (Facione 1990) which defines CT as a list of skills and dispositions, and following an insufficiently critical curriculum approach. AUC assumes that teaching an instrumental critical thinking will first, work the same for Egyptian students as it does for American students, and second, benefit Egyptian students in the same way it benefits American students. I posit that this does not work because Egyptian students come from a different background (where criticality is common in the streets but not allowed in many classrooms and homes), and because the sociopolitical environment in Egypt requires a different kind of criticality than that needed in an established democracy like the US. Additionally, the variety of AUC students' backgrounds and experiences, as well as pathways through university, means that there cannot be a "one size fits all" approach that will benefit all students equally. While all of the above conclusions came from studying AUC specifically, educational institutions worldwide are likely to find similarities to some extent.

11.2.2 Whose Responsibility Is It?

When I discuss what needs to be done at AUC to improve students' abilities to benefit from learning experiences, I need to clarify whose responsibility this is. Barnett and Coate (2005) ask the question of who is responsible for curriculum? Is it the students themselves who are the ultimate beneficiaries and decision-makers? Is it the institution that provides it, the instructors who ultimately enact it with students? They recommend that institutions focus on providing spaces for learning that attract students to engage with learning experiences on the three levels of knowing, acting and being. However, I ask: how do you create those spaces in ways that are visible and accessible to all students? An example of the failure of doing so at AUC is Kenzy: Kenzy chose to study computer science, and enjoyed taking courses in the humanities that enabled her to interact with others who thought in different ways. She was able to perceive and benefit from this aspect of liberal arts education. However, she did not even attempt to explore other options outside academia. She did not try applying for extracurricular activities for fear she would not be able to

manage her time. She was afraid to apply for an internship in the regular way¹²⁶ because she felt she did not have interviewing skills. Instead, she took the internship opportunity offered by a friend's father in his own company, the quality of which is questionable (she had nothing to say about its impact on her CT). The limitations on Kenzy's learning experiences are not for lack of offerings from AUC: AUC's "Mentoring Unit" provides workshops on time management; AUC'S CAPS office offers workshops and one-to-one counselling on interviewing, job search, and resume-writing skills. Had she known of, and taken advantage of, these opportunities, she may have increased her confidence in interviewing and applying for internships. She might have learned of the importance of pursuing some of the plentiful extracurricular activities for building all sorts of skills, as well as confidence, to promote her success in life. Such opportunities are not "hidden" from students, but this does not mean all students can "see" them equally. While she is ultimately responsible for her choices, she is not a completely free agent. She seems not to have had the cultural capital (interviewing skills, previous experience with activities, appreciation of the importance of building these experiences) to enable her to make more beneficial choices. Unlike Kamal's more persistent personality, she did not attempt to apply and learn from rejection until she joined an activity or internship – in fact, she never even made it a goal. She was fortunate to have the social capital to land an internship (her friend's father) – but she limited herself to the opportunity that landed in her lap, rather than pursuing the one that might have been more beneficial for her own growth and development. Therefore, it is insufficient for an institution to provide engaging opportunities and assume this is enough to reach students. It is the responsibility of the institution to ensure diverse students are able to make informed decisions about which learning opportunities to pursue, in ways that do not privilege some students over others. Since the appropriate set of learning opportunities will differ depending on each student's circumstances, this may take the form of some sort of individual mentoring throughout a student's years at AUC, something that goes deeper than the current advising system (already admittedly flawed - Institutional Research, 2008). LEAD students (such as the student mentioned in the opening of this chapter) receive such explicit support, as well as the support of their peers (of similar backgrounds) in their cohort, but other students do not.

¹²⁶ I.e. through CAPS office, where she would have to send her CV to a company, then probably have to pass an interview in order to get accepted.

Another barrier to learning is once the students are in the learning experience itself: How can in-class discussions be conducted differently such that power imbalances do not hinder some students' participation and learning? How can intercultural dialogue experiences, for example, be structured to allow students with less intercultural maturity to flourish rather than be intimidated?

Finally is the importance of recognizing the limitations of an instrumental criticality. Students may use CT as they problem-solve in a well-structured internship, but how do they learn to question beyond the limits of the job itself? How do they reach the level of the LEAD student mentioned above: to be able to be critical of US foreign policy, and take action based on their beliefs, despite having an American education and maybe also working in an American institution? How can university experiences prepare them for the kind of critical citizenship needed in Egypt today and tomorrow?

11.2.3 My Recommendation

A critical approach to curriculum in context (Cornbleth, 1990) can help when planning AUC learning experiences for individual students. This research has shown how the complexities of developing criticality in a Western institution to non-Western students requires such an approach. Such an approach would question how certain learning experiences privilege certain students over others, would try to overcome inequalities in access, would recognize how power imbalances across the university and in particular classrooms and activities can limit or hinder learning for some students. It would take account of the current sociopolitical situation as well as realistically recognize how neoliberalism (e.g. as manifested in external accreditation and institutional policies) limits the potential of trying to teach critical thinking at AUC, and find ways to realistically infuse criticality throughout the curriculum in relevant ways – socially critical vocationalism being one option to explore. Such an approach would question the privileging of Western-based knowledge over local knowledge, while looking at both critically. Such an approach would not use dialogue unproblematically as a liberalizing pedagogy, but recognize its limitations and the power imbalances it can create. Such an approach would recognize differences in teachers' ability to develop criticality in this context – whether because they are Westerners unfamiliar with local backgrounds, or locally-educated part-timers unfamiliar with liberal arts education. Such an approach would recognize that it is not enough to develop an instrumental criticality where

students learn to find informal logical fallacies in statements – but a more holistic socially active criticality that enables them to see beyond the superficial democracy developing in Egypt right now and find solutions to Egypt’s problems beyond “taking to the streets” that has been the only, and unsuccessful, tool since Mubarak’s regime left power (Bali, 2013).

Although no institution of higher learning should limit its goals to preparing students for the immediate situation, the current situation in Egypt is an urgent call for fostering critical citizenship that responds to the complexities of Egyptian society and the increasingly uncertain future.

11.3 Key Contribution to the Field: Revisiting CT

This thesis contributes to our understanding of the dynamics of developing CT at university, and how diverse students navigate curricular offerings in order to develop it. The originality of this research lies in its in-depth focus on the curricular and extracurricular offerings of a particular institution that offers a Western education to postcolonial students, where developing criticality has become essential in a time of social and political upheaval.

Returning to key debates in CT mentioned in chapter two, I suggest that one needs to go beyond them. Of course different disciplines and even different paradigms within disciplines have different epistemologies and so interpret some aspects of CT differently. However, to be critical citizens, people do not need to simply think critically in sociology or in engineering. There is a kind of general criticality that all citizens need, and there is a continuum of conservative and radical views on how "critical thinking as political engagement" (Barnett, 1997, p. 12) or "critical citizenship education" (Johnson & Morris, 2010, p. 77) can be conceived. So by a "general" CT here, I do not mean the generic decontextualized skills of informal logic, but the kind Brookfield (1987) suggests adults use when they interact with media, politics, work and in personal relationships. Engineers would claim that the problem-solving they learn transfers to all areas of life. However, it is unlikely to directly lead to questioning of social injustice and to political action – things all citizens need. It is therefore important to intentionally find ways to develop such a criticality which does not normally receive much focus in professional and scientific disciplines (Peach 2010; Shor & Freire, 1987; Barnett, 1997; McPeck, 1990).

Also, regarding cultural bias in CT, I have shown that even though critical thinking exists in Egyptian and Muslim culture, the approach and emphasis in developing CT in this context differs from that in the American context because of differing sociopolitical circumstances and different emphasis in schooling. There is a need to consider a socially-constructed notion of CT in context (Thayer-Bacon, 1998).

11.3.1 So How Do I View CT Now?

Although I recommend in section 11.6 that a contextual understanding of CT be developed in a participatory manner amongst AUC stakeholders, as a potential participant in this community, I can clarify here how I currently view CT.

Initially, I began this research intending to critique the practice of implementing CT at AUC. Even though this remains a large part of my thesis, I also found myself critiquing the theory of CT.

11.3.1.1 What is CT for? Critical Citizenship

I believe that the value of critical thinking for Egypt today lies in its importance for promoting critical citizenship to help Egypt progress in this early stage of democracy, where there are no clear rules or directions. As such, traditional understandings of CT fall short of preparing Egyptians for this constantly changing context. I published some of these ideas in a magazine that focuses on Arab Higher Education, an article entitled *Critical Citizenship for Critical Times* (Bali, 2013), and the paragraph below summarizes the article's argument.

Recent events in Egypt clarified some of my critiques of CT theory, and my understanding of CT continues to evolve as events unfold around me. Before Jan 2011, I thought Egyptians were not critical enough. Then they showed they were critical enough to gather and topple an oppressive regime (critical action). But events that followed showed the shortcomings of that notion of CT and critical action - criticality that can destroy but not construct. Hence a combined notion of CT that goes beyond questioning knowledge and taking action, that clearly involves social justice and empathy, is needed (as I argue in Bali, 2013). A social justice focus is needed once a regime has been toppled, as Freire suggests the oppressed, when given power, are likely to oppress their previous oppressors (and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt seemed to be going along that path; then when their regime was toppled, the rest of the country went back to oppressing them in a

vicious cycle - Bali, 2013). Emphasis on empathy is essential to understanding diverse views in order to creatively construct a new country.

These notions of social justice draw upon critical pedagogy, and the notions of empathy draw on feminist views of CT (e.g. Clinchy, 1994; Thayer-Bacon, 1998) as well as Said's philological hermeneutics and Nussbaum's (1997) notion of "narrative imagination". Interestingly, there are instances in the Quran where gaining knowledge is coupled with gaining the capacity for mercy. For example, in Surat Al-Kahf, Moses meets a knowledgeable man whom he wants to learn from. The man is described as someone whom God has given the capacity for mercy, and taught knowledge from God (Quran, Al-Kahf, 65). Mercy is prioritized here in importance over knowledge. However, in practice, thinking and knowledge are often treated divorced from such emotions.

A former AUC provost posted a comment on my article on *Critical Citizenship* article, suggesting activists needed to follow these ideas and think beyond the negative; he also said he thought that ML King and Gandhi would have supported the ideas in the article. Although the article mentioned above was based on thinking about Egypt, an academic from the American University of Beirut wanted to invite me to give a seminar about my notions of critical citizenship on their campus – in a country that has had political upheaval for many more years than Egypt. An educational blogger in the US wrote about how the infusion of social justice and empathy into notions of critical citizenship were needed in the US, to better enable US citizens to make decisions about foreign policy, such as the recent events in Syria. In hindsight, promoting empathy and social justice in youth could even have an impact in domestic debates in Western countries, such as issues of immigration and healthcare (two big topics of debate in the US and UK).

11.3.1.2 A Conception of CT

My notion of what CT is continues to evolve (see 11.4.3.1), but at this moment in time, I believe that critical thinking has four dimensions: the first relates to questioning knowledge, and it relates to questioning authority, interrogating evidence, and going beyond established frameworks into knowledge critique (similar to Barnett's¹²⁷ levels). A second dimension is a social dimension, which involves understanding different worldviews in an empathetic manner before one critiques those

¹²⁷ Note that three of these dimensions (knowledge, self, world/action) are in Barnett's 1997 model. I add the "social" dimension, and the infusion of empathy and social justice into the social/action dimensions.

different worldviews and questions hidden agendas. One's approach to others should build on this empathy by taking a social justice orientation when working on the third dimension, which relates to critical action. Often, the epitome of citizenship is seen as taking physical and political risks by demonstrating against an oppressive regime. I have argued here that Egyptians have done this multiple times with some success, but that toppling regimes by demonstrating does not go far in re-constructing the country. I also suggest that taking critical action without empathy or social justice orientations in our approach to different others cannot construct a country after conflict. A fourth dimension of CT is a self-reflective dimension of questioning oneself, questioning one's hidden assumptions and values, again going beyond reflecting within established frameworks, and reflecting on all of the other dimensions. There is a need to move beyond a critical thinking that criticizes, towards a critical thinking that can construct alternatives (Bali, 2013).

Learning experiences discussed in this thesis can help promote all these dimensions, but educators need to do this reflectively and be willing to encourage questioning beyond established frameworks. For example:

1. The knowledge dimension can be promoted by exposure to diverse disciplines, exposure to diverse knowledge frameworks, preferably from different cultural perspectives as well. This builds on the ideas of Barnett (1997) and Nussbaum (1997). Also the ideas of culturally-relevant pedagogy are important so that students have confidence in their own identity while learning to question it and question others.
2. The social dimension is recognized in the CT literature but not often considered a dimension of CT separately (e.g. Brookfield, 1987 considers CT inherently social). Critical intercultural exposure is one way to promote this, given its importance for developing empathy as an approach to understanding different worldviews.
3. The action dimension can be promoted via authentic learning experiences, preferably with a political or social justice focus so as not to promote instrumental action or uncritical activism.
4. The personal dimension needs to be involved throughout all of the other three dimensions, and can be promoted by promoting reflection on all learning that occurs inside and outside education. One possible example is the Integral Living course mentioned in section 10.2.6.

Each of these ideas on its own is not unique. They borrow from the work of established scholars such as Barnett, Freire, Said, Nussbaum, and the ideas behind *Women's Ways of Knowing*. These ideas, though seemingly Western, are not alien to the Muslim world, because there are elements in the Quran (such as those mentioned above) that show the importance of coupling mercy with knowledge, of even prioritizing mercy before knowledge. Taken together, these ideas are particularly relevant to Egypt in this historical moment.

11.4 Reflections on Methodology

This section shares one major challenge I encountered due to changes in the Egyptian context, and two ethical struggles. I then focus on what I perceive to be the main limitations of this research, which I hope the recommendations for further research can address.

11.4.1 Challenge of the Changing Egyptian Context

As with any social situation, change does not stop occurring while we conduct research on a snapshot of the institution at a moment in time. However, the case for AUC is that there were two major changes that affected this research: AUC's move to the new campus (discussed in chapter four), and Egypt's revolution, introduced in chapter one, but discussed further here in relation to this research.

Beinin (2013) summarized the situation in Egypt after 2011: "A spontaneous popular movement can bring down an autocrat; it cannot construct a new political order." The final chapters of this thesis were drafted in 2011 when Egypt's January 25 uprising occurred, a time of elation followed by much frustration and anger at lack of reform. The peaceful protests demanding social justice and political and economic reform have had no clear strategies to achieve this reform (Beinin, 2013). This made me reflect on the importance of critical citizenship in this context (Bali, 2013).

As I have shown, and as is well documented (chapter five), Egyptian schooling does not promote much criticality, and even AUC as a university does not do it equally well for all students. But it seems what is needed is the promotion of political action in an environment that subdues both verbal criticism and activism – both subtly (e.g. by allowing media some level of freedom) and

violently (by using force against protesters); both actively (e.g. by prosecuting journalists who oppose the regime) and passively (by allowing elections to take place despite protests from the judiciary).

Based on the research I have presented so far, I have concluded that exposure to diverse viewpoints and worldviews, and the process of interacting with these various views, is one of the most important ways of developing CT (as shown in part III).

When I started this research, Egypt was just beginning to get an inkling of freedom of speech with the government allowing some new opposition newspapers – but these were still more propaganda-type than good journalism. There was access to satellite TV (some of which is Egypt-based channels) and internet without restrictions. With time, more Egypt-based channels started to have politically-oriented programs. These shows have gradually had more freedom, new opposition newspapers with more credibility have developed and been widely accepted by Egyptians, and the impact of social media in allowing youth to communicate and organize has allowed unprecedented critical speech and eventually action via the speed of spreading ideas. Egyptians thus became exposed to diverse viewpoints on events, and the rise of the internet and social media allowed individuals to not only consume ideas, but also express themselves, rather than be limited to the views of large media giants – all of this allowed for an exchange of diverse views, and room for expressing one's own views as well – despite restrictions from emergency law.

Egyptians have no problems with scepticism. However, media is prone to conspiracy theories that are not supported by any research or evidence. Multiple times, Egyptians showed capability to speak relatively freely and organize protests. However, there are no clear strategies for how to achieve social justice and political and economic reform, and none has occurred as yet (Beinin, 2013). Egyptian youth in Tahrir square who initiated the protests were so democratic they had difficulty choosing a leader to negotiate with government institutions. The revolution “grew in a national atmosphere in which various groups and coalitions have been talking about 'change' for several years” (Elbendary, 2011), the result was that when presidential elections came about, these various groups each offered a different presidential candidate, hence dividing the

“revolution” vote and losing politically in the end. To this day, the choices seem to be limited to either an Islamist or a militarized state.

AUC (as an important educator in the country) not only needs to decide which aspects of CT are most relevant to Egypt at different times, emphasizing the most relevant forms needed, but AUC also needs to find ways to promote the process that are accessible to, and work for, its diverse student body.

But AUC’s role in such political reform is controversial and sensitive. Even though most students are Egyptian and a large percentage of faculty are Egyptian and Arab, it is still an American institution, and political action taken by it can be considered a form of US intervention in Egypt’s affairs – which would not be taken positively by most Egyptian people. Even the reforms I suggest to AUC’s curriculum here will always have a sensitive dimension in that however “empowering” the intention is for Egyptians, it is partially coming from “outside” and therefore will always be suspect. This suspicion is also justified in that the “masses” of Egyptian people have a right to question whether the privileged Westernized (often liberal) elites truly understand their own oppression, and can really find solutions that work for their context.

This should not prevent us from trying to improve the curriculum in more critical ways, but should remind us to continue to be critical and sceptical of whatever curriculum comes out in the plans and in practice. AUC and its students, faculty and alumni need to avoid a “Have We Got a Theory for You!” (Lugones & Spelman, 1983) or a “What We Can Do For You!” (Gore, 2003) and instead find ways to work with Egyptians in a more grassroots fashion and in authentic ways, as is often the goal in community-based learning (CBL) courses mentioned in chapter eight.

The kind of CT we need to develop for AUC students will differ according to Egypt’s context, but should remain flexible to equip them to face any context. Before the January 25 uprising, there was blatant oppression, lack of freedom and widespread social and economic inequality. Since the revolution has succeeded in toppling the previous regime, critical thinking and action needs to go beyond dissent and speaking up against oppression (which still prevails, some would argue more so since the toppling of Morsi's regime in 2013), and towards a “pedagogy of hope” that involves critical and creative problem solving that is long-term and strategic. This requires a creative and

fluid approach to curriculum accounting for external and internal context, as suggested by Cornbleth (1990).

11.4.2 Ethical Struggles

11.4.2.1 Access to Confidential Information

As a staff member of AUC's Center for Learning and Teaching, I have had access to a lot of confidential information about AUC and what goes on in classrooms, and I inadvertently learn from private and informal conversations with faculty, staff and students. I also have my own information (which obviously risks being biased) from my experiences as an undergraduate student of Computer Science at AUC (including my undergraduate extracurricular experiences), as a Teaching Assistant to the Scientific Thinking course, and as an adjunct faculty member in the Graduate School of Education.

My struggle has been to find and share as much of a complete and true picture of what occurs at AUC without betraying confidences. It was impossible to completely ignore this knowledge because it not only impacted, but enriched, my analysis, whether or not I made it explicit. So in an attempt to make it explicit and usable for this thesis, I attempted the following to various degrees:

First, I tried to bring up this information in the interviews I conducted. For example, I made a point to ask students whether they used skills learned in RHET courses in their own majors and found this was true for political science students, but not true for science/engineering and business students. Also, in my interview with RHET-Admin, I asked about general observations I had made about RHET classes to get the administrator's interpretation of them. This way, it was not the knowledge I had beforehand that I was using as evidence, but the conversation in the interview.

Second, I looked for publicly available AUC reports, documents or research tackling the same issue, and referred to that as a method of triangulation. Often, these reports enriched rather than merely confirmed, my analysis, and gave voice to stakeholders at AUC I had not interviewed directly. Examples include Elshimi's (2007) self-study of RHET giving voice to RHET faculty's self-evaluation, and IR(2009) survey of AUC faculty to get a general view of where AUC faculty stand on various issues.

Third, I took advantage of my role working with faculty at AUC and conducted some research with them on topics that were of mutual interest. Oftentimes, consciously, and in rare cases, unconsciously, thoughts of my thesis intersected with work I was doing, such that parts of the resulting research became beneficial to my thesis, supporting or deepening information. Examples include Bali and Balkenbush (2009) on CBL, Bali and Bossone (2010) on Soliya and Bridge (this additionally complements my own experiences as a Soliya facilitator and mentor/trainer-of-facilitators), Bali and Carpenter (2009) on English language competency and several studies on CT in scientific thinking classes. I also individually conducted research such as Bali (2011) to see how faculty planned to modify their courses after the January 25 revolution in Egypt.

11.4.2.2 Biting the Hand that Feeds?¹²⁸

My research of course brings out many issues at AUC about which I am quite critical. As with Lash (2001), there is always the internal struggle of “biting the hand that feeds”. This is multiplied for me because of my different roles at AUC. First, there is a nagging fear of offending my employers¹²⁹ when I am not a tenured faculty member, secure in my future position in the institution. This of course is a sign of neoliberal times – since universities, unlike corporations, should be open to self-criticism, especially in the name of social justice.

I also ponder the ethics of publishing my research while using the institution's name. Even though I took written permission to do so, this was done based on my research proposal, not the findings! For publications beyond the thesis, I will consider either anonymizing the institution name when appropriate, or discussing approval to use the institution name with AUC's newly established Institutional Review Board (IRB). However, as others have pointed out (Lincoln, 2005; Morse, Niehaus, Varnhagen, Austin, & McIntosh, 2009), IRB procedures are often inappropriate for naturalistic inquiry as they originated in positivistic conceptions of research in the health sciences.

The last and most difficult aspect relates to a growing anger I started to feel towards the institution I had initially intended to study with love. The move from love to anger rather than academic disinterest in itself worries me about how objective I possibly can be. However, I cannot fathom why one would conduct research about a topic one is not passionate about. When we do

¹²⁸ This section title is inspired by Lash's (2001) thesis

¹²⁹ By employers I do not mean my direct supervisors (they have been supportive of my research), but the larger institution

research with the intention of understanding something in order to change it for the better, we must feel some passion towards the object (institution) and subjects (students, teachers) of the study. In looking deeper at my anger, I realize that this anger is twofold: anger that this institution is not meeting its potential, despite the wealth of its resources compared to its peers in the region; and anger at the unacknowledged injustices occurring to students, faculty and staff. These two faces of anger, I believe, can be used productively in order to advocate social justice and change.

11.4.3 Limitations of Research

11.4.3.1 Definition of CT

One of the main limitations of this study is in the way CT has been defined (justification in part II). I needed to define CT early on in the study in order to use it to interview students in particular, who may not have had a set notion of exactly what CT meant to them. I could not use general definitions such as “reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do” (Ennis, 1989, p. 4), because they were too general and vague to explore influential experiences very deeply with students who probably had never thought to wonder what influenced their thinking. I chose to model Facione's way of defining CT for two main reasons. First, because it was based on an expert consensus and thus included the views of a large number of scholars in the field. But more importantly, I did so in order to provide a detailed understanding of CT that could be used to guide students in the interview into reflecting on how different experiences helped develop various aspects of CT. I did not stop at Facione's list of CT skills and dispositions, however, because I found that others such as Barnett, Freire and Giroux conceived of criticality differently. The North American understanding used by Facione largely represented views of scholars such as Ennis and Paul, but not the entire field of scholarship on CT (e.g. few women, exclusively North American scholars). And so I added to Facione's definition a focus on questioning, and some aspects of critical action. It is important to note that my initial reading and understanding of CT had focused on the North American conception, and my understanding of CP had been incomplete. As a result, the definition of CT used in my interviews did not sufficiently emphasize social justice or challenging hegemony as key concerns for critical action, nor did it emphasize the importance of integrating action with reflection to avoid mere "activism".

Chapter 11: Conclusion

However, as my own understanding of CT evolved through this research, my widening reading, and my teaching experiences, I have come to realize that the way I defined CT fragments it into its constituent elements while possibly losing the big picture, and without highlighting the more important elements of CT. It looks like it was defined this way to facilitate measurability rather than capture the essence of what CT is, similar to a curriculum created from a product-oriented perspective. It tends toward an instrumental understanding of CT without taking account of goals and values behind developing and using it. My initial understanding of CT, the kind I had intended to explore, was the kind usually used by faculty at AUC (and I assume most North American universities), by us at the Center for Learning and Teaching when giving workshops on CT, and by those teaching the Scientific Thinking course (when I was a TA). It was the more instrumental CT defined in Facione (1990).

I started out believing that a basic instrumental CT was a prerequisite to a more holistic criticality that involved dialectical reflection and action as understood by critical pedagogues. However, my teaching experience since then has shown that students can be open to learning the deepest criticality without having to be explicitly taught an instrumental CT first, even if these students are unused to questioning or critical dialogue beforehand. My students (who are themselves school teachers) have reflected on how they learn implicitly through this pedagogy of dialogue without having to be taught it in more overt ways.

Very few examples of explicit teaching of CT came out of my interviews (only a few cases in RHET and SCI), whereas most students were able to elaborate on how their CT was developed in less direct ways through e.g. social interaction with diverse peers. The same can be said for instructors - few of them discussed direct teaching of CT skills; most discussed processes of encouraging questioning and challenging students to think for themselves. I was concerned that the definition of CT I used was fragmented and leaning towards instrumentality, which could have limited by findings to only situations of instrumental understanding developed at AUC. However, looking at my findings shows that instructors (e.g. RHET and POLS) who had more emancipatory conceptions of CT were able to articulate them clearly, so my approach was not limiting for them. It is doubtful that other instructors who did not show an emancipatory conception of CT actually had it but were unable to articulate it, because there was a question about promoting transformative/critical action, and their responses to this question was mainly limited to problem-solving (e.g.

engineering instructors), or to suggesting this was not a main goal in the courses (e.g. RHET-administrator). In faculty interviews specifically, I asked more open-ended questions before asking questions directly about my definition of CT, so this allowed instructors to show how they conceive of CT in their teaching, regardless of how I understood it. Also, even though the definition seems to fragment CT, probing questions I asked in student interviews allowed them to elaborate on learning experiences that developed different dimensions of their criticality. Besides this, I have explored each learning experience beyond the interview findings, and continued to find evidence of limited CT in most experiences.

So I posit that AUC mainly aims to develop CT in the North American sense (even if not doing so by explicitly teaching CT skills), and that this CT is not enough for several reasons: It does not equip students to analyze critically within the framework of the neoliberal context, nor to question cultural imperialism in any way, and does not make them aware of inequalities within the institution and how they connect to the larger context – especially needed for students who are minorities/less advantaged, but also needed for the “Westernized elites” who may not perceive the negative impact of globalization and cultural imperialism. It does not promote action and so limits the meaning of criticality. CT, by focusing on individualism, hides the potential of collective action which is central to CP. It does not help question the institution itself and how neoliberal influences prevent it from developing CT in ways that avoid reproducing inequalities in society. Even if instrumental CT is discipline-specific, a more contextual criticality needs to focus on sociopolitical issues and so is really *not* discipline-specific – but will be difficult outside humanities/social sciences because of how professional disciplines are themselves so strongly influenced by neoliberalism and globalization – that in itself is a topic that engineers and accountants need to become aware of in order to break the cycle (e.g. recognize that IMF and World Bank are hurting developing countries rather than helping them; that some policies for introducing technology in schools have agendas that do not necessarily help develop a more literate and knowledgeable society). This is not to say that professionals are unable to become critical actors: Ibrahim and Hunt-Hendrix (2011) report on one of Egypt’s most successful NGOs, Resala, which grew from discussions in a course on Engineering Ethics. The instructor was able to raise student consciousness about social issues in Egypt, which eventually led students to decide to establish the NGO in order to provide community service and engage Egyptian youth positively.

This apolitical organization spread across Egypt, and its members eventually became active participants in Egypt's January 25 revolution (Ibrahim & Hunt-Hendrix, 2011). Although discussion of social issues is not necessarily something you would expect in an engineering ethics course, this example shows how one instructor who brings his own social consciousness to a single class can influence a group of students who themselves can influence wider society to challenge social injustice in different ways.

11.4.3.2 Students Excluded from the Research

By deciding to choose from a sample of students I had personal classroom interaction with, I limited my pool of choices. My decision was based on the need for personal knowledge of the students' criticality, and was encouraged by research previously conducted with their professor that evaluated their CT in online discussions¹³⁰ instead of relying on my personal evaluation alone.

However, in retrospect, the research did not include all the diversity of AUC students. None of the students I interviewed came from French schools (however, these are few as a proportion of AUCians, and would have been difficult to find given that I was sampling from a group of around 80 students I knew previously), and no non-Egyptian students (this was intentional, since a small number of non-Egyptian students would not have been in any way representative of the non-Egyptian student population with all its diversity). This means that there may be other learning experiences that develop CT at AUC, and a host of issues not tackled in this study. It is my contention that the "thick description" used throughout this thesis provides readers a deep understanding of the experiences of the students I did interview, while my openness about methodology and the interpretive/critical stance of the study does not claim that the results are exhaustive and cover every demographic within AUC.

Missing also from my sample are uncritical thinkers. I intentionally excluded them because of the way I intended to conduct my interviews – by asking how students' criticality (on various dimensions) was before AUC and now (during AUC). I also felt less critical thinkers would be less able to reflect extemporaneously on such questions. However, a different approach could have been taken to the investigation of lack of criticality and may have revealed useful knowledge, such

¹³⁰ References not included to preserve anonymity of my co-author who is also an interviewee here

as whether the uncritical thinkers in fact did not have the same kind of learning experiences as the critical thinkers – or whether they participated in the same experiences but benefited less. Including uncritical thinkers in my sample may have uncovered cases where attempts at developing CT failed completely, whereas the students in my sample highlighted cases where CT was difficult to develop, but eventually succeeded.

11.4.3.3 A Self-Critique

Everyone lives life in a given language; everyone's experiences therefore are had, absorbed, and recalled in that language. The basic split in my life was the one between Arabic, my native language, and English, the language of my education and subsequent expression as a scholar and teacher, and so trying to produce a narrative of the one in the language of the other – to say nothing of the numerous ways in which the languages were mixed up for me and crossed over from one realm to the other – has been a complicated task. (Edward Said, 1999, p. xv-xvi, quoted in Nixon, 2006, p. 342)

Said's sentiments above represent my experience thus far, and I am sure that of many other bilingual researchers. In doing this thesis I have mostly relied on the English-language theoretical writings of white, male Western authors. Recognizing this and overcoming it are two very different things. Including more Arab authors (beyond Western hybrids such as Edward Said) in the discourse would have required an effort beyond this, including efforts in reading Arabic (not my academic language, since my education has only ever been British or American, and so I find extreme difficulty understanding academic Arabic texts) and translating (which I attempted and confirmed that I am not skilled). Also, the kind of critical thinking AUC aims at is largely based on the American conception of CT, for which most authors are white male scholars from North America. I have tried, however to include other non-Western, female and minority authors where possible. Although the understanding of CT I used assumed gender neutrality, throughout part III, I highlight experiences which emphasize "understanding of different worldviews" which can be done with an empathetic view of criticality more in line with Belenkey et al.'s (1986, cited in Clinchy, 1994) "connected knowing". In my analysis of power in educational experiences, I also draw upon the view of feminist poststructuralist thinking (especially Ellsworth, 1989) which tackles the practical complexities of power when teaching criticality. I do not make many strong points about gender throughout, though, as I found the issues of social reproduction, neoliberalism and cultural imperialism took precedence in the AUC context.

Additionally, I conducted my interviews mostly in English, though I did not stop students from using the occasional Arabic word or phrase. I do not expect that this has limited the depth of students' responses in any way since the students were relatively fluent in English and felt free to speak in Arabic when they wanted to.

I am an Egyptian myself, doing research about Egyptian students in Egypt, albeit at an American university, for a thesis to be submitted to a British university. I have "taken" the Western perspective by foregrounding English-language knowledge throughout my thesis. This is similar to the following quote by Lugones in which she talks about how it feels for a woman of colour to talk to those different from herself – but which I use to make a more general point about minorities/colonized people expressing themselves in the language of the dominant/colonizers:

We [the minorities] and you [the dominant] do not talk the same language. When we talk to you we use your language: the language of your experience and of your theories. We try to use it to communicate our world of experience. But since your language and your theories are inadequate in expressing our experiences, we only succeed in communicating our experience of exclusion. We cannot talk to you in our language because you do not understand it. (p. 575 in Lugones & Spelman, 1983)

And so, unfortunately, I cannot always express some thoughts related to Arab or Muslim experience, or relay the thoughts or words of others initially expressed in Arabic. And even though I believe critical thinking as a general concept is not culturally-specific, I recommend (see section 11.4) that AUC faculty and students together negotiate a local conception of criticality that makes sense to *them* in *their* contexts. What would it mean for Egyptian engineers to think, be and act critically in the context of the current sociopolitical environment – in what ways does this environment help or hinder someone's capability to use critical thinking (Nussbaum 2011 calls this notion "combined capability")? What kind of preparation would they each need, given previous exposure to critical thinking, keeping in mind students' own initial capability, needs, and ability to make choices? On one level, how, for example, can intercultural exposure be incorporated/infused into their educational experience without overwhelming them with additional courses/activities? On another level, how do we encourage students to question their own values without imposing (or seeming to impose) a colonialist type of threat to those values? How does the pervasive use of

English later restrict AUC graduates' abilities to be active in the political sphere that requires eloquence in Arabic?

So even though I make critiques of AUC as an institution in the ways CT is developed, I make some of these same mistakes as a researcher and as a teacher.

11.4.3.4 Over-Representing RHET?

Although teaching CT through writing is well-documented in language-learning and CT literature (e.g. Elbow's, 1994 and Ennis' 1989, theoretical work; Fox, 1994; Tsui, 2002 and Pascarella et al., 2005, empirical), and a close look at my data shows the specific ways in which AUC's RHET courses have been doing this, I do recognize that the influence of the RHET courses could be over-represented in my data, compared to other experiences or courses. There are basically five reasons why students may have mentioned RHET so frequently: First, most AUC students have to take them in their first few semesters – therefore, since all but one in my sample had taken them, the probability of RHET coming up in the interviews was high; however, all of the students had also taken the Scientific Thinking course and several other introductory courses, but only RHET was mentioned consistently across students and in various parts of the interviews. Because the RHET courses are usually taken 2-3 in a row (versus e.g. Scientific Thinking which is just one isolated course) there is a higher probability that each student would have had at least one good RHET teacher who taught CT in a memorable/transferable way, as compared to other courses in the core curriculum. Second, most of the students I interviewed were in their third year of college at the time. By then, some (especially in professional disciplines) may not have taken many other courses that involved reading, writing and research skills or ones that explicitly incorporated CT. The RHET courses might also be connected in students' minds with critical thinking if those courses were their first exposure to the concept.

Third, and most importantly, some of the wording I used to define CT and included in my interviews was similar to what is used in teaching RHET. This is possibly because my own knowledge of RHET made me consider these CT skills important, and my close interaction with the administrators and faculty of the RHET department influenced my perspective on what CT is and

what AUC considers it to be. Of course, it is also probable that the RHET department¹³¹ and I used some common references to define CT (e.g. Paul, Ennis, Facione). Fourth, the method I used to choose students to interview was by picking those who demonstrated more critical thinking than their peers in their online discussions (i.e. involving writing, and some research), and so my choice of students to interview may have been based on their writing ability, a reflection of how much they may have benefitted from the RHET courses and transferred skills of argumentative writing to other courses. However, I do not think I have only chosen good writers to interview, because I had added my personal observations of student performance during in-class discussions and exams to my judgment of their online discussion and tried to get a more holistic view of my students' thinking. However, I may have missed those who had critical thinking but did not overtly *perform* it in ways observable to me in an academic context.

Finally, the order of the interview questions may have had an effect. The first few questions are about "questioning authority" and then "evaluating sources of information" – both of these processes should be clearly covered in a RHET course – and so students were reminded of the courses early on, which may have jogged their memories about other aspects of the courses throughout the interview. However, my interviews with students involved three phases. The first was a short questionnaire to get demographic and some background information which gave me some conversation openers to use (e.g. courses they liked, extracurricular activities, parents' jobs, although at the time my concept of cultural and social capital was not fully developed). The students knew beforehand they would be interviewed about CT so they must have had some thoughts beforehand. In all interviews, I probed each student's response, and any sub-questions were followed up beyond the initial answers.

Overall, I believe chapter seven has shown ways in which RHET has developed student CT; but there may have been other courses that developed CT in more depth, but which were not afforded the same space in the thesis (e.g. the POLS class) because they were not university-wide experiences (see next section).

¹³¹ At some point we wrote a joint proposal to do research on CT at AUC - but the proposal was not accepted

Other learning experiences that have been given a large amount of space in this thesis are MUN, Soliya and the Scientific Thinking course. This is due in large part to the depth of my own personal experiences with each of these, such that I could bring in much more insight than was available from interviews and published documents.

11.4.3.5 Where is the Philosophy?

A large amount of research on CT originates from the philosophy departments of universities (e.g. many scholars in Facione, 1990 Expert Consensus), especially the view of CT as “Informal Logic”. When I first started the thesis, I thought this understanding of CT would be central to my research, and that I would become engrossed in the different logical fallacies and so on. However, early on in my research, I was having a discussion with two experienced faculty: one from philosophy, the other from RHET, and they agreed that the required philosophy course at AUC does not actually teach CT¹³², whereas the required RHET courses do. Based on my knowledge as student and staff member, I found myself agreeing to this, and the end result has been that for my instructor interviews, I interviewed a RHET instructor mentioned in a couple of student interviews, and a RHET administrator. I also interviewed the scientific thinking instructor since she was mentioned by several students as influencing their CT (since they all took the course with the same instructor, this was not a coincidence). On the other hand, even though the philosophy course came up in seven student interviews, I did not interview any philosophy instructors. In hindsight, this must look strange for a thesis on critical thinking. Even though I had my reasons for this, I still recognize this as a shortcoming of the thesis.

My reasons were: first, there was not one particular professor mentioned by more than one student, or for whom a student gave a long description on how this person influenced their CT. Most other professors were chosen based on a combination of factors: either mentioned in more than one interview, or mentioned in depth by one student in a way that convinced me they were worth interviewing¹³³, or would help clarify a particular theme (e.g. the Comparative Religion course fit into the intercultural learning theme), or I had other background information on the

¹³² In retrospect, I think the philosophy instructor might have meant that another non-required course on “informal logic” was the one that teaches critical thinking directly

¹³³ However, I excluded one particular professor who was mentioned by two students because all they said about him was they enjoyed his lecturing style – whereas I was looking for faculty whose pedagogy more clearly encouraged CT; I excluded a couple of professors whom I had experienced being uncritical (either in discussion, or in writing)

instructor that indicated the interview with them would add new dimensions to the data (e.g. I knew that RHET2 and POLS both placed critical/emancipatory action as central to their teaching).

My second reason was that I did not want to limit myself to the understanding of CT assumed by a professor of philosophy. However, in retrospect, there is no reason for this perspective to be any *less* valid than that of faculty in different disciplines merely because it is dominant in the North American discourse on CT! In a way, I was adapting Brookfield's (2007) classroom-based suggestion to my writing, by excluding the dominant view in order to give diverse views sufficient "space". However, I might have done better to conduct an interview, but give it equal (or even less) space/prominence in the writing of the thesis, but not ignore it completely. In the absence of an exemplar teacher to interview (one philosophy instructor was mentioned in the interviews as being insulting to student culture, rather than being a good teacher), in hindsight, I could have interviewed the philosophy department head to get an overview of what the course was intended to teach.

11.4.3.5.1 A side note on philosophy

Another point has come to mind since I read Nussbaum's (1997) book which recommends teaching philosophy specifically as integral to developing critical reasoning in LAE. More specifically, Burbules (1999) critiques Nussbaum's dismissal of lack of African American students and academics in philosophy departments. This made me realize that AUC's philosophy department is composed entirely of full-time Western faculty, most of whom are male, with the following minorities: one European female, two Indian-Canadian females, and one of the European males is a Muslim convert. Since the number of students majoring in philosophy is so small, having all faculty full-time is an indication of AUC's care for liberal arts education (as CORE mentioned in our interview), although it does not explain why other core courses (e.g. Sci 120, and elective core requirements in disciplines where there are many part-timers) have many sections taught by part-timers. It also does not explain why the philosophy faculty are all Western (whereas other AUC departments have a mix of Egyptian and Western faculty, including English Language Institute and Rhetoric and Composition). Is it that AUC does not trust "local" people with philosophy? Or is it that there are very few Egyptian philosophy academics? If so, why? And what does this mean for requiring a course in philosophy in a culture where there are not many philosophers, or none are qualified to teach the course? What about Islamic philosophy? There is

only one such course. Does this imply there is little emphasis on local understandings of philosophy? Although other departments have similarly skewed demographics (e.g. Computer Science were all Arab male instructors and only one female when I was a student), this one struck me more because of the supposed importance of philosophy to LAE and CT – and how this department’s composition seems to raise the concerns of elitism in LAE and the possibility of White-Western-maleness of CT.

Having highlighted some of the limitations of this research, I now turn to discussing my personal growth throughout this thesis, as a researcher and as a teacher.

11.5 Personal Growth

11.5.1 Growth as a Researcher

When I started my PhD, my Master’s studies had exposed me mostly to positivist and interpretive research, but I did not have a clear understanding of critical approaches to social research. As I progressed in my research, I came to understand more about critical research and felt that I should have approached my research with a different orientation to begin with. My definition of CT and my interviews with students were done from an almost purely interpretive perspective; my interviews with faculty and staff were slightly more critically-oriented, and my analysis still more critically oriented. However, in retrospect, if I were to do this research all over again, I would approach it differently – as I am recommending as further research below.

I also now feel extreme discomfort with making suggestions or recommendations on my own without having done participatory research with the people who are actually not merely the “audience” but actually the “actors” of my research. Even in my interviews, I could have given participants more of a say in providing their own understandings of CT, or in suggesting ways AUC can improve learning experiences. By the time I started feeling this way, I had finished my interviews and had started writing, so I was advised to leave this as recommended further research.

I am not suggesting this research has no immediate value – in fact my conversations with faculty and staff based on this research are already making a difference (e.g. OneAUC¹³⁴), and my recently published article on critical citizenship (Bali, 2013) has found resonance with other academics in the region. I hope this research will be a springboard of ideas, particularly where I point out inequalities that may not be immediately obvious, or that others may feel discomfort voicing aloud. I find this research opens up issues and raises questions relevant to Western institutions with postcolonial students, but I would prefer to re-open these issues in a participatory manner and so they be asked continuously by those who will be responsible for taking action and responding to changing internal and external conditions.

In terms of immediate impact on my practice, any workshops I give in future regarding CT or pedagogies such as use of discussion/dialogue in the classroom will be different and more critical, and also allow more faculty participation in defining the details of the topic. However, one would have to keep in mind that the audience is faculty from various disciplines who sometimes wish to learn new useful skills rather than have a philosophical discussion or undergo personal transformation¹³⁵. However, there are other avenues for starting the discussion on CT, such as newsletter articles which sometimes spark forum discussion topics. One such timely topic would be critical citizenship (Bali, 2013).

One further way I have grown as a researcher is in my resourcefulness. As a remote student, I lacked access to the University of Sheffield physical library year-round, and I lacked access to peers doing PhDs in Education. When I first started my thesis, AUC did not have a Graduate School of Education, so was not as well-stocked on education literature as it is today. AUC's library remains not as well-stocked as the University of Sheffield library in the work of UK scholars (e.g. Barnett's earlier work). During years when I did not have access to AUC's physical library, I managed to

¹³⁴ I mention this in the previous chapter – an initiative I led for all intercultural extracurricular experiences to come together so students can know of them from the get go (during the First Year Experience program)

¹³⁵ I have had this experience with an NGO I gave a workshop to – they enjoyed the discussion but were unhappy they had nothing “concrete” to go home with. In retrospect, this workshop was an exemplar of a process-oriented curriculum. I was asked to give a workshop based on certain assumptions. I prepared it, then after meeting the participants (the first session was dedicated to understanding their backgrounds and needs) I discovered they needed a completely different type of workshop than the one I had planned, and it was one for which I did not have expertise. And so I recommended a different person to give another session as part of the workshop, and conducted the rest of the workshop, and myself gave two more sessions which built upon the participants' own knowledge and needs, rather than my own. I ended up facilitating some really interesting and useful discussions – which the participants said they enjoyed, but they wanted something concrete to take home!

benefit from public libraries in cities I lived in, in the UK and US. I could not find all the books I needed and could not afford to buy them all, but managed to use AUC's document delivery service to get some chapters and journal articles that were not available in online databases. Several times during Egypt's political upheaval when I did not even have access to AUC's physical library or even the document delivery service (including the final stages of this thesis when I needed to do additional literature searches for some chapters). During times like these, I was grateful to colleagues who lent me their own books and gave me suggestions regarding electronic references to incorporate. To make up for lack of access to certain books, I tried to use electronically available articles by their authors. To make up for lack of access to peers, I joined some research projects at AUC that involved faculty and students from the social sciences (culminating in Bali & Balkenbush 2008, Bali & Simons-Rudolph 2008). While on leave from AUC, I participated in activities that offered peer interaction (e.g. educational lectures at the University of East Anglia, an "International Literature Reading Group" at the public library, which gave me opportunities to discuss issues related to language, translation and interculturality). While on maternity leave, I published journalistic articles related to my research (e.g. Bali 2013), and received responses from other academics.

11.5.2 Growth as a Teacher

My teaching experiences had a direct impact on my thinking for this thesis. Before starting this thesis, I was a faculty-developer who had little formal teaching experience. Most of my teaching experience had been with volunteer teaching of literacy as an undergraduate, and with teaching assistantship in Sci 120 at AUC. Several varied teaching experiences have shown me how technical curriculum approaches built around measurable learning outcomes are problematic in practice, and have highlighted to me the importance of focusing on the particular students and context, while emphasizing the process of learning. Particularly, when AUC's Graduate School of Education started (2008), I joined as an adjunct faculty member, teaching several courses in the Educational Technology diploma.

My own teaching has illuminated to me the complexities of promoting criticality in the context of an American university¹³⁶: I attempt to promote students' capacity to question their own contexts, but I also do not wish to discourage students from questioning the values behind receiving this sort of education from an American institution. I normally allow the use of the Arabic language in my class to allow for authentic expression and equalize students' abilities to express themselves¹³⁷, but one cohort of students found this insulting and requested we stick to English since some came to study education at AUC partly to improve their English fluency.

As a teacher, I have learned from the interplay of theory with practice, and my experiences have particular resonance with Ellsworth's (1989) work in the sense that applying critical pedagogy is not simple or straightforward, nor does it necessarily lead to emancipation. For example, as a young, female teacher-educator, my students are often more experienced and older teachers, and so some of the ways in which I try to "share" power can become problematic, particularly as they are neither used to having this sort of power when they are students, nor very used to learning from someone younger than themselves. For example, sometimes students think I avoid sharing my own knowledge, when what I am doing is trying to bring their own authentic knowledge in the classroom so they can learn from each other; others consider this a sort of humility/modesty, which I am not entirely sure it is, because this to me implies a sort of false pretence. When discussing gender-related issues, I sometimes find male students making very biased statements that I feel I must defend as a woman, to take a social justice stance, but doing so with the authority of teacher may impinge on the male students' capacity to express their thoughts freely. When I had to deal with intentional plagiarism in my class, I suddenly found myself treating the accused student not with collegiality, but in a patronizing manner. I learn from these contradictions and struggles, and take that learning to my next class, but every new group of students pose their own challenges, and the socio-political context has also impacted upon the classroom. For examples, before the revolution, it was a novelty to teach critical questioning, and some students were resistant to it. After the revolution, students are more willing to question, but more prone to conspiracy-theory than truly critical questioning.

¹³⁶ Of course, my students are adults and not the typical undergraduate students of AUC I have done my research about. But from teaching them, I have also extended my knowledge of Egyptian schooling, to which I personally had very limited exposure beforehand.

¹³⁷ Some of my students are English-language teachers (who believe their language is better than others who e.g. teach science; in reality, this is not necessarily the case, at least for oral speech)

Chapter 11: Conclusion

Taking my experiences and this research further, it is problematic to expect and assume that AUC as an institution would/should change in the ways I recommend. It is stuck in the throes of globalization and neoliberalism, and has to survive financially. It is an institution of cultural reproduction that implicitly imparts some cultural imperialism. However, this does not mean that faculty and students cannot resist these influences in any way they can – whether inside courses or through extracurricular means. And this actually does occur – for example, a recent strike where blue collar workers were demanding the administration improve their benefits; faculty and students stood in solidarity with striking AUC workers, helping them express their rights and demands, and several faculty involved students in discussing the events in their classes (I know of two: in RHET and economics).

When one looks at the interplay of power at the micro level in the particular context (Gore 2003) of AUC, one can start questioning how much, really, can a White American professor understand the plights of Egyptians? For that matter, how much can an American-educated Egyptian professor and students from the elite of society understand the conditions of the less advantaged in Egyptian society? How much of this can they explore in the classroom? And what does it mean when they bring in those values to the classroom? It is simplistic to assume a teacher can understand different students' experiences of oppression if they had never firsthand been the recipient of it (Ellsworth 1989). A critical stance is difficult to apply in the classroom without imposing the instructor's view of what constitutes social justice. Brookfield (2007) suggests that the dominant view be removed from the classroom discussion in order to give sufficient space to dissenting views. Freire suggests we keep the dominant view but critique and question it. However, for culturally different students and instructors, what is the dominant view? What is the side of social justice? Nussbaum (1997) warns against extreme liberal relativism that tolerates injustices by justifying it on cultural grounds. But I think only people from majority cultures do not feel the "threat" of universalization of values. On the other hand, when one feels strongly about a social justice issue it is difficult to remain neutral (nor is it necessarily respectful to students to pretend to be so). For example, a psychology instructor and I were discussing recently the difficulty of an instructor *not* defending the human rights of children with special needs in the midst of a dominant discourse in Egypt that is clearly ignoring their rights. But to what extent would students feel comfortable in expressing dissent to an authoritative teacher? Also, what

about situations in which the dominant view seems to be the one supporting social justice , but still needs to be questioned (e.g. when supporting the Egyptian revolution was the dominant discourse; on the other hand, handling it critically seems like speaking against the revolution and risks sounding like treason, even more so in the events of summer 2013). As Ellsworth (1989) suggests, rational discourse is not necessarily ideal for all situations, and "partial understandings" (meaning both biased and incomplete understandings) can have value in certain contexts.

In all of these ways, doing this thesis and teaching at the same time continue to raise these sorts of questions for me, and support my personal growth as a teacher.

11.6 Recommendations for Further Research

11.6.1 For AUC

Some of the major limitations of this research can be partially resolved by conducting further research in order to implement the recommendations: A "CT across the Curriculum" project.

I suggest a critical participatory study where faculty from various disciplines as well as students and staff work together to explore understandings of criticality, how they would apply to AUC, and how best to develop it in ways that meet different students' needs and goals while considering institutional limitations such as credit hour requirements and faculty availability. Alumni, if able to contribute time and effort, would also add perspective of someone reflecting back on their education. Many of AUC's faculty and staff are themselves alumni or parents of current or former students, so they could potentially play dual roles in this research study.

As a participatory study, participants need not follow goals that I set in advance: they would vary the goals and priorities of the research within the general framework of "CT across the Curriculum". Participants need not necessarily agree with all my conclusions, but could explore their relevance to their own practice where appropriate.

Some points that could be covered based on my findings include:

1. Redefining criticality with local conditions in mind. What kind of criticality is needed given the current political situation, and historical and social context? What is needed to develop a criticality in this culture? How to stay flexible so students are prepared for whatever the future may bring rather than just current conditions? The result of such deliberation would move beyond each individual's own understanding of CT, but still need not (in fact, preferably not) produce a fixed definition used globally by AUC, but rather a clarified yet fluid understanding of CT that can be continuously revised according to conditions, and which can be adopted by different instructors and disciplines differently. The participatory approach, however, is likely to deepen everyone's understanding of CT and reflections on how to apply it in their practice, and how the context influences this. While I reached these ideas on my own while working on this thesis, my ideas also resonate with Thayer-Bacon's (1998) notion of "constructive thinking".
2. Recognition of student differences and how the AUC educational experiences can privilege some over others. How to modify access to learning opportunities and ways experiences are conducted to reduce impact of power differentials. Participants could identify obstacles that both limit access to opportunities (e.g. few electives in engineering), marginalize some opportunities (e.g. core courses for professional disciplines), and limit potential depth of experiences (e.g. lack of reflection and theory with extracurricular experiences).
3. Exploring the ideas of socially critical vocationalism (Peach 2010) and Barnett and Coate's (2005) three dimensions of curriculum. I discuss these in the discussion chapter, but a participatory approach would go beyond this into exploring the desirability and feasibility of infusing these ideas throughout curricula – providing space for students to explore educational opportunities without overwhelming them with unnecessary busy-ness and forcing particular courses on them.
4. How to deal with the question of the dominant American culture and language taught to Arab students with varying degrees of Westernization? How to incorporate students' own cultures in a critical way while also teaching the dominant culture when needed, also critically. Participants would examine the controversial role of instructors from various backgrounds in applying this. Such questions are relevant for any university with

international students. One option to explore is “culturally relevant pedagogy” (Ladson-Billings 1995) described in chapter ten.

5. Devising ways to improve student ability to make informed choices – possibly through reforming advising reconceptualized as ongoing mentoring, and/or adding a "planning for AUC next few years of study" reflective activity in first year courses to ensure students have a clearer idea of opportunities and prerequisites to getting there. Possibly also adding capstone courses to reflect on the entire AUC experience (examples in chapter ten).
6. Focus on pedagogy and preparing faculty for teaching in a liberalizing manner in the AUC context: this includes professional development for local (especially part-time faculty) to understand liberal arts, but also for international or even Westernized faculty to understand the context and complexities of doing so in the Egyptian context, with all the social justice issues this raises. It would include not only "training" but also reflective activities that involve teachers thinking deeply about their teaching philosophies and how this relates to their wider goals in life, and how it manifests in their classrooms.

Other possible areas of study not directly coming out of this research but that can be interesting to pursue include a comparison of LEAD, government-scholarship and other AUC students’ AUC experience and how it develops criticality. What kind of different struggles do they face, how do they overcome them? How can the institution help them make the maximum of their years at AUC?

Another area of study could relate to the revolution and AUCians’ participation in the revolution – faculty, students, alumni – what their roles have been, what influenced them to be there, and how they perceive the future for Egypt and their roles in it.

11.6.2 Beyond AUC

Another recommendation for further study would be a cross-institutional study of Arab students’ CT development in Western institutions – whether they be Western institutions based in Arab countries (and AUC has several “sister” institutions such as the American University of Beirut) or Arab students studying abroad – especially after the “Arab Spring”. Most of the recommended points of discussion in the above section can be asked across institutions. Such research could be

compared to the more extensive literature on Chinese and Asian student adaptation to Western education.

11.7 Chapter and Thesis Conclusion

I take criticism so seriously as to believe that, even in the midst of a battle in which one is unmistakably on one side against another, there should be criticism, because there must be critical consciousness if there are to be issues, problems, values, even lives to be fought for... Criticism must think of itself as life-enhancing and constitutively opposed to every form of tyranny, domination, and abuse; its social goals are noncoercive knowledge produced in the interests of human freedom. (Said 1983 p. 28, quoted in Ashcroft & Ahluwalia 2008 p. 33)

In earlier parts of this study, I discussed debates on what critical thinking is, but as I end this study, I hope that educators will spend more time questioning what critical thinking is for - what are the values behind teaching CT? What does it mean for education to promote critical citizenship? Asking the "why" will help us move on to "how" in the midst of social and political upheaval, as is the case in Egypt.

I have been studying critical thinking development at AUC since 2006. At the end of this study, I want nothing more than to continue this research in a more critical and participatory manner that I hope will engage stakeholders within AUC – to better help prepare our students to be active citizens in the new and changing sociopolitical environment. I hope this work provides a good starting point for such critical action research to benefit these students, this country, and the region.

11.8 Epilogue

In the final stages of this thesis, the June 30, 2013 rebellion occurred in Egypt, followed by much division and violence. In response, I published an article entitled *Critical Citizenship for Critical Times* (Bali, 2013). In it, I discussed how, despite Egyptians' success at advocacy in the form of street demonstrations that topples regimes (Mubarak's then Morsi's), this "kind of citizenship, based on opposition, seems unable to change tactics and work towards reconciliation and reconstruction. It just recreates the protest cycle over and over again". I also encouraged Egyptians to reinterpret the meaning of critical citizenship, in a way that is "dialogically and

Chapter 11: Conclusion

reflectively developed, and responsive to contextual changes, considering issues of social justice and empathy needed in Egypt today", and I invited other academics to join the conversation on the role of higher education in doing so. The conversation has never been more urgent, and the growing popularity of this article (as evidenced from the comments received, as well as how often it has been shared online) is the start of the educative and (hopefully) catalytic validity I seek for the research I have done. Evidence of its relevance beyond AUC shows in a comment from a researcher outside AUC, as well as a personal email from a colleague at the American University of Beirut, who suggested faculty at her university might benefit from a seminar on the topic. I look forward to taking the ideas from this research into action on the ground.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Primary Research Documents

1 Pre-Interview Questionnaire

Section A: Demographic Section (emailed and filled before actual interview)

NAME:

RESEARCH KEY: (to be filled in by researcher)

- Schooling:** I already know what kind of high school degree you have (X degree from Y country), but could you give me background on previous schooling – how many years in each school?

Years (e.g. 1985-1987)	Name of School	Country

- AUC major:** _____ **minor:** _____ **current standing:** _____

- Favorite courses:**

- Extra-curricular activities (AUC and outside of) and/or hobbies:**

- Family's professions (parents, siblings) – this question is optional, I just thought it might be interesting to know 😊**

- Future aspirations/career goals/mission in life?**

- Travel experience: let me know if you have lived or traveled abroad (where to? For how long?)**

- Contact Info: MSN username:** _____ **Skype username:** _____

Email: _____ **On Facebook?** _____ **Prefer Email or Facebook for contact?** ___

2 Interview Guide for Semi-Structured Student Interviews

The below was designed to include the headings in my definition of CT, in a table which I would fill as I conducted student interviews. I would ask them about their level of the skill before AUC and now (at the time we were conducting the interview). The numbers were not important in themselves and were not used in the analysis, but they were important to help me prompt students for factors that influenced their CT development. They were used to help me understand:

1. Whether the student felt he had the skill/ability at all before AUC. Even though "1" was the lowest number, some went on to say "zero" to show how little of it they had before university
2. Whether and how far the student felt they had grown in that skill/ability throughout their AUC experience.
3. These numbers were then used to help me prompt for factors influencing CT. For example: Growing from 1 before AUC to 3 during AUC was a positive sign to ask about what happened at AUC to help them grow; Growing from a 3 before AUC to a 4 during AUC prompted me to ask how they acquired it before AUC, and then how it grew through AUC.

Section A: Demographic Section (before actual interview)

[insert data from pre-interview questionnaire in order to refer to it while conducting the interview, where relevant]

Levels/Factors Questions

For the following sections, the scale is different for each section.

Section B: QUESTIONING AUTHORITY

Tell me how far you believe, and how much you question each of the following

Scale of 1-5. 1 = totally believe, without question; 5 = question strongly, believe very little

AUTHORITY	Level before AUC	Level now	Factors leading to this change?
1. International Media sources (e.g. CNN)			

APPENDICES

2. Local Media sources (e.g. Ahram), newspaper)			
3. Professors, teachers			
4. Religious authorities (e.g. pope, sheikh)			

Section C: ALTERNATIVE VIEWPOINTS (based on Perry) (skipped)

APPENDICES

D: EVALUATING INFO SOURCES (my wording based on using Facione 1990 expert consensus)

How do you evaluate your ability to evaluate sources' credibility, relevance, recognition of assumptions (1 = novice, 5 = expert)

	Before AUC	Now	Factors influencing this change
1. Evaluate credibility of a source, e.g. website			
2. Evaluate relevance of source to my needs			
3. Identify hidden assumptions			
4. Recognize hidden agendas			
5. Understand "world view"			
6. Assessment of strength of an argument			

APPENDICES

Section E: MAKING OWN ARGUMENT (my wording based on using Facione 1990 expert consensus)

How do you evaluate your ability to make a logical, convincing argument (1 = novice, 5 = expert)

	Before AUC	Now	Factors
1. Recognizing importance of building “sound argument” in discussion			
2. Modifying argument presentation for different audiences			
3. Ability to bring information from various sources into argument			

Section F: METACOGNITION (my wording based on using Facione 1990 expert consensus)

How do you evaluate your ability to think about your own thinking (1 = novice, 5 = expert)

	Before AUC	Now	Factors
1. Understanding the way you learn best			
2. Recognizing your own biases (understanding your reaction to news about political issues)			
3. Self-correction (re-writing drafts; changing strategies in an argument)			
4. Self-evaluation (e.g. know if you've written an A or C paper)			

APPENDICES

Section G: DISPOSITIONS (using Facione 1990 expert consensus)

How do you evaluate the strength of each of these characteristics in yourself? (1 = novice; 5 = expert)

	Before AUC	Now	Factors
1. Open-mindedness, openness to different views			
2. Analysis			
3. Inquisitiveness, curiosity			
***4. Persistence in following through with own argument			

APPENDICES

Section H: CRITICAL ACTION (using Barnett 1997 as interpreted by Creme 1999)

How do you evaluate the strength of each of these characteristics in yourself? (1 = novice; 5 = expert)

	Before AUC	Now	Factors
1. Ability to solve problems in the academic context			
2. Ability to solve problems in every day life			
3. (later removed; repeated above) Learning how to learn			
4. (later removed) Understanding how knowledge is created			
5. Ability to make use of resources to grow as a person			
6. Capacity to meet personal goals			
7. Capacity to transform my surroundings (small-scale e.g. classmates, club-mates)			

8. Capacity to influence socio-political sphere (e.g. NGO work, writing)			
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Section I: GLOBAL QUESTIONS

1. How do you compare the strength of your critical skills in disciplines different than your own (e.g. core courses, your minor)? E.g. do you feel you are good at correcting yourself in engineering problem-solving questions but not in writing courses?
2. Of all the factors you mentioned above, some were repeated several times (I would repeat those): of all of these, which one do you feel had the greatest impact on your critical thinking development?

3 Interview Guide for Faculty Loosely-Structured Interviews

What made you decide to teach?

Why AUC?

How do you deal with different levels of CT among students?

Would u say developing CT is essential to course or less?

How do you go about promoting CT in your courses?

[Explain that I have defined certain elements of CT, and ask whether they think their teaching/courses promote these a little, or a lot, and how?]

1. Questioning
2. Evaluating information sources
3. Clear argument presentation
4. Seeing behind the obvious/reading between the lines
5. Understanding “the other” (person, views)
6. Self-reflection/metacognition
7. Solving personal and academic problems
8. Preparing students for transformative action (small scale in their lives; large scale in their country/world)

Talk to the participant more about their teaching style, influences on their own teaching, etc.

[Specific questions to add based on student interviews about this instructor, or based on my previous knowledge of the instructor]

Appendix B: List of Instructors/Administrators interviewed

Based upon student interviews, I conducted the following interviews with AUC instructors/administrators. Content of these interviews will be mentioned in the results chapters where appropriate. The breakdown below (8 instructors; 6 administrators):

Who interviewed/CODE	For which theme/chapter
Comparative Religion instructor COMPREL	Intercultural learning, Liberal arts
INTL (international affairs office administrator - responsible for international students who come to AUC) EXCH (exchange programs administrator - responsible for sending AUCians abroad)	Intercultural learning
Rhetoric and Composition administrator (RHET-admin) Rhetoric and Composition instructor (RHET2)	Rhetoric and Composition Rhetoric and Composition, Authentic Learning
Career Advising and Placement Services administrators (CAPS and CAPS2)	Authentic learning
Core Curriculum administrator CORE-admin	Liberal Arts
Scientific Thinking instructor SCI	Liberal Arts
Management instructor, marketing specialty MKTG	Liberal Arts, Authentic learning
Political science instructor, POLS	Liberal Arts, Authentic learning
Computer Science instructor CSCI	Liberal Arts
Construction Engineering instructor CENG	Liberal Arts, Authentic learning
Mechanical Engineering instructor MENG	Liberal Arts, Authentic learning

APPENDICES

There were other instructor interviews I requested but that were not conducted due to lack of response (one in English and Comparative Literature, one in Journalism and Mass Communication) and one (management) because the instructor refused to conduct the interview unless I sent him the detailed interview questions beforehand, which I could not do since the interview questions were not preset

Appendix C: Student Interview Results by Question

The following section outlines the kinds of responses students gave to particular sets of questions asking about development of particular aspects of critical thinking.

1. Questioning: authority/media

Students' questioning of media sources came from a combination of exposure to variety of media sources through the internet and satellite channels, and finding differences in the ways news was reported. A few students mentioned specifically discussing and questioning media in courses such as journalism and rhetoric & composition. Some students also mentioned discussions with family and friends. Credibility of local government-controlled media was generally more than CNN and Al Jazeera as examples of international media, except for one student who believed local newspapers completely.

Questioning of religious authority was generally prevalent among students, partly due to recognizing the humanity and therefore fallibility of religious leaders, but also because of some scandalously ridiculous things some religious leaders have recently been saying on TV. A few students went a level further and talked about how religion is open to interpretation and how talking to people who thought about religion differently helped open their eyes to this.

Students had mixed responses to questioning teachers/professors. The science majors specifically seemed to feel they could question professors in their non-science courses, but not so in science courses where they perceived the instructor to be teaching "facts" that were unquestionable. It makes me wonder what is happening in these courses, because questioning is an important characteristic of any scientist. Several students emphasized that in school they were taught to take teachers' words for "the absolute truth" but that at AUC they eventually learned to question more. A few students simply questioned teachers because they were human and could make mistakes like everyone else. Several students said it depended on how competent they perceived the professors to be; some professors were to be questioned because they were less competent.

2. Recognizing alternative viewpoints (Perry – progresses through Multiplicity, Relativism, Contextualism)

I used these levels in my analysis of the online discussions of students, and chose to interview students who had reached higher levels. However, I did not use them in the interview. After piloting my interview with two different people, I removed this question because a. it was very difficult to articulate in a way that was not "leading" and b. the general ideas in it were covered by other questions, including "questioning", "understanding worldviews" and "recognizing own biases".

3. Evaluating sources of information/evidence (evaluation with sub-skills assessing claims & assessing arguments)

Most students found the rhetoric and composition courses, as well as the information literacy course helpful in the development of skills related to evaluating relevance and credibility of information sources, as well as evaluating the strengths of others' arguments, as well as recognizing hidden assumptions.

For skills related to recognizing hidden agendas and understanding different worldviews, intercultural interaction and exposure to diverse people and different points of view was often mentioned.

4. Synthesis/Justifying own claims logically to self and others of various audiences (Facione 1990)

In terms of ability to synthesize information sources and to present one's own sound argument and modifying it for various audiences, students often cited the rhetoric and composition courses. But more so, they cited opportunities to practice argument-making in debates, discussions and extra-curricular activities, including MUN in school or at AUC. Some students also mentioned reading.

5. Metacognition/reflection (in critical pedagogy but also Facione, 1990: self-regulation with sub-skills self-examination & self-correction)

When I asked questions about Metacognition, I included ability to know how one learns best, ability to recognize one's own biases, to correct oneself and to evaluate the quality of one's work.

Most students learned more about how they learn best through exposure to different professors and ways of teaching different from what they were used to in school.

Students mentioned the rhetoric and composition courses (e.g. teacher feedback on their writing giving explicit criteria later helped them self-correct their own writing), and working in groups during courses or extra-curricular activities helped students correct themselves also.

In terms of recognizing one's own biases, exposure to various cultures and points of views was often mentioned.

6. Ability to take critical action in the larger socio-political sphere

This question was slightly more difficult to ask students and I had to prompt a lot to get responses. Critical action here included ability to solve problems in everyday life and in academia, ability to transform surroundings on a small-scale and large-scale, and capacity to make use of available resources and to meet personal goals.

Most responses revolved around how extra-curricular activities helped one feel able to make a difference on a small-scale or on a larger-scale, partly because students had the opportunity to try

influencing small groups of people within the activity. Some students mentioned writing, and several mentioned community service experiences.

7. Some Critical Dispositions

These included mainly the dispositions for curiosity/inquisitiveness, open-mindedness and analysis.

Students often mentioned supportive family as helping their curiosity and open-mindedness, but the open-mindedness was further supported by intercultural interactions.

Disposition for analysis, most students mentioned specific instructors or courses, including the rhetoric courses.

8. Perception: Does CT ability vary according to discipline – do individuals think they will use it differently in disciplines other than their own?

When asked this question, the majority of students said they felt they could transfer critical thinking skills outside their own discipline, but that their competence would not be as good, given their lack of background knowledge of other disciplines. It is worth noting that most of the students' responses in giving examples of how their critical thinking has improved are examples outside the academic area altogether, showing how they apply critical thinking in everyday life, rather than just in their discipline.

Appendix D: Different Definitions of LAE

Whereas definitions of LAE shared in chapter six focus on content, content variety and teaching, the below definitions have emphasis on intent or consequence.

Emphasis on Intent

Yale University resisted pressure to adopt more specialized models of education in the nineteenth century by reasserting that its aim was “to lay the foundation of a superior education” (quoted in Pfnister, 1984) as compared to vocational education learned in context.

Seifert et al. (2008) cite the working definition of a liberal education used by The Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts as

“characterized by an ***institutional ethos that values***: (a) the development of a set of intellectual arts (e.g., intellectual openness to inquire and discover; and the ability and desire to adopt a critical perspective of one’s and other’s beliefs) more than professional or vocational skills; (b) curricular and environmental structures that work in combination to create a coherent integrity to students’ intellectual experience; and (c) an institutional tradition of student–student and student–faculty interaction both in and out of the classroom” (p. 109, emphasis added).

Even though the definition incorporates elements of consequence (e.g. students’ intellectual openness and criticality), curricular content and teaching philosophy (e.g. interaction in and out of the classroom) – the emphasis is on an institution’s *intent* at this point.

Pascarella et al. (2005) conducted a study comparing liberal arts outcomes versus indicators of an institution’s “liberal arts emphasis” and its students’ “liberal arts experiences”, including some intentional aspects: “Scholarly/intellectual emphasis”, and “Faculty interest in student development” (p. 60). While Pascarella et al. (2005) found that some institutions provided liberal arts experiences to students despite not identifying themselves as “liberal arts institutions”, Dellucchi (2009) criticizes some US universities for doing the opposite: promoting intent to provide liberal arts education without necessarily meeting that promise. Both recognize that a university’s intent to provide liberal arts is not a sufficient indicator of whether liberal education is actually occurring.

Emphasis on Consequence

Some literature focuses on qualities of the liberally educated person as an outcome of a liberal education. For example:

Whatever its content or emphasis, the final judgment of a liberal education program has to be based on whether it helps the individual to be free. (Fen, 1961, p. 210)

Liberal education consists not in any special kind of learning to the exclusion of all other kinds, but in the development, on the basis of learning, of attitudes and habits of mind and conduct whose sum total is liberalness of spirit. (Farrison, 1946, p. 380)

Dewey defines a liberalizing education as one that begets

... hospitality of mind, generous imagination, trained capacity of discrimination, freedom from class, sectarian or partisan prejudice and passion, faith without fanaticism. (Dewey, 1940, p. 185 quoted in Ducasse, 1944)

Perry (1968) defines the “liberally educated” person as one who:

has learned to think about even his own thought, to examine the way he orders his data and the assumptions he is making, and to compare these with other thoughts that other men might have (p. 39 quoted in Bizzell, 1984)

Johnson (1945) asserts that a liberal education is much more than a general education:

But if a man is to blast away at the outmoded and build the new, if (to change the figure) he is to advance the frontier of our knowledge and excellence in medicine or law or education or industry or statecraft, he must bring to his task the critical and creative intelligence of the liberally educated (p. 12, emphasis added)

Clayton (1945, p. 322) states “A liberal education divorced from the specific conditions of the social forces of its day is an ornament rather than a significant agency of democracy” and recommends that the “function of liberal education...should be the development of effective social leadership” rather than a merely “conservative function” based on developing people sharing certain basic values.

However, Anderson-Mattfeld (1974) believes that an educational institution does not have full control over the end outcome of the extent of a student’s liberal education, since this will depend upon the student him/herself and how s/he “takes selectively from his family, his peers, and the total environment what he is consciously or unconsciously seeking and ready for at any given time” (p. 283).

Two definitions of liberal arts outcomes have been detailed to support two large research studies in the US conducted with several common researchers (Pascarella et al., 2005 and Wabash National Study, 2009). Pascarella et al. (2005, p. 61), have found that an institution’s liberal arts emphasis and students’ liberal arts experiences correlate with certain liberal arts learning

outcomes. They conclude that the development of these outcomes depends on the individual students' liberal arts experiences in college and suggest that the converse is probably true: if a student attends a liberal arts institution but does not personally undergo enough liberal arts experiences, s/he is less likely to develop these outcomes than a colleague who underwent most of the experiences.

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Appendix E: Critique of Nussbaum's Model of LAE

While Nussbaum (1997, 1998) believes critical reasoning can be infused into the curriculum in various ways, her experience with diverse institutions suggests a two-semester-long philosophy requirement works best. She recognizes that this sounds like “professional chauvinism” (Nussbaum, 1998) and does not attempt to clarify how this is not elitist, even though “defending elitism” in LAE is part of her goal. She dismisses the troubling fact that she herself finds few African American students in non-required philosophy courses, that African-American academics are underrepresented in philosophy departments¹³⁸, and that the Committee on Blacks in American Philosophical Association asserts that African-American students are uncomfortable with philosophy courses (Burbules, 1999). Moreover, in discussing “relativism”, Nussbaum keeps referring to the epistemology of philosophy that she feels should be used in discussions of various disciplines – which shows another layer of chauvinism – the belief that the best way of thinking is that which belongs to one’s discipline, and that it is universally applicable across disciplines. Moore’s (2011) research shows that the kind of criticism/criticality valued by philosophers differs markedly from that valued in the study of history and literature.

Nussbaum does not sufficiently problematize the possibility of conflict between universal human values (which often take a Western perspective) and local perspectives or those of special interest groups (Burbules, 1999; Gunderson, 2005). As a non-majority person reading her book, it seems to me that she is addressing how to educate the elites about “other” cultures; but she does not seem to directly address “other” students and faculty in academia. The learning of other cultures is seen as a way to make one a better citizen; it does not seem to be done with a social justice stance.

The biggest problem with Nussbaum’s model is that it does not depart sufficiently from the elitism she is defending. It seems like an appropriate model to involve those from dominant social groups in understanding those different from themselves, but it does not delve deeply enough into how something like “world citizenship” may be inappropriate for individuals from non-dominant groups for whom group loyalty and affiliation is essential for their identity (e.g. Ellsworth's, 1989 work). It also assumes universal values without sufficiently problematizing the tensions created by contradiction between predominantly Western values and those of other cultures. It continues to privilege certain content assuming its intrinsic superiority and capacity to liberate human beings of all backgrounds (I find her dismissal of her own academic chauvinism alarming!). Basically, it does not depart enough from other elitist models of LAE, but at least it is a start to valuing the knowledge of marginalized groups.

¹³⁸ As I show elsewhere, AUC's philosophy department consists SOLELY of Western faculty, most of whom are white males, with little diversity (around 3 females, two of whom are North American from Indian origin)

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Appendix F: AUC's Core Curriculum Design

1 Evolution of the Core Curriculum: Comparison of Three Versions of the Core Curriculum

Incorporating the capstone courses (did not exist in my time), ensuring some courses done earlier; providing courses at various intellectual levels; covering service learning, research, internship and international perspective

Element	Newest reported in thesis (Starting Fall 2007)	Recent - Contemporary (introduced 2005: students in my sample went through this)	Older: My student days (1996-2000?)
Writing, language and literacy (<i>slight changes</i>)	Information Literacy (0 credits) Rhetoric & Composition (3-9 credits/1-3 courses) Arabic language (0-6 credits/0-2 courses) depending on exemption and high school	Information Literacy (0 credits) Rhetoric & Composition (3-9 credits/ 1-3 courses) Arabic language (0-6 credits/0-2 courses) depending on exemption and high school	N/A Writing Program (0-9 credits/ 1-2 courses of 4 & 5 credits each) Arabic language (0-x credits) depending on exemption and high school; may skip exemption exam and take an extra Arabic Literature course in Arabic

APPENDICES

<p>Fundamental Intellectual Skills (<i>same courses, different content and to be taken within first 3 semesters</i>)</p>	<p>Scientific Thinking (3 credits) – shared syllabi Philosophic Thinking (3 credits) <i>To be taken in first three semesters</i></p>	<p>Scientific Thinking (3 credits) – shared syllabi Philosophic Thinking (3 credits)</p>	<p>Scientific Thinking (3 credits) – different syllabi (pre-requisite to below) Philosophic Thinking (3 credits)</p>
<p>Arab World Studies (<i>reduction of number of credits, increased choice</i>)</p>	<p>Choice of history, literature or anthropology/sociology options (6 credits/2 courses)</p>	<p>Arab History Arab Society Arabic Literature (9 credits/3 courses)</p>	<p>Arab History (pre-requisite to below) Arab Society Arabic Literature (9 credits/3 courses)</p>
<p>Natural Science requirement (<i>no change</i>)</p>	<p>Course + lab (4 credits/1 course + 1 lab); science/engineering exempt</p>	<p>Course + lab (4 credits/1 course + 1 lab) ; science/engineering exempt</p>	<p>Course + lab (4 credits/1 course + 1 lab) ; science/engineering exempt</p>
<p>Humanities/Social Sciences (<i>slight change in course timing</i>)</p>	<p>Choice of one humanities and one social science course from an approved list (3 credits within first three semesters and 3 credits within first six semesters)</p>	<p>Choice of one humanities and one social science course from an approved list (6 credits/2 courses)</p>	<p>Choice of one humanities and one social science course from an approved list (6 credits/2 courses)</p>

APPENDICES

<p>MAJOR CHANGES</p>	<p><u>International/World Studies</u> (3 credits/1 course)</p> <p>Capstone level (2 – may be within major):</p> <p>Research/ internship (3 credits/1 course of either kind)</p> <p>Service learning/ international perspective (3 credits/1 course of either kind)</p>	<p><u>Human Spirit and Liberal Arts</u> electives (6 credits/2 courses) – some of these include International/World Studies courses in the “newest” core, some of them are replacements for Core Seminar 200 in the “oldest”</p> <p>No capstones required but some majors require e.g. theses</p>	<p><u>“Free” soft core elective</u> (3 credits/1 course of any humanities, social science or natural science – may be forced to take Arabic Literature here)</p> <p><u>Core Seminar 200</u> (3 credits/1 course) (Philosophic Thinking prerequisite to Core Seminar)</p> <p>No capstones required although some had considered Core Seminar the capstone. But some majors require e.g. theses.</p>
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2 Examples of Courses for Various Requirements

Area	Examples of course titles	Comments
Primary level: Natural Sciences	Physics for Poets Introductory Biology Lab: Science and Technology of Ancient Egypt Lab: Exploration of the Universe	Some of these courses are especially designed for people with no science background (those who have high school background in science are directed to other introductory courses usually)
Primary level: Humanities and Social Sciences options	Children's Literature and Cultural Representations Big History World Cultures The World of the Theater The Human Quest: Exploring the "Big Questions" Introduction to Political Science Selected Topics in the Social Sciences	Variety – these courses are intended for first year students and so are designed with language levels appropriate to them, and build basic study skills and reading and writing in preparation for university

APPENDICES

<p>Secondary level: Humanities and Social Sciences options</p>	<p>Core Seminar (remaining from previous versions)</p> <p>Introduction of Islamic Art and Architecture I</p> <p>Arabic Literature and Gender</p> <p>Introduction to Sufism</p> <p>Modern and Contemporary Art</p> <p>Survey of British Literature</p> <p>Informal Logic</p> <p>Europe in the Age of Reason</p> <p>Cross-Cultural Perceptions and Representations</p> <p>Non-Muslim Communities in the Muslim World</p> <p>Introduction of Macro Economics</p> <p>Ancient Egypt Introduction to Psychology</p>	
<p>Arab World Studies</p>	<p>Arab Society (remaining from previous versions)</p> <p>Survey of Arab History (remaining from previous versions)</p> <p>Introduction to Classical Arabic Literature (remaining from previous versions)</p> <p>Making of the Modern Arab World</p> <p>Zionism and Modern Judaism</p> <p>Social Problems of the Middle East</p>	<p>Notice how now there are more choices of which era of Arab history to study, it is no longer just Arab but also includes a course on Zionism</p> <p>HOWEVER, despite the increase in number of choices, there are more SECTIONS in old-style courses like Arab</p>

APPENDICES

	<p>Arab Family Structure and Dynamics</p> <p>Economic History of the Modern Middle East</p>	<p>Society and Arab History than the new ones that are not even necessarily offered every semester.</p>
<p>International World Studies</p>	<p>Peoples and Cultures of Latin America</p> <p>Peoples and Cultures of Sub-Saharan Africa</p> <p>Peoples and Cultures in Asia</p> <p>Pilgrimage Traditions in the World's Religions</p> <p>Prayer and Contemplation in the World's Religions</p> <p>Between Hindu and Muslim in India and Pakistan</p> <p>Medieval Literature</p> <p>Literature of the Renaissance</p> <p>World Literature</p> <p>African Literature</p> <p>Third World Literature</p> <p>Economic History</p> <p>Music in the Western Tradition</p> <p>Social Movements Social Class and Inequality</p> <p>Environmental Issues in Egypt</p>	<p>Notice the variety of courses focusing on various parts of the world including sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Asia, and various world religions including Hinduism for example</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>Environmental Issues in Egypt sounds local to me.</p>

APPENDICES

	<p>What is America?</p>	
<p>Category 1: Research and Practical Experience (3 credit hours)</p>	<p><i>The requirement may be met by selecting one course from a variety of options, including a senior thesis, a senior seminar, or a supervised internship.</i></p>	<p>Some majors (e.g. computer science and engineering) already have a required senior thesis and some have an internship course (e.g. “Industrial Training” required in engineering and optional in computer science)</p> <p>I found it strange that they grouped research with practical experience until I saw the MENG having 2 credits for thesis + 1 credit for industrial experience add up to the 3. Defeats the purpose.</p>

APPENDICES

<p>Category 2: Community Engagement and International Perspective (3 credit hours)</p>	<p><i>The requirement may be met by selecting one course from a variety of discipline-specific service learning courses, international study options, international dialogue courses or special seminars in international issues and debates, and the Core Seminar.</i></p>	<p>Not all majors have a service learning (community engagement) type of course but students may take one in other disciplines; international perspective is less clear: do they mean either a dialog course or some exchange program?</p> <p>Besides, I see practical experience and service learning being more closely interchangeable!!!</p>
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3 AUC vs. Aspects of Liberal Arts in Literature

Aspect of Liberal Arts Education	Recognized by AUC? (examples from AUC core curriculum website and interview)	Ensured/Assessed by AUC?	Examples from interviews with teachers
<i>Intent</i>	Yes, AUC mission statement and core curriculum description and FYE	AUC does nothing to ensure part-time teachers have the intent or even understanding of liberal arts education; however, I need to find out if it does so when interviewing full-timers	Some teachers will show this intent (examples?) but part-timers may be unaware of what a liberal arts education is
<i>Content: proportion of liberal arts degrees</i>	No– keeps the majors going despite few students choosing them. More than 70% of students choose non-liberal arts (i.e. professional) degrees	Nothing specific to encourage this except the option that students may change their major (and hopefully use the first year of college to “shop around”); however, many of the newly created majors are in the professional disciplines (architectural engineering, petroleum engineering, computer engineering, education, professional development, community psychology all added within the past 10 years; also added recently the liberal arts disciplines: biology, history and	Proportion of full-time FACULTY in each discipline is a bit laughable compared to # of students in each disciplines – although liberal arts faculty are many because of the core curriculum

APPENDICES

		gender studies)	
<i>Content: diversity of courses</i>	<p>Yes – core curriculum ensures students get some courses in humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. Also, two courses in Arab culture.</p> <p>ALSO: “free” electives</p>	<p>Yes – but exposure to just ONE social science course or ONE natural science courses is not enough to develop awareness of the discipline. Free electives are one way to do so, but Engineering, Computer Science and Business students have very FEW “free” electives to use for such purposes</p>	

APPENDICES

<p><i>Content: specific courses</i></p>	<p>Yes – Rhetoric and composition courses, Scientific Thinking, Philosophic Thinking.</p>	<p>Yes – all students are required to take these courses and will not graduate without taking them (unless they transfer their equivalent from another institution)</p>	<p>The teachers of these courses apparently have an idea about liberal arts education but there is no way to ENSURE they do</p>
<p><i>Content: teaching methodologies</i></p>	<p>Yes – CLT trainings on “The Art of Discussion Leading” and “Teaching Critical Thinking using Active Learning”</p>	<p>No – only student evaluations of instruction used and count towards tenure; few disciplines observe teachers before tenure (only once) and no one ensures teachers are trained/prepared to teach in non-didactic ways.</p>	<p>Some of the things teachers said</p>
<p><i>Consequence/ Outcomes</i></p>	<p>Yes – in mission statement and most course learning outcomes and program learning outcomes</p>	<p>Not really. For accreditation purposes in some professional majors; as core administrator said: student evaluations of courses (only across-the-board assessment AUC does regularly) has few questions relevant and students do not take the survey seriously</p>	<p>The Questioning, etc. questions</p>

4 Comparison of Major Requirements

Core Curriculum = 34-46 depending on Arabic and English Requirements. Say most people need 2 English courses and one Arabic course – then most people will do around 40 credits – i.e. most people will have the minimum # of electives + 6. HOWEVER, those who end up needing more courses (esp. English) may be those who would benefit more from more core. They have less of a chance to go deeper into anything as a minor or for interest

General Observations:

MAJOR	# of General Electives	# of collateral courses in “pure” disciplines
Economics	14-26 credits	None (finance, accounting, computing)
Journalism	35-47 They were too busy to calculate it but it goes like this: $120 - (24+9+6) - (34 \text{ or } 46) =$	None
Political Science	23-35 credits	2 history (various other options depending on specialization)
English and Comparative Literature	29-41 credits	
Business Administration	15-27 credits	3 econ, 1 math
Computer Science	3-15 credits	6 math, 2 physics + 2 labs (some cs courses cross-listed with physics)
Mechanical Engineering	0-9 credits	5 math, 2 physics + 2 labs
Physics	0-6 credits	5 math, 2 chem + 2 chem labs

5 Number of general electives by major for some major¹³⁹:

MAJOR	# of General Electives	# of collateral courses in “pure” disciplines
English and Comparative Literature	29-41 credits	Not clear
Journalism	35-47 credits	None
Political Science	23-35 credits	2 history (various other options depending on specialization)
Economics	14-26 credits	None (finance, accounting, computing)
Business Administration	15-27 credits	3 econ, 1 math
Computer Science	3-15 credits	6 math, 2 physics + 2 labs (some cs courses cross-listed with physics)
Mechanical Engineering	0-9 credits	5 math, 2 physics + 2 labs
Physics	0-6 credits	5 math, 2 chem + 2 chem labs

¹³⁹ Created from the catalog: most courses are equal to 3 credits and labs are usually equal to 1 credit