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A Corruption Course through a Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: The Need for an Assessment That Fits

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Abstract: The present study examines the challenges and the rewards of assessing learning in a seminar on corruption which is taught in a country (Iraq) where political corruption is seen as the main source of structural instability and sectarian tensions. It specifically focuses on the role of culturally relevant pedagogy in defining the most suitable summative assessment. To this end, essay test questions were developed concerning the relevance of political corruption, the impact of investigative journalism, the role of humor in investigative journalism, and the appropriate remedies (besides journalism) to political corruption. In students' responses, investigative journalism (with or without humor) was consistently reported to be a dangerous undertaking, but disagreement emerged on its effectiveness as one of the possible remedies for corruption. Dishonesty was seen as the universal cancer of political systems and thus difficult to extirpate, albeit some systems (e.g., Al-Muhasasa) were seen as tolerating it more than others. In our study, the qualitative examination of students' responses served three objectives: (a) it offered evidence about the extent to which culturally relevant pedagogy was realized in the course; (b) it served to put forth a proposal on how students' test responses can inform teaching and assessment in future offerings of the course; and more broadly, (c) it synopsized the views of a sample of college students who represent the population upon whom the country heavily relies for its economic and political recovery.

Keywords: political science; investigative journalism; Iraq; student-centered pedagogy

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1. Introduction

A *student-centered approach* to instruction in higher education is generally considered ideal [1–4]. As the label suggests, the needs and abilities of the learner are its focus. The educator's role is that of a facilitator rather than a provider of knowledge. Learners are not expected to be passive receivers of knowledge but rather active participants who not only acquire knowledge but also transform it and themselves in the process. It is often defined in its opposition to an educator-centered approach, according to which the educator is the main source of knowledge for learners who passively conform to their directives. Practices associated with a student-centered approach have focused on key aspects that differentiate it from an educator-centered approach, such as learners' active role in constructing their knowledge structures and reservoirs, and its fostering engagement [4,5] and deep learning (i.e., inducing concept development and critical analysis rather than merely copying and retaining knowledge over time) [6,7].

Not surprisingly, a student-centered approach is at the heart of *culturally relevant pedagogy* (CRP), which advocates meaningful and effective learning through acknowledgment of "the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students" [8] (p. 29), and through teaching that affirms and nurtures students' strengths. According to Kramsch [9], the term *culture* can be defined as the values, beliefs, views, and actions that are accepted as right by individuals who see themselves as belonging to a given society or social group. *Cultural relevance* is a term that emerges

from the belief that effective learning is rooted in students' cultural experiences [10,11]. To wit, ways of learning and prior knowledge may differ from one culture to another. Thus, educators' ability to understand and rely upon students' cultural knowledge in their instructional practices is seen as an unavoidable necessity for enhancing students' sense of self-efficacy and learning opportunities, both of which are key aspects of effective learning.

CRP aims to highlight the reciprocal links connecting students' cultural competence, academic success, and sociopolitical consciousness [12,13]. Namely, it "not only 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" [14] (p. 469). Thus, the educator actively collaborates with students to develop their competencies, as well as enhance engagement and a sense of belonging, thereby avoiding detachment, disengagement, and powerlessness. As such, CRP promotes a horizontal power structure, which is defined by the roles that the educator and students play in academic activities inside or outside the classroom [15].

Of course, as for all theoretical models, challenges exist in instructional implementation and assessment [16–18]. The present research focuses on how the pedagogy can be applied to summative assessment so that it offers students opportunities to express their particular course knowledge, cultural competence, as well as sociopolitical insights while adhering to general institutional mandates and directives (e.g., the requirement for summative assessment at the end of the semester).

1.1. The Topic and Location of the Course: Corruption and Iraq

It is challenging to teach a political science course on "corruption" in a foreign land that, in its recent past, has undergone a US invasion and that has remained unable to mitigate sectarian struggles as well as feelings of victimization and entitlement [19]. It is particularly challenging in the context of a commitment to CRP since a key aim of the course is to help students rationally examine their own culture and social system while navigating texts made in the language and codes of a foreign super-power (i.e., US, a nation with a dominant position exemplified by its ability to exert influence and project force on a global scale). In this context, students' engagement does not constitute an instructional challenge. Corruption (of the political form) is a topic that is deeply felt by the students because of its direct and often unavoidable impact on their lives and on those of their immediate and distant families. However, to be effective, instruction must foster a rational approach to a deeply felt and complex topic through the application of inductive and deductive analyses and heuristics to class activities, which may involve clarifying the objectives to be achieved in searching for relevant information, thoroughly canvassing an array of sources, absorbing and evaluating information in an unbiased manner, and then weighing realistic solutions carefully as to avoid impulsive seizing upon hastily contrived options.

In the present research, we selected for a case study a course (GOV 402) that is intended to assist students in defining corruption and identifying its causes, types, and impacts, as well as approaches and policies that are meant to combat it. The course is an elective for students majoring or minoring in International Studies or Political Science at a university with a US curriculum and a student-centered instructional approach located on foreign soil (Kurdistan Region of Iraq). Although our study can be applied to a variety of countries that have faced dramatic social change, we focused exclusively on Kurdistan for its being one of the most politically and economically dynamic regions of the Middle East. The US invasion of Iraq has created a new balance of power among Sunnis, Shi'as, and Kurds, based on a sectarian allocation of resources (Muhasasa Ta'ifiyya) which tends to foster victimization and entitlement, as well as to sideline meritocracy [19]. Not surprisingly, the Muhasasa (i.e., the distribution of political offices) has become one of the epitomes of all that is wrong with the post-invasion political order. Muhasasa, which establishes a proportional political representation based on the demographic/ethnic makeup of Iraq, has been credited as having the inevitable and foreseeable effect of elevating ethnic and sectarian identities to political relevance, reshaping the patronage networks that have dominated Iraqi economic

and political activities for a long time. Muhasasa exists at the expense of meritocracy, according to which merit or talent is the sole basis for assigning people to positions and distributing rewards, thereby ensuring economic justice [20]. Sectarian infighting, alleged instances of political corruption in a variety of forms, suppression of dissent (including the repeated calls for the independence of Kurdistan) [21], and weaknesses of the economic engine have led to increasingly vociferous and widespread appeals for change. Although many factors may be linked to political corruption, Muhasasa is seen as the primary culprit.

Young people, who have been the most vocal dissenters [22], represent the demographic group upon whom the Kurdistan Regional Government as well as the Republic of Iraq rely to develop a sustainable economy. As such, not only the quality and nature of their education but also their views of government are considered critical to the economic and political future of the country [23].

1.2. The Pedagogy: The Challenges of the "How" to Assess

Most of the evidence on CRP deals with an instruction [24,25]. The present research focuses on students' assessment that can serve as a tool (a) to deliver to students feedback about their learning (i.e., assessment for learning), and more broadly, (b) to determine the extent to which instructional objectives are achieved (i.e., assessment of learning), as well as (c) to inform future reiterations of teaching and assessment.

Important to note is that a one-word shift from "of" to "for" defines two conceptually different aims of assessment [24]. The preposition "of" stands for the traditional way of conceptualizing assessments in which the focus of instruction is to determine the extent to which particular standards are achieved. In this context, educators have limited freedom to allow students to explore beyond the standards that are selected for testing. In contrast, "for" defines assessment as one of the tools that educators can use to foster learning. In this context, educators tend to go beyond institutionally mandated narrow standards, encouraging students to demonstrate competence by applying learning to real-world situations, thereby adding depth and complexity to the processes involved in the acquisition of information and skills.

Interestingly, a distinction is often made between formative assessment and summative assessment [25]. Formative assessment is intended to promote the enhancement of students' attainment (i.e., assessment for learning), whereas summative assessment is intended to merely summarise students' attainment at a particular time (i.e., assessment of learning). CRP does not prevent the summative assessment from being used and understood as a tool to ascertain students' competence (i.e., what they know and can do), to demonstrate whether they have achieved preset standards, and, occasionally, to show how they are positioned in relation to other students [26]. However, CPR dictates that summative assessment also be used as a tool for learning [27]. To this end, imagine a take-home test with open-ended questions. The content of the test refers to issues, concepts, theories, and materials explored during the semester (as per institutional requirements), but the questions allow students to go beyond the information covered in class and independently search for answers to issues that are relevant and impactful through sources that are deemed useful. Students then develop individualized answers, thereby making a final contribution to their learning in the course. Upon receiving the instructor's delayed feedback, their learning is then further amplified by comments serving as additional opportunities for inquiry. Of course, CRP also dictates that summative assessment be used as a tool to inform future teaching and assessment based on the idea that learning for both students and educators is not limited to course knowledge but includes cultural competence, as well as sociopolitical insights, all linked together through engagement and critical thinking skills. Thus, learning is not a student-only endeavor but extends to educators whose teaching experiences, if carefully analyzed and reflected upon, can inform and consequently strengthen future teaching.

The research described below asked the following questions:

a. Can summative assessment be used to illustrate the effects of the implementation of CRP in a course?
b. Can summative assessment in a course serve to inform teaching and assessment in future offerings of the course?
c. Can summative assessment serve to inform educators and administrators of a given institution of the views of its students regarding culturally, socially, and educationally relevant topics/issues, such as corruption?

2. Materials and Methods

Participants were 29 students (age range: 18–25) enrolled in a seminar entitled "Corruption" (GOV 402). The seminar was offered by a private university located in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The university is accredited by the Association of American International Colleges and Universities, as well as by the Republic of Iraq's Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The seminar, which enrolled 11 females and 18 males, was described to students as requiring the examination of definitions of corruption and the identification of its causes, kinds, and consequences, as well as approaches and policies intended to serve as remedies. Students were juniors or seniors who had chosen International Studies or Political Science as their major or minor. Their ethnicities could be defined as including Kurds and Mesopotamian Arabs. Other details regarding ethnicity, religious affiliation, and first language(s) were not included in compliance with the UN standards regarding data protection [28].

The seminar entailed a midterm test, a final test, a research paper, an oral presentation, and weekly class discussions. Each class activity was intended to cover all the six levels of Bloom's taxonomy [29–31], including remembering and understanding, application, analysis, evaluation of information, and knowledge development. At the very start of the course, students were informed that GOV 402 was a discussion-oriented course. Therefore, during each class meeting, they were expected to be able to discuss the materials of specific reading assignments, including peer-reviewed articles, newspaper or magazine articles, and book chapters. At times, audio-visual materials were added to reading assignments, which consisted of documentaries, speeches, investigations, and debates given by scholars and politicians. To ensure organization, at every meeting, individual students were responsible for introducing the assigned readings.

As per other courses at the selected university, English was the primary communication mode in and outside the classroom. Peer observations and evaluations qualified the instructor as a learning-oriented instructor [32] whose teaching was informed by a student-centered model and a well-practiced consideration for cultural diversity. She was described by colleagues as expressing a "humanizing pedagogy that respects and uses the reality, history, and perspectives of students as an integral part of educational practices", a description that embodies the CRP credo [33] (p. 160).

The data examined below are first and foremost summaries of students' answers to final test questions (summative assessment). The test was a take-home examination to be completed within a day. It was selected for our case study because it was a summative assessment that was developed to conform to CRP. Students could consult study materials but had to rely on their own words for answering test questions. Direct quotations were discouraged (no more than 15% of the total text). All submissions were scrutinized by the instructor for plagiarism.

To ensure the anonymity of the data collected, students were given unique random numbers to which their responses were then linked. Participation complied with the guidelines of the Office for Human Research Protections of the US Department of Health and Human Services and with the American Psychological Association's ethical standards in the treatment of human subjects.

3. Results

Students' responses were organized by the issue they addressed. Thematic analysis [34] was utilized to identify themes in the participants' answers. To ensure the detection of stable trends in our qualitative data set, themes that were mentioned by at least 80% of the participants are reported below. Gender is cited whenever discrepancies of viewpoints exist that fall along gender lines. Otherwise, responses are collapsed. Idiosyncratic responses are only occasionally reported if they help explain an issue or matter that is judged to be ambiguous.

3.1. Knowledge of Investigative Journalism (e.g., J.A. Namu) and of the Use of Humor in Investigative Journalism (e.g., A. Albasheer)

The first test question assessed the extent to which knowledge of instances of investigative journalism (e.g., J.A. Namu) and of humor to disseminate its findings (e.g., A. Albasheer) were possessed by students. The test questions explicitly mentioned J.A. Namu and A. Albasheer, as these journalists, their lives, and work had been extensively discussed in class. Students' knowledge of A. Albasheer's work was more extensive than that of J.A. Namu, as demonstrated by both the length of the students' answers and by the number of specific details included. However, both kinds of individuals were overwhelmingly cited for their courage in exposing wrongdoings in their respective countries and for the dangers that they, their families, and/or their colleagues were willing to face. Interestingly, the stories with which the two journalists dealt were recognized as somewhat different when students mentioned the country of origin and the specific matters of their work. However, stories were recognized as similar when references were made to the aims of their work, the integrity with which they carried it out, and the dangers they and their families were willing to face.

All students agreed that investigative journalism, with or without humor, has the function to inform the public of malpractices and actual crimes that are carried out by those in power or with power. Education (conceptualized as being informed by facts as opposed to being gullible) was seen as essential to the development of a political system based on freedom of speech, meritocracy, and respect for diversity. However, there was very little hope that investigative journalism would be successful in Iraq since all kinds of resources were thought to be controlled by those in power. Namely, investigative journalism was seen as being able to uncover the culprits of wrongdoing but not sufficiently established to change their behavior since they had all the cards in their hands, including the power to decide whether a person would live or die. Students frequently mentioned that over time, the people in power have changed, shifting between/among ethnic groups without equitable improvements in the day-to-day conditions of the ethnic groups that comprise Iraq. A constant reference was made to the current political system (i.e., Al-Muhasasa) that allocates positions based on ethnic affiliation rather than competence. Al-Muhasasa appeared to be generally disliked due to its inability to recognize competence as the primary requisite for holding office irrespective of ethnic and religious affiliation. Ironically, in a country that had been stitched together by Western countries unwilling to recognize its ethnic and religious diversity, and thus the will of the people, Al-Muhasasa was seen as fostering ineffectual actions and wrongdoings by recognizing ethnic and religious diversity above all else. Another concern often reported was the association made by those in power between ethnicity and religious affiliation, which was seen as perpetuating the current system and its underlying corruption. In addition, a few students spoke of the benefits of a secular political system, as religion was seen as being instrumentalized for ethnic ends.

3.2. Opinion about the Impact of Investigative Journalism

All believe that investigative journalism was impactful, but the nature of the impact and its magnitude varied. Some students focused on the influence that investigative journalism might have on the people of a society, making them aware of wrongdoings and encouraging them to protest in the streets. Others focused on its impact on the people

in power or with power. Articles of investigative journalism were seen as giving such individuals opportunities to either change their behavior (a positive outcome) or retaliate against the journalists and their families (a frightful outcome). However, others were uncertain whether the journalists' commitment to justice and related work would matter in a society, such as that of Iraq, where media are controlled by those in power, and independent journalists are often easily silenced since they operate without protection and with very scarce resources.

3.3. Opinion about the Impact of Humor in Investigative Journalism (e.g., A. Albasheer)

Twenty students (72.73% of the females and 66.67% of the males) stated directly on the first sentence or paragraph of their answers that humor as a tool for the dissemination of critical information can fight corruption. However, explanations for this belief were not entirely uniform. Except for one student, all believed that the impact of humor was positive. They explained that humor could grab the attention of all audiences, especially young people, and make the news less "boring". Humor about wrongdoings by the people in power can make the products of investigative journalism palatable to the very people who are likely to be the injured parties. It can help educate the injured parties, dispel fears, give hope, and drive them to consider non-violent mass protests. It can also make leaders reflect on their wrongdoings and those of others or merely make them fearful of their being in the spotlight, thereby potentially driving them to change their actions. Although most students believed in the utility of humor for the dissemination of the outcomes of investigative journalism, one claimed that the impact of humor might be entirely negative. He noted that ridicule would not be appreciated by many leaders, who, as a response, would be so angry to feel justified to exercise violent retaliation against those with whom they disagreed.

A minority of students openly recognized that humor might be a double-edged sword, a tool not always leading to the intended outcome in a country where dissent might result in the death of the dissidents and the impunity of the culprits. Specifically, nine students (27.27% of the females and 33.33% of the males) stated in the first paragraph of their answers that humor is not an effective tool for the dissemination of the products of investigative journalism. The most common claim was that humor helps people see dishonesty but does not change their responses. Namely, it does not make them more or less likely to protest and rebel against dishonesty. It also can make leaders more likely to retaliate violently against anybody who expresses disagreement and/or can diminish their current power. Answers regarding the ineffectiveness of humor could be characterized as expressing hopelessness and despair regarding the present and future of Iraq. Indeed, nowhere in these answers, students mentioned hope. There were frequent remarks that news outlets were controlled by the powerful, and investigative journalism was rare or absent in Iraq. Although all stated that wrongdoing by the powerful was widespread, they admitted that it would be difficult as well as dangerous to uncover, an obstacle that even humor could not overcome.

3.4. Opinion about Political Corruption and Potential Remedies

The exam ended with a question about the nature of political corruption and the possibility of reform. Students' answers illustrated the depth and vividness of their understanding of the meaning of the term political corruption in its different practical manifestations and implications, especially for Iraq. All agreed that corruption is not at all an isolated occurrence in a few unfortunate countries but rather a widespread phenomenon. They admitted that the weaker are the institutions that define a society, the more likely is corruption to be rampant. Iraq was mentioned as a prototypical example of a country where institutions did not have much support from the very people whose interest they were purported to guard. Most importantly, students felt that institutions needed to be selected and developed by the local people without the interference of external powers even though the latter might believe "they know better". External powers were not only

viewed as interfering with the affairs of the country but also as suffering from the same ailments they claimed to be able to "cure".

Overall, yearnings for reforms were palpable but reserved to the youth based on the widespread acknowledgment that older generations had failed to answer the call for change. Such a desire was intermixed with concerns regarding the task ahead, including fears for one's life. Students' answers illustrated pride in their society, an interest in introducing change without interference from outside powers, and a genuine aspiration to improve their lives and those of their fellow countrymen. Their answers consistently reiterated the belief that competence and practical experience have to overcome ethnicity and religion as qualifications for public office.

3.5. Evaluation of the Selected Assessment by Independent Evaluators and Feedback by Students

The quality of the summative assessment choices made by the instructor was determined by six criteria encompassing CRP: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, predicted impact, and sustainability. Although the selected criteria mostly pertained to the content of the test questions and related answers, the take-home essay format of the test remained a non-negligible aspect of the assessment protocol because it gave students sufficient room to express their thoughts.

Relevance concerned the significance of the questions in the students' daily lives. Coherence denoted the extent to which the questions fitted not only the course objectives but also the needs of the students. Effectiveness referred to whether the course objectives were achieved and the needs of the students were satisfied. Efficiency pertained to the extent to which the test questions delivered answers in a trouble-free manner. Predicted impact referred to the extent to which the test questions might have long-term and/or broader effects than those covered by the criterion of effectiveness. Sustainability meant to refer to estimates regarding the permanence of the results obtained for the students who participated.

Criteria were given to three evaluators whose graduate degrees and professional expertise encompass not only curriculum and instruction in higher education but also CRP. They were asked to independently examine the students' answers based on the syllabus used in class and related course specifications. Table 1 represents the obtained evaluation. In it, each criterion is measured on a 4-point scale including "developed", "developing", "under-developed", and "not available". Each checkmark represents the rating of an evaluator. It follows that the presence of three checkmarks in the same cell denotes agreement. The inter-rater agreement was 88.89% (i.e., the number of agreements divided by the number of opportunities to agree). Important to note that the criteria of predicted impact and sustainability were by and large assumptions made by the evaluators based on the students' responses and the instructor's views.

Table 1. Experts' Evaluation of Summative Assessment Organized by the Criteria Used.

Criteria	Developed	Developing	Under-Developed	Not Available
Relevance	✓✓✓			
Coherence	✓✓✓			
Effectiveness	✓✓✓			
Efficiency	✓✓✓			
Impact	✓✓	✓		
Sustainability	✓✓	✓		

Note: Each checkmark represents the rating of an evaluator.

Evidence regarding students' views of the final test was deemed relevant to demonstrate that not only summative assessment but also instruction conformed to CRP. Thus, at the end of the semester, the same evaluation criteria were given to students, along with definitions of the selected criteria. They were asked to express independently and anony-

mously their views of the test that they had taken at the end of the semester. Although not explicitly required, students added comments to the evaluation sheet. Spontaneous comments tended to overlook assessment and give priority to teaching. For all criteria, students' selection of "developed" was tempered by additional comments written at the bottom of the evaluation sheet. Specifically, the evaluation of the criterion effectiveness was emended by remarks that illustrated the desire to continue exposure to this pedagogy in other courses, as well as a need to know more about the topic covered by the course on corruption. Thus, objectively, the evaluation of effectiveness could be considered "developing".

In addition, students' formal end-of-the-semester evaluations confirmed more broadly the course's adherence to CRP. Students reported the class to be engaging and valuable but also demanding and challenging. They often remarked that examining other viewpoints sharpened their critical thinking skills as well as enhanced their awareness of the obstacles ahead. Thus, feelings vacillated between hope and concern, without definitely settling on one or the other, as students recognized that their professional and personal lives were still in the making. However, most students found the class a valuable opportunity for self-reflection.

Performance in the class, as measured by end-of-semester class grades, was also considered to illustrate the extent to which a traditional indicator of academic success reflected the qualitative data regarding CRP exemplified by the students' test responses. In this regard, it is important to note that, except for one, all students were deemed by the instructor to have met the course requirements satisfactorily (i.e., received a grade of C, 70%, or higher), and thus passed the course, albeit there were performance differences mostly dependent on the depth of the critical analyses offered during the semester and in the summative assessment. Students' grades at the end of the semester ranged from F, which belonged to the student who failed the course, to A. The average course grade was 87.6% (SD = 7.91). The student who failed the course exhibited poor participation in class discussions and other class activities mostly during the second part of the semester, underlying the limits of CRP when the increasing demands of everyday life deprive learners of opportunities for academic pursuits.

3.6. Utility of the Evaluation of the Selected Assessment

The analyses described above were initiated by a series of informal discussions about CRP among faculty at different higher education institutions. Discussions frequently led to a sense of urgency regarding the development of summative assessment tools that can demonstrably fit the selected pedagogy, as well as be used for the ongoing process of quality improvement of the curriculum and instruction to which all higher education institutions aspire [35,36]. Thus, the extent to which the summative assessment carried out in the course agreed with the intended pedagogy was of critical importance. The broader aim was to develop a reliable practice of collecting evidence regarding this issue each time the course would be offered to inform not only assessment but also instruction in future reiterations of the course.

Interestingly, the evidence collected through our case study, as well as the procedure applied to evaluate the summative assessment of the selected course, led to discussions among faculty about applications of CRP at other institutions and in a variety of courses for which teaching and assessment were deemed in need of improvement. Of particular interest was one of the themes that emerged from faculty's informal discussions, which was the willingness to review and restructure the content of final tests so that they become a tool for learning. Another theme was a commitment to evaluate assessment choices regularly through self-evaluation and feedback from colleagues to make such choices evidence-based rather than merely reflective of the proclivities of individual faculty.

4. Discussion

The case study presented above had three diagnostic objectives: (a) It examined the extent to which CRP was realized in the selected course through the examination of the

results of a summative assessment. (b) It offered a preliminary test for how students' test responses in a summative assessment might inform teaching and assessment in future offerings of the course. More broadly, (c) it illustrated the views of a sample of college students who represent the population upon whom the Kurdistan Regional Government as well as the Republic of Iraq depend for their economic and political recovery. Thus, our case study also examined whether summative assessments could serve to inform educators and administrators of a given institution of the views of students regarding culturally, socially, and educationally relevant topics/issues, such as corruption.

To accomplish these objectives, students' responses to the open-ended questions of the summative assessment were submitted to qualitative analyses, and questions and responses were then evaluated by educators who are experts in the field of CRP. Furthermore, students' end-of-semester class grades and opinions about the selected summative assessment and course were collected.

4.1. Can Summative Assessment Be Used to Illustrate the Effects of the Implementation of CRP in a Course?

The evidence collected suggests that the selected summative assessment conformed to CRP and that students' knowledge of political corruption was not negligible. In contrast to evidence collected by Becker et al. [37], who relied on a broader sample of undergraduate students and reported that knowledge of corrupt practices among undergraduate students is deficient, the students in our sample demonstrated an in-depth and sometimes direct knowledge of such practices. Furthermore, they saw political corruption as corrosive to the present and future of the public institutions of their society. To wit, they reported that political corruption, fostered by systemic failures, brings about the worst of human nature [38].

Our case study relied on multiple sources of evidence to assess the reactions of students to CRP instruction. The evidence provided by (a) the qualitative examination of students' final test responses, (b) the evaluation of the final test and related students' responses by CRP educators, (c) students' end-of-semester views of the course, and (d) final test performance assessed by the instructor concurred that the implementation of CRP was largely beneficial to students. Our findings are similar to those of other studies that examined summative assessment as a measure of CRP effectiveness, albeit, to our knowledge, none has focused on our subject matter in higher education. For instance, in New Zealand, the application of CRP to secondary education was reported by Bishop [39] to increase engagement, attendance, and summative assessment scores of Māori students. In the USA, Preston reported improved performance, including summative assessment scores, of African American college students who require developmental education [40].

4.2. Can Summative Assessment in a Course Serve to Inform Teaching and Assessment in Future Offerings of the Course?

The answer to this research question is mixed. On one side, it is in itself noteworthy that the findings of this study and an earlier one devoted to the teaching of history [3] along with pertinent CRP methodological literature [41] became a source of discussion among faculty at different academic institutions, most of whom want to be more effective in instructing students whose socio-cultural background is diverse and/or different from theirs. On the other side, it is unclear whether faculty's interest and commitment to CRP will indeed deepen following informal discussions, thereby translating a vocal commitment into an operational mandate. A seed was planted, though, which may motivate faculty to engage in the time-consuming actions of regularly revising used summative assessment tools with CRP aims in mind and with a set of criteria in hand to evaluate revisions.

Important to note here is that the evidence collected through the analysis of the summative assessment made the instructor consider alterations to the current realization of the course. For instance, to reinforce a relativistic approach to experience, final test questions might deal more with comparisons of socio-political systems of other countries; and the use of scenarios and simulations of political systems in action might be adopted as

a partial substitute for class discussions to give students a greater variety of opportunities to understand matters and express their knowledge.

4.3. Can Summative Assessment Serve to Inform Educators and Administrators of a Given Institution of the Views of Its Students Regarding Culturally, Socially, and Educationally Relevant Topics/Issues, such as Corruption?

The richness and candor of the students' answers collected through the selected summative assessment suggest that the methodology used by our case study may be useful to educators and administrators not only as an evidence-based approach to examine the effectiveness of instructional and curricular choices but also as a valuable source of information about the very people who are the recipients of such choices [42]. However, this is the case only if different data sources are considered to corroborate the outcome generated by the summative assessment, and consideration is given to the size and composition of the sample to restrain exuberant generalizations.

5. Conclusions

Our case study has several limitations. First and foremost, the findings of our study merely suggest that CRP implanted a seed in the participants, involving trust in their capability to acquire knowledge, build skills, cultivate critical-thinking skills, explore attitudes and prospectives, and reflect on experiences. It is difficult to predict whether the seed will seep into other academic and professional activities before and after graduation. For instance, it is difficult to predict whether students' knowledge and views regarding what constitutes responsible and ethical conduct will continue to impact their perceptions and behaviors in their adult lives. However, because the college students who participated in our case study will likely pursue governmental and administrative careers, it is reasonable to predict that their moral attitudes have the potential to influence the future ethical climate of the society to which they are expected to contribute. Of course, it is also unclear whether faculty's commitment to CRP will indeed deepen following informal discussions, thereby translating a vocal commitment into an operational mandate. As per students' attitudes, a seed was planted which may motivate faculty to engage in the time-consuming actions of revising their summative assessment tools with CRP aims in mind and with a set of criteria at their disposal to evaluate adjustments.

Second, our case study relied on a much smaller and selected sample of participants. Thus, the specific views of students regarding corruption may not precisely generalize to students at other institutions in the Middle East. However, its evidence contributes to the existing literature by offering fruitful opportunities for methodological cross-national comparisons [43,44]. Namely, an evidence-based approach might generate different views in other students, but the evidence collected would remain informative for the population the sample represents, which is the population served by the particular set of educators and administrators who wish to utilize this approach.

Third, the qualitative evidence collected and the analyses performed involved a limited number of CRP-oriented educators. A larger sample of expert evaluators may produce a richer or more diverse set of opinions regarding the CRP implementation adopted.

Future research will address these limitations. As Ladson-Billings argued, CRP, which focuses on learners' academic success, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness, is "just good teaching" [33]. However, the study of its impact is a work in progress.

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