

# The Representation of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning Skills in Moroccan EFL Textbooks (Ticket to English 2 as a Case)

Lamyae Lazaar, Nourelhouda Bouhaissa, Hind Brigui

Ibn Tofail University, Faculty of Languages, Letters, and Arts (FLLA), Morocco

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.903SEDU0450>

Received: 05 August 2025; Accepted: 11 August 2025; Published: 30 August 2025

## ABSTRACT

This study examines how effectively the secondary-level Moroccan EFL textbook, Ticket to English 2, integrates 21st-century learning skills. In response to global educational reforms, Morocco has adopted strategies to incorporate innovation, digital literacy, and self-regulated learning into its curricula. Employing a qualitative descriptive design with snowball sampling, 120 in-service Moroccan EFL teachers evaluated the textbook's promotion of goal setting, creativity, digital/media literacy, and critical thinking. The findings indicate that while the textbook moderately supports essential skills such as information literacy and critical thinking, it falls short in areas like digital fluency, practical creativity, reflective practice, and fostering a growth mindset. The study highlights discrepancies between the textbook content and current pedagogical goals, underscoring the need for curriculum designers to incorporate more technology-driven, interactive, and reflective learning resources.

**Keywords:** 21st-century skills, Moroccan EFL textbooks, textbook evaluation, critical thinking, growth mindset.

## INTRODUCTION

As the world becomes more globalized and technology-driven, schools are being pushed to go beyond traditional content-based teaching and instead focus on developing 21st-century skills like critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, digital literacy, and adaptability that will help students prepare for a job market and civic life that are constantly changing. Not only do these skills help students understand academic material better, but they also supply them with the tools they need to be active, creative members of society.

The national curriculum for upper-secondary English in Morocco says that baccalaureate students should focus on learning to communicate eloquently, be independent learners, and think critically. The second-year baccalaureate classes must use the book "Ticket to English 2." This makes it a crucial tool for achieving the goals of the curriculum. But we still don't know how well this textbook helps students learn the skills they need in the 21st century.

Even though these skills are known to be important, previous research on Ticket to English 2 has only looked at a few specific features, like critical-thinking prompts, and has not given a full evaluation of all the 21st-century skills. We don't know how teachers feel about the textbook's overall strengths and weaknesses in this area. This study aims to fill that gap by collecting systematic evaluations of teachers in various skill areas. This will help with curriculum implementation, textbook revision, and teacher support. The following questions guide this research:

1. To what extent do teachers believe the textbook aids students in developing 21st-century skills?
2. According to teacher evaluations, which specific 21st-century skills does the textbook most effectively support, and which skills are least supported?

---

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Skills for Learning in the 21st Century in the 21st century, education reform has stressed the need for systems that go beyond traditional academic goals to impart students the skills they need to succeed in a world that is changing quickly. Researchers and policymakers agree that schools should teach students how to be creative, competitive, employable, adaptable, and able to learn for the rest of their lives (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2015). People think that adding these skills to the curriculum is important for making learning environments more effective, making students' experiences better, and improving teaching conditions. This kind of integration affords students a structured framework that encourages them to become involved, boosts their self-esteem, and helps them do better in core subjects. It also prepares them ready to lead, come up with new ideas, and be active citizens.

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2015) groups these skills into three main areas:

1. Critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and teamwork are examples of learning and innovation skills.
2. Skills in information, media, and technology include being able to use computers, analyze media, and understand ICT.
3. Life and work skills include being flexible, taking the initiative, being socially and cross-culturally competent, being productive, being accountable, and being a leader.

Other important definitions help reinforce these skills. Binkley et al. (2011) affirm that these skills are methods of thinking, working, and living in media-rich and connected environments. The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL, 2003) also says that high productivity, creative thinking, digital-age literacy, and excellent communication are important for success in a global economy.

Lai and Viering (2012) combine real-world research on critical thinking, problem-solving, working together, and digital literacy. They point out how challenging it is to measure these skills in school settings. They suggest using integrative assessment methods that combine formative assessments, performance-based tasks, and standardized tests. They also stress the importance of making sure that assessments, instructional materials (like textbooks), and policy definitions of competencies all work together.

### Importance of Self-Regulated Learning

Zimmerman's (2002) dynamic, cyclical model of self-regulated learning (SRL) provides us more information about how students can actively learn the skills they need for the 21st century. There are three parts to SRL:

1. Forethought, which includes setting goals, making plans, and using motivational tools like self-efficacy and intrinsic interest.
2. Performance encompasses self-control, focused execution, environmental regulation, and monitoring one's own progress.
3. Self-Reaction, which includes self-evaluation, figuring out what caused something, and making changes for future learning.

Research shows that SRL is not a fixed trait but a process that can predict success in school, adaptability, and the ability to keep going in a variety of situations, such as sports and professional training. Using SRL strategies in the classroom helps students stay motivated, contemplate their actions, and act strategically, which are all important for learning 21st-century skills.

### Frameworks for Comparing 21st-Century Skills

Several international organizations have created frameworks to help schools add 21st-century skills to their curricula. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2015) focuses on skills for life and work,

information/media/technology literacy, and learning and innovation. NCREL (2003) focuses on skills for productivity, creativity, literacy, and communication.

Trilling and Fadel (2009) say that real-world, project-based, and student-centered learning experiences can help students learn both traditional academic subjects and skills like critical thinking, working together, being creative, and using technology. Their model stresses the need for changes in teaching to prepare students ready for solving problems in the real world and learning for the rest of their lives.

Voogt and Roblin (2012) look at frameworks from the European Commission, UNESCO, and the OECD and observe that they all have some basic skills in common, like critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, teamwork, digital literacy, and self-management. They say that even though policy frameworks often make these skills clear, it is still challenging to include them in national curricula, textbooks, and classroom practices. Learning should be skill-based, relevant, and not just memorization.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

Moroccan EFL teachers' opinions of how well the secondary school textbook Ticket to English 2 fosters the development of 21st-century skills are investigated in this study using a qualitative descriptive design. The study targets skills such as critical thinking, creativity, media and digital literacies, reflective thinking, and self-regulated learning. It gives a thorough explanation of the participants' professional assessments, revealing the textbook's advantages and disadvantages in developing these skills.

### Participants

As regards to the sampling, One hundred and twenty Moroccan EFL secondary school teachers in training constituted the sample. To identify volunteers, a snowball sampling strategy was used. The researcher first reached out to a select group of well-known EFL instructors who satisfied the requirements for inclusion: (1) they had to be teaching Ticket to English 2 currently, and (2) they had to have taught for at least two years. In addition to being encouraged to share the questionnaire with other qualified colleagues in their professional networks, these educators were asked to fill it out. This approach allowed the study to remain pertinent to the research topic while reaching a larger pool of participants from various Moroccan regions.

### Instrument

A 30-item questionnaire that the researcher created was used to gather data. The items were arranged according to major 21st-century skill domains in thematic sections:

- (1) Learning and Innovation Skills (such as critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork)
- (2) Skills related to information, media, and technology (such as media analysis and digital literacy)
- (3) Life and Career Skills (such as reflective thinking and self-regulated learning)

Teachers were asked to rate how much they thought the textbook promoted each competency using a five-point Likert scale for each item (1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree). The questionnaire took about fifteen minutes to complete and was written in English.

### Procedures

The first group of teachers received the questionnaire online through professional social media groups and email. Prior to their involvement, participants received consent forms, information about the study's objectives, and an assurance of confidentiality. Over the course of the six-week data collection period, more respondents were gathered using snowball sampling.

## Analysais of Data

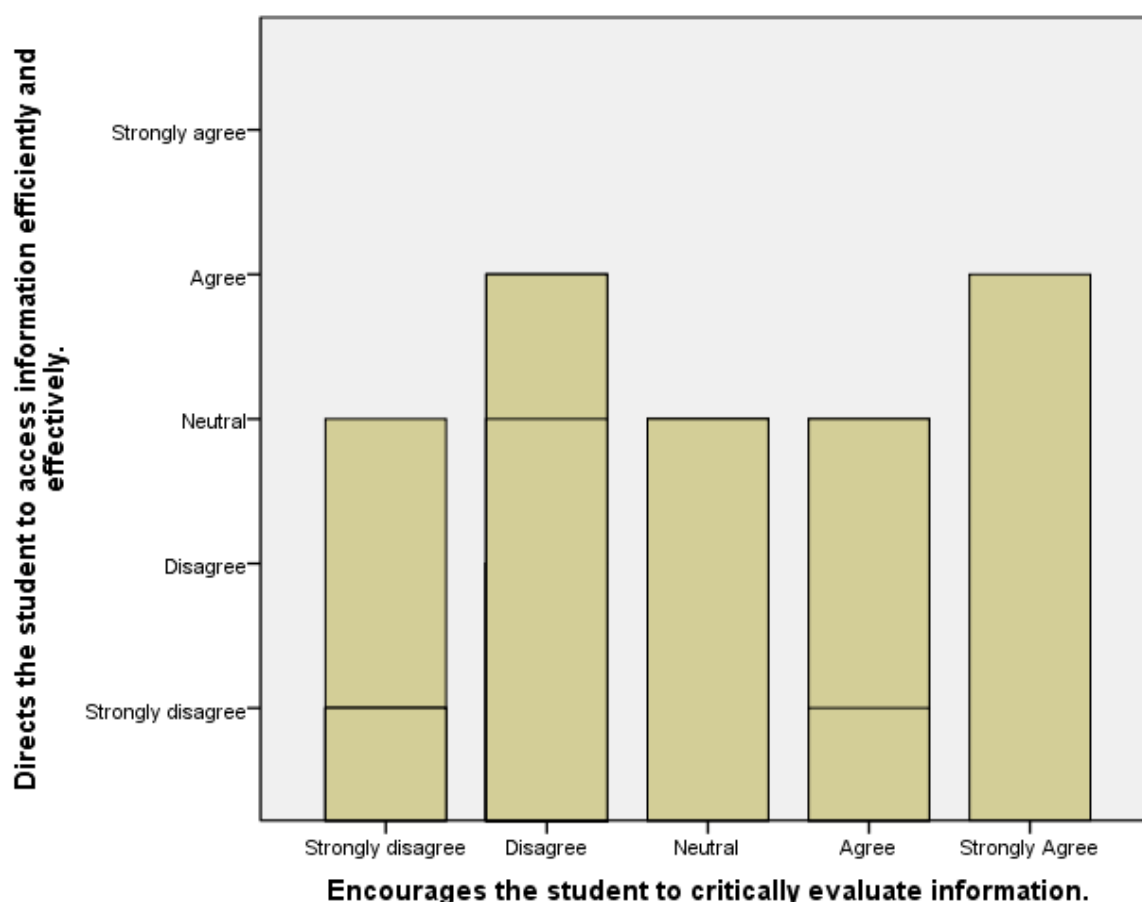
In accordance with the prédéterminees skill categories, teacher responses were coded and subjected to thematic analysis with the use of SPSS. For every skill domain, quantitative summaries were produced and displayed using eye-catching bar charts. Teachers were able to compare which competencies they felt the textbook supported the most and least thanks to these visualizations, which made it easier to identify patterns. A clear connection between the research questions and the questionnaire results was made possible by the results' thematic organization.

## RESULTS

According to the findings revealed through the questionnaire, teachers generally held favorable opinions regarding the textbook's support for 21st-century learning. While responses to some skills were positive, others reflected hesitancy or dissatisfaction.

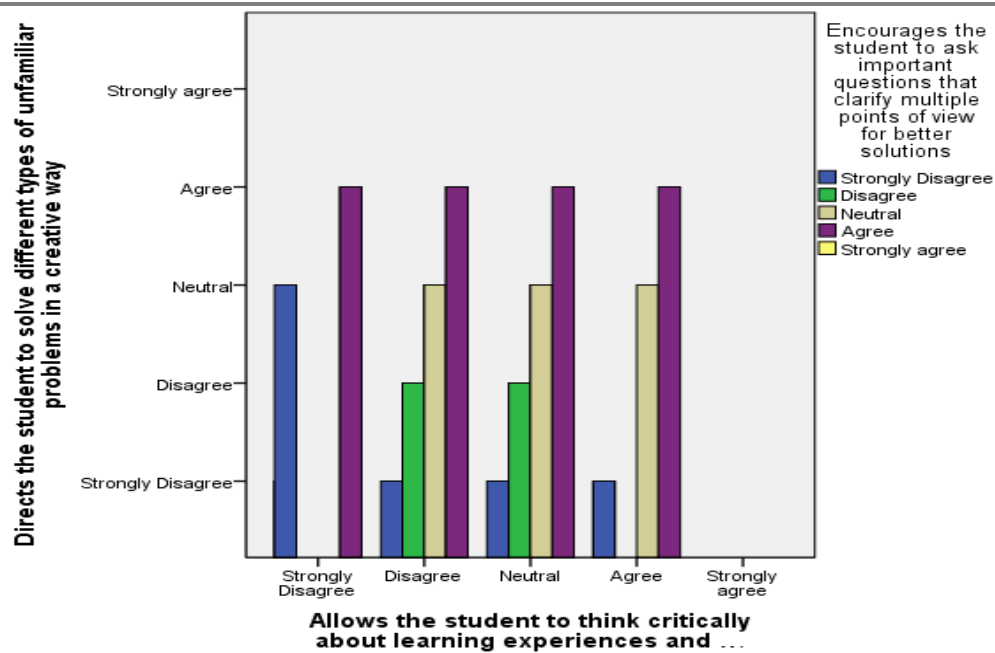
### Skills with Positive Support

This section examines the 21st-century skills that the Ticket to English 2 textbook effectively supports according to in-service teachers. It emphasizes how the textbook excels in developing essential skills such as information literacy, critical thinking, task organization, and student motivation. The findings indicate that teachers largely agree these skills are adequately present and contribute positively to students' educational experiences.



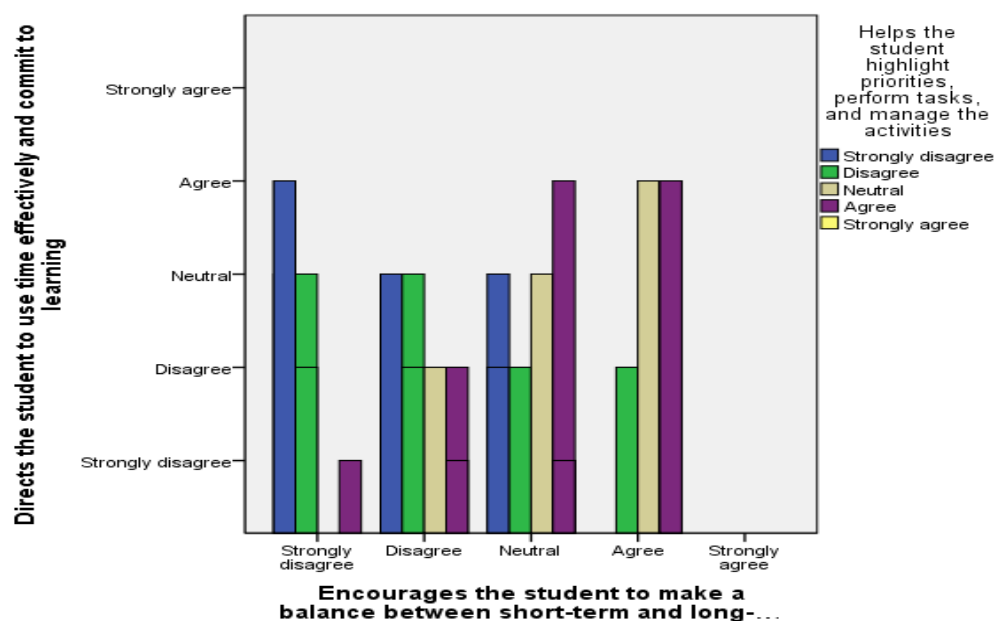
**Figure 1: Critical Thinking & Information Literacy**

According to *figure1*, the textbook aids students in developing two essential 21st-century skills: information literacy and critical thinking. However, the effects of this development vary among students. The data shows that these skills have improved moderately to favorably, and they need to be more consistently integrated into the textbook material.



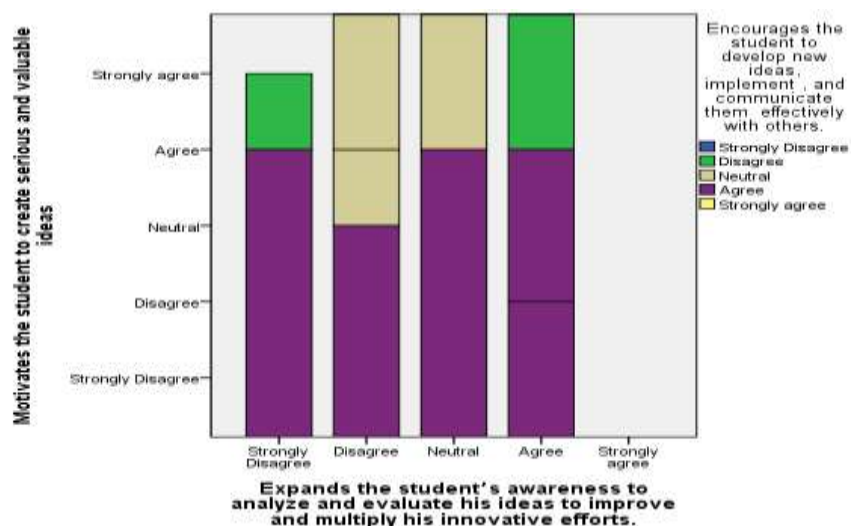
**Figure2: Critical thinking and Problem solving**

The graph above demonstrates teachers' evaluation of the textbook's effectiveness in promoting inquiry, critical thinking, and creative problem-solving. While most agree that the textbook encourages students to ask clarifying questions and explore various perspectives, it falls short in providing robust support for critical thinking and creative problem-solving. The findings indicate that the textbook is inadequate for cultivating deep cognitive and creative skills.



**Figure 3: Task Organization**

According to the chart above , the majority of teachers believe that the textbook effectively aids students in managing their time, particularly in relation to planning and executing educational activities. When evaluating the textbook's impact on time management and striking a balance between short- and long-term learning objectives, responses were more diverse. A significant percentage of teachers disagreed or remained neutral, suggesting potential gaps in strategic learning support, even though some teachers agreed that the textbook offers guidance in these areas. Future textbook development should incorporate more precise frameworks for time management and goal-setting.

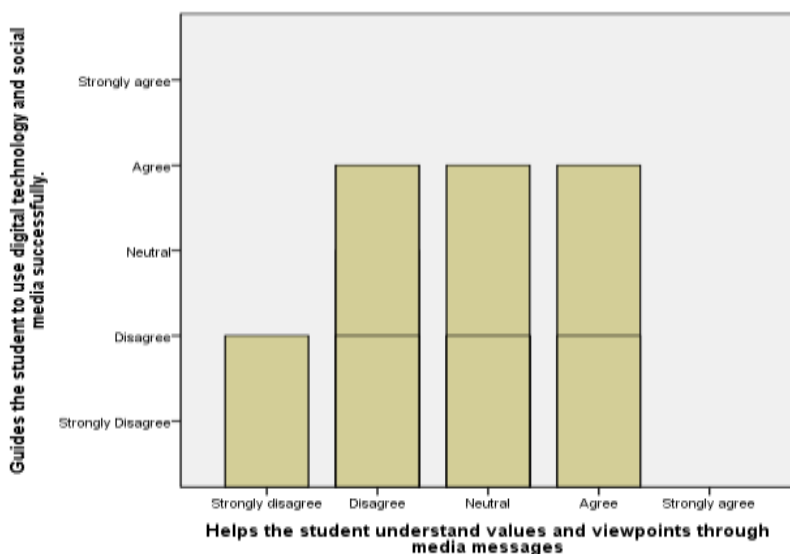


**Figure 4 : Motivation and idea generation**

Figure 4 visually analyzes teachers' opinions about how well the textbook fosters students' motivation, creativity, and critical thinking. The results indicate that teachers' confidence levels vary across the various aspects of learning outcomes related to innovation. Teachers seem to have a favorable opinion of the textbook's contribution to evaluative thinking and student motivation, both of which are essential for creative endeavors. Nonetheless, there is a noticeable hesitancy or discontent with the textbook's ability to encourage creativity in practice, especially in areas that entail creating, putting into practice, and sharing novel concepts. This concern could reflect a need for textbook reform—incorporating more interactive, student-centered tasks, real-world problem-solving opportunities, and platforms for student expression to better align with the competencies required in a 21st-century learning environment.

### Skills with Limited Support

This section examines the 21st-century skills that the Ticket to English 2 textbook either supports inconsistently or inadequately, based on teacher feedback. Certain competencies, such as growth mindset, digital literacy, reflective learning, and creativity in action, appear to be underdeveloped or lacking, while others are present to a moderate extent. These discrepancies highlight where the textbook fails to meet the standards of contemporary, skill-based learning.



**Figure 5: Media and Digital literacy**

The chart demonstrates that teachers express concern that the textbook fails to sufficiently promote the development of students' digital and media literacy skills. The lack of strong agreement, combined with the prevalence of neutral and disagree responses, suggests that the textbook does not effectively integrate essential 21st-century competencies related to digital and media literacy. However, some teachers do recognize a moderate presence of these elements.

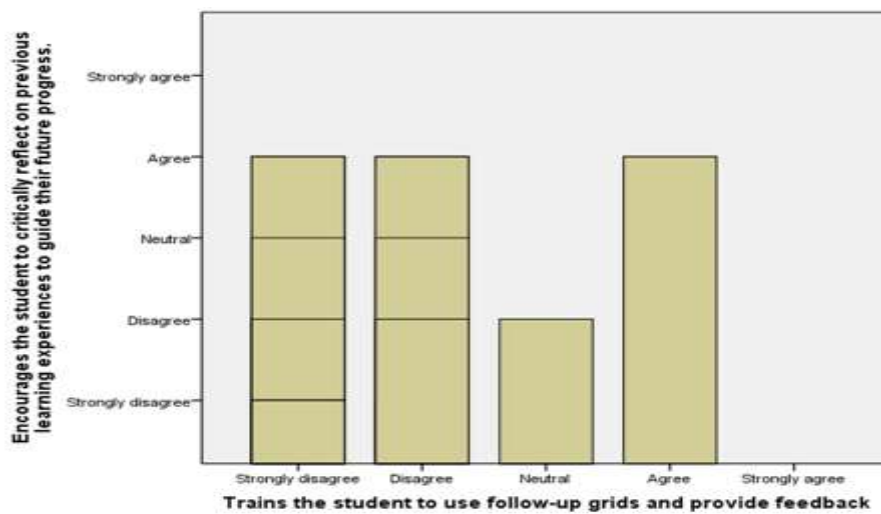


Figure 6: Reflective learning and feedback

The chart regarding the textbook's contribution to reflective learning and self-evaluation reveals a notable trend of neutrality in the teachers' responses. Specifically, there is disagreement about whether the textbook effectively teaches students to utilize follow-up resources or encourages them to reflect on past learning experiences to inform their future development. This general neutrality may indicate that the textbook either lacks these essential features or does not emphasize them sufficiently. This finding points to a potential area for improvement in textbook design, particularly in incorporating structured feedback mechanisms and reflective prompts, given the importance of reflective practice in fostering lifelong learning skills.

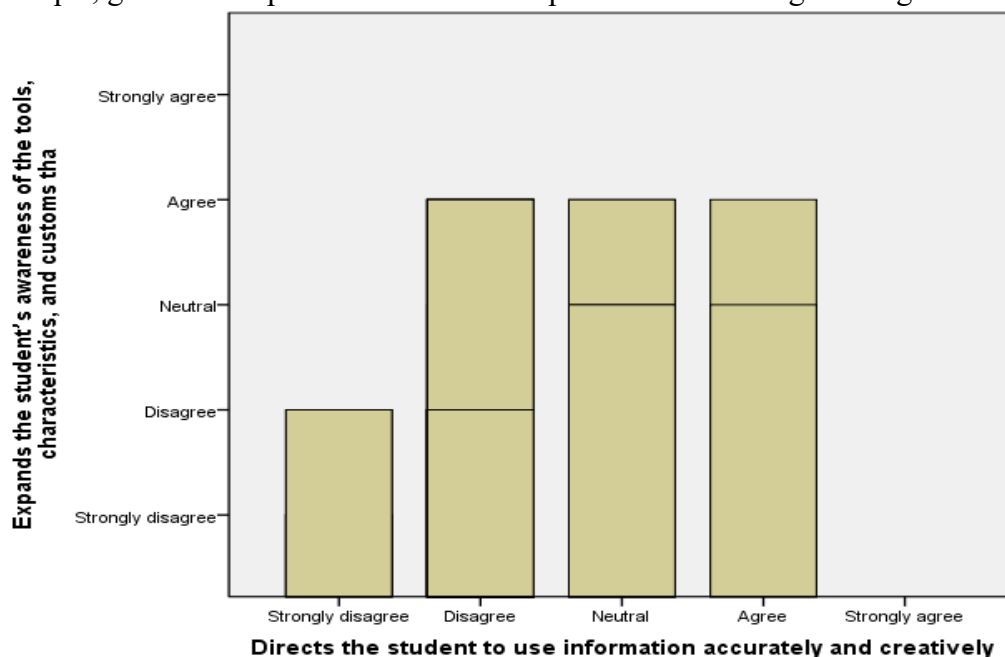


Figure 7: Creativity in action

The graph above indicates that the textbook only partially promotes creativity and information literacy, as well as cultural and digital awareness, which includes understanding tools, traits, and customs. However, the lack of

strong agreement and the presence of neutral or disagreeing responses imply that learners do not feel adequately supported. Evidence shows that, regarding 21st-century skills, the textbook assists students in using information creatively and grasping the broader global and cultural context to a moderate degree. Still, it lacks depth, clarity, and consistency in these areas.

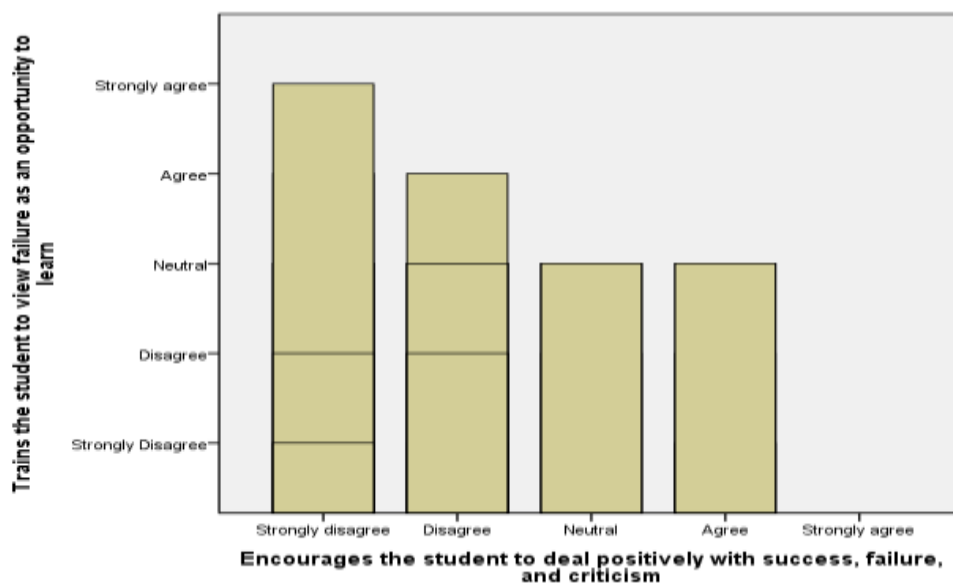


Figure 8: Growth Mindset; Learning from failure

The majority of educators who strongly disagreed that the textbook teaches students to view failure as a teaching opportunity also strongly disagreed or disagreed that it encourages students to handle success and failure positively. However, the chart also indicates that very few teachers strongly agree with both statements.

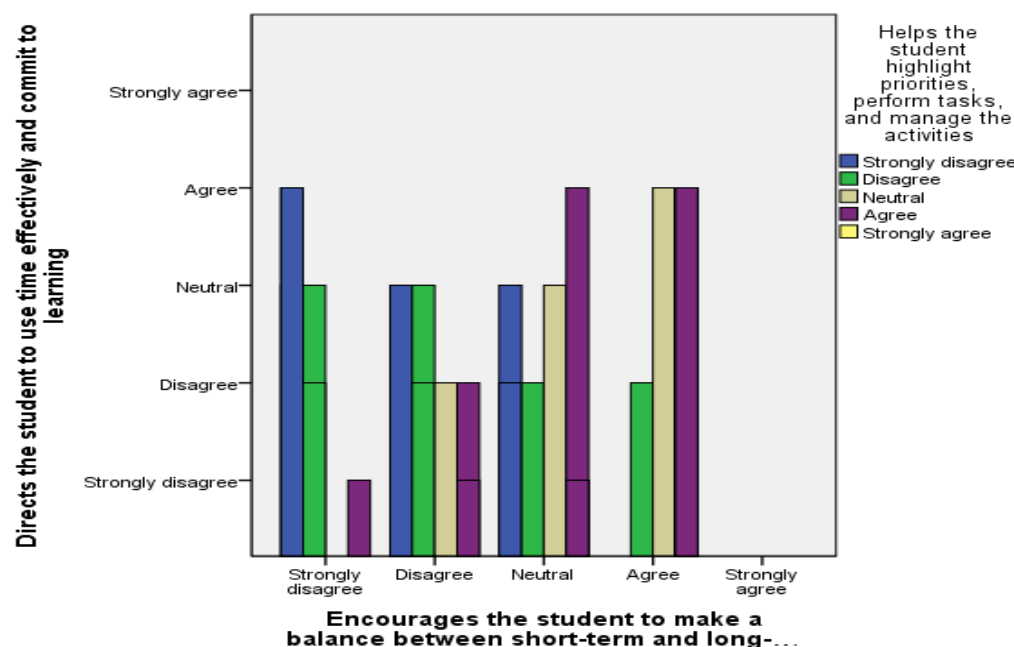


Figure 9: Goal setting and highlighting priorities

According to the chart, most teachers agree that the textbook helps students manage their time effectively, particularly in planning and executing educational activities. However, when assessing the textbook's influence on time management and the balance between short- and long-term learning objectives, the responses varied significantly. A notable percentage of teachers either disagreed or chose not to take a stance, indicating possible shortcomings in strategic learning support. Although some teachers acknowledged that the textbook guides in



these areas, this discrepancy points to the need for more specific frameworks for time management and goal-setting in future textbook development.

## DISCUSSION

The results indicate that the textbook material and the objectives of education in the twenty-first century are partially aligned. Higher-order competencies like reflective practice, digital fluency, and creativity in action are either underdeveloped or inconsistently embedded, despite the presence of fundamental cognitive skills like critical thinking and task organization. This disparity indicates that more interactive, student-centered, and practical exercises that promote full-cycle creativity, metacognition, and adaptability are required in textbooks. The investigation of teacher perceptions establishes a multifaceted vision of the textbook's contribution to the development of 21st-century skills. The increasingly comprehensive, integrative competencies that characterize 21st-century readiness, including creativity in action, digital literacy, and reflective practice, remain insufficiently developed or inconsistently represented, despite the recognition of fundamental abilities like critical thinking and task organization. These results are consistent with previous research indicating that traditional, content-driven instruction is still prioritized over skill-oriented learning in many educational materials (Voogt & Roblin, 2012; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). In this respect, the textbook is indicated to work well as a fundamental teaching manual, but it is devoid of the interactive elements and scaffolding required to develop more complex, transferable skills.

In this regard, the textbook promotes idea generation but falls short of encouraging full-cycle innovation. This discrepancy implies a misalignment between fostering creativity and enabling students to actualize their ideas through execution, teamwork, and presentation. True creativity necessitates iterative processes and real-world engagement, as highlighted in research on innovation education (Lai & Viering, 2012), neither of which was particularly apparent in teacher feedback.

Of particular note is also the lack of assistance for digital and media literacy. A textbook that does not incorporate digital tools or media awareness runs the risk of leaving students unprepared for the present challenges in an era where digital competency is a requirement for both academic and professional success. The skepticism of educators in this regard highlights the pressing need for updated resources that integrate technology-enhanced learning opportunities.

In a similar vein, the indifferent answers about feedback and reflective learning imply that these procedures are either invisible or underappreciated in the framework of the textbook. With the increasing focus on metacognition and self-regulated learning in contemporary pedagogical models (Zimmerman, 2002), textbooks that lack reflective prompts or feedback mechanisms risk missing out on opportunities to develop critical lifelong learning habits.

The findings also point to a severe absence of assistance in developing a growth mindset and resilience. Modern education regards the ability to overcome obstacles and deal with failure as essential for students' success and well-being (Dweck, 2006). It appears that this textbook is out of step with the affective and social aspects of contemporary learning given that it fails to address these competencies adequately.

Overall, while the textbook effectively develops certain fundamental cognitive abilities, it falls short in addressing the comprehensive, skill-based educational model essential for the twenty-first century. These insights provide guidance for bridging the gap between instructional materials and future-ready education, benefiting not only textbook developers but also curriculum planners, teacher educators, and policymakers.

## Pedagogical Implications

The Moroccan English textbook "Ticket to English 2" exhibits significant shortcomings in supporting a range of essential 21st-century skills, despite some areas of success. Teacher feedback indicates that skills such as media and digital literacy, reflective learning, creativity in action, and the cultivation of a growth mindset receive insufficient attention or are inconsistently integrated into the curriculum. These inconsistencies suggest that

while the textbook may assist students in developing basic cognitive skills, it falls short in fostering the deeper, transferable skills necessary for thriving in a complex and ever-evolving global environment. There exists a disconnect between the textbook content and the realities of contemporary education, highlighted by the lack of interactive exercises, digital resources, and opportunities for metacognitive reflection. To address these deficiencies, a more deliberate integration of skill-based learning strategies, real-world applications, and affective learning components is essential to ensure that students acquire the competencies required for success in the 21st century across their academic, personal, and professional lives.

## CONCLUSION

This study identifies both the advantages and disadvantages of the textbook's design according to Moroccan EFL teachers. While it requires significant improvement in areas such as digital literacy, creativity implementation, and reflective learning, it does help students develop some fundamental 21st-century skills to a moderate extent. To better align instructional materials with the demands of modern education, curriculum developers and textbook authors should consider these insights when reforming content and pedagogy.

## REFERENCES

1. Binkley, M., Erstad, O., Herman, J., Raizen, S., Ripley, M., & Rumble, M. (2011). Defining 21st century skills, draft white paper. Melbourne, Australia: University of Melbourne.
2. Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Random House.
3. Kivunja, C.(2015). Teaching Students to Learn and to Work Well With 21st Century Skills: Unpacking the Career and life Skills Domain of the New Learning Paradigm. *International Journal of Higher Education*. 4.1-11.
4. Lai, Emily R, & Viering, Michaela. (2011, April). Assessing 21st Century Skills: Integrating Research Findings [Paper presentation]. ERIC Number: ED577778.
5. Lemke, C. (2003). enGauge 21st century skills: Digital literacies for a digital age. North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/ERIC-ED463753/pdf/ERIC-ED463753.pdf>
6. Partnership for 21st Century Skills. (2015). *Framework for 21st Century Learning*. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills.
7. Trilling, B.& Fadel, C.(2009). *21st Century Skills Learning for Life in our Times*, Jossey Bass, San Francisco, CA.
8. Voogt, J., & Roblin, N. P. (2012). A Comparative Analysis of International Frameworks for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competences: Implications for National Curriculum Policies. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 44, 299-321. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2012.668938>
9. Zimmerman, B. J. (2002). Becoming a self-regulated learner: An overview. *Theory Into Practice*, 41(2),64-70. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4102\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4102_2)