

## Exploring Barriers, Facilitators, and Benefits of Research-based Teaching in Higher Education

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### Abstract

Research-based teaching (RBT) is a pedagogical approach widely recognized to promote critical thinking, student engagement, and the development of scientific competencies. However, its implementation in university settings is often challenged by structural, pedagogical, and emotional barriers. This study aimed to explore perceptions of students and professors regarding the barriers, facilitators, and benefits of RBT in the context of third-year undergraduate psychology education. A qualitative design was adopted using two focus groups: one with undergraduate students ( $n = 6$ ) and one with university professors ( $n = 4$ ). Transcripts were analyzed thematically following Braun and Clarke (2006). Two overarching themes were identified. First, opinions and attitudes toward RBT highlighted positive previous engagement, perceived complexity, and fear as key dimensions shaping participants' experiences. Participants underscored the benefits of RBT, such as enhancing critical thinking, fostering real-world application, increasing student engagement, and cultivating a culture of inquiry and research. Second, context-dependent barriers and facilitators included class size and student motivation. Barriers included academic skill challenges, resistance to change, time constraints, and resource limitations, while relevance of topics, student choice, use of current research, and instructor enthusiasm acted as facilitators. Findings suggest that while RBT has potential promise for enriching higher education, its effectiveness depends on institutional support, smaller group sizes, scaffolding of academic skills, and the integration of relevant and current research. Addressing these factors can help maximize the transformative potential of RBT for both students and educators.

**Keywords:** Research-Based Teaching, Higher Education, Barriers, Facilitators, Critical Thinking