

APPLICATION OF CRITICAL THINKING TECHNOLOGY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LESSONS

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Анотація:

Ця стаття підкреслює необхідність створення навчального середовища, де студенти можуть розвиватися під керівництвом досвідчених педагогів, дозволяючи їм здобувати не лише знання, а й необхідні навички для успіху в сучасному суспільстві. Крім того, вона підкреслює важливість критичного мислення серед динамічних соціальних перетворень, надаючи інсайти щодо його визначення, значущості та поступового розвитку. Додатково, підкреслює значення інтеграції критичного мислення в освітні практики, вимальовуючи структурований підхід до його вирощування через різні етапи. В кінцевому підсумку, вона висловлює підтримку просування критичного мислення як основу розвитку освіти, що є необхідним для надання студентам можливості зростати в швидкозмінному світі.

Ключові слова: критичне мислення, освіта, етапи критичного мислення.

Summary: *This paper underscores the necessity of creating an enriching learning environment where students can develop under the guidance of experienced educators, enabling them to acquire not just knowledge but also the requisite skills for success in today's society. Moreover, it highlights the paramount importance of critical thinking amidst dynamic social transformations, offering insights into its definition, significance, and progressive development. Additionally, the annotation underscores the significance of integrating critical thinking into educational practices, delineating a structured approach to its cultivation through various stages. Ultimately, it advocates for the promotion of critical thinking as a foundational pillar of education, essential for empowering students to thrive in a rapidly changing world.*

Key words: critical thinking, education, stages of critical thinking

Modern education in Ukraine, in accordance with all regulations and acts, is focused on the student's personality. Indeed, the fundamental goal of education is not just the transmission of information, but also the development of skills and abilities that will enable students to adapt to a changing world.

It is important for educational programs to encourage students to actively explore material, ask questions, seek answers, and apply their knowledge to solve real-world problems. Additionally, group work, idea discussion, and mutual learning can greatly enrich the learning process and develop skills in collaboration and communication.

These values are accompanied by John Dewey's idea of developing a critical way of thinking. The ability to analyze and evaluate information, make informed decisions, and respond to new circumstances are critical in the modern world. Therefore, education that promotes the development of these skills not only prepares students for future challenges, but also helps them become active participants in society.

In this context, it is important for educational programs and teaching practices to focus on creating a stimulating environment where students can develop their abilities under the guidance of experienced teachers and staff. Only such an approach to education can provide students with not only knowledge, but also the skills necessary for successful functioning in the modern world.

Thus, the development of critical thinking becomes most relevant in times of intense social change, when it is impossible to act without constant adaptation to new political, economic and other circumstances, without effective problem solving, many of which are unpredictable. In this sense, the vital importance of critical thinking for the national educational system is obvious. This is the only way we can think about development in line with the requirements of the global information society and move further towards democracy.

Usually we treat the process of thinking as if it were something we take for granted and natural, like breathing or blinking our eyes. Yet most of us hardly ever use the opportunities that lie in this amazing human capacity. In fact, thinking can and even should be constantly improved/trained, just as athletes or musicians train, for example. Because humans are the only creatures in the world that can think critically.

What is critical thinking? This is the process of analysing, synthesising and justifying the assessment of the reliability/value of information; the ability to perceive the situation globally, find reasons and alternatives; the ability to generate or change one's position based on facts and arguments, correctly apply the results to problems and make informed decisions about what to trust and what to do next. It should not be confused with:

- simple memorisation (a computer's memory is much wider than ours, but this does not mean that a computer can think).

- understanding of complex ideas (when we work on understanding someone else's idea, our own thinking is passive - we only perceive what someone else has created).

- creative/intuitive thinking (the creator's brain works unconsciously - this is the main difference). The key characteristics of critical thinking are important:

- Freedom and independence (the ability to express an idea independently of others).

- Information is a starting point, not an end point for development (to form a balanced opinion, you need to process a huge amount of materials).

- Starts with raising questions and problems to be solved (the first step to teaching students critical thinking is to help them see the endless number of questions around them).

- Uses persuasive argumentation (when a person comes up with their own solution and supports it with reasonable evidence).

- It is a social process (any opinion is tested and refined when we share it with others; when we argue, discuss, object and exchange opinions with others, we deepen our position).

On the way to developing critical thinking, you need to go through 6 consecutive steps:

1. Non-reflective thinker - does not yet realise the "underdevelopment" of his/her thinking.

2. Puzzled thinker - realised that he/she has problems with his/her thinking.

3. Beginner thinker - tries to improve, but without regular practice.

4. Practising thinker - recognises the need for regular practice.

5. Advanced thinker - grows through regular practice.

6. A master of thinking - conscious and insightful thinking becomes a person's calling card.

But why do we need to develop critical thinking? What does it give a person:

1. A sense of free will.

2. Expanding horizons (the vision of the world becomes wider, deeper, more interesting).

3. The ability to find and accept certain important truths for oneself.

4. Deeper understanding of yourself, your values and needs.

5. Courage to make decisions.

6. Flexibility and better adaptation to change.

7. Balance and calmness (a person who thinks critically has a better chance of understanding their needs and doing things that do not contradict their inner convictions, and therefore, less regret and disappointment in what they have done).

8. The ability to resist information pressure - not to take everything you read for granted, but to check, analyse and make informed decisions.

9. Ability to detect and neutralise manipulations.

10. Tolerance to the opinions of others.

11. An ecological attitude towards members of the team/group, but at the same time the ability to focus primarily on one's own values and not succumb to the pressure of certain group norms.

It is also important to stimulate and positively evaluate all manifestations of critical thinking in students.

We all know that students are inquisitive by nature and eager to learn about the world. They are able to put forward a lot of original ideas. Therefore, the main task of a teacher in a lesson or in project work is to be, first of all, an assistant that stimulates students to search for information, learn and comprehend new things, and generate their own ideas [4].

The use of critical thinking technology in English language classes makes it possible to create favorable conditions for the activation and development of students' thinking.

Critical thinking is independent thinking, in which the initial stage is information. It begins with a question, is built on the basis of an assertion. This technology makes it possible to define and set a special goal, support activity in the lesson, cause a productive discussion, helps students to independently build and ask questions, helps to express their own opinion, supports motivation to read, cultivates respect for the opinion of others. [5]

A modern lesson, in particular a lesson using the technology of development of students' critical thinking, according to the latest psychological research, is always built according to such an algorithm.

Introductory part or challenge. Each lesson begins with an actualization stage, during which the teacher offers students a task that helps them refresh their memory of existing knowledge, skills, reflect and ask questions about the topic they are starting to study.

At the actualization stage, students together with the teacher:

- refresh previously acquired knowledge, ideas, skills;
- conduct an inventory of this knowledge (including mistakes);
- focus attention on the topic;
- create a context for the perception of new ideas;

Having created a foundation for building new knowledge, skills, and relationships, the teacher announces the topic of the lesson and its intended outcomes, aiming for students to realize their own learning goals. The introductory part, as a rule, takes 5-7 minutes of the lesson.

The main part or comprehension. After such a beginning of the lesson, the teacher organizes the active activity of students in researching, understanding the material, finding answers to previously asked questions, posing new questions and finding answers to them. The first of the sub-stages here will be the stage of "active experimentation". The teacher offers students to complete a task related to the application of knowledge and skills that they should master in the lesson. The purpose of this part of the lesson is for students to determine their level of mastery of these knowledge (skills) before starting special training. Then, students are offered a "portion" of theoretical knowledge and exercises to master this knowledge and practice the skill purposefully and in the correct form.

We assume that assimilation always involves the presence of several "waves". It takes several "takes" by students on the same content to give them a chance to "chew" it. In addition, such approaches should be diverse, such that they do not repeat the initial stage of perception. For example, in mathematics, this is learning the theory, then doing exercises and examples that gradually become more difficult. Each way students process the material shapes their understanding of the content. Sometimes the method itself is more important than the content of the information. Only in this way can we ensure the mental development of the student. When learning is passive, the student "exists" in this process without questions, without interest, without interest in its results. When learning is active, the student is constantly in a state of search, he wants to get an answer to a question, needs information to solve a problem, or thinks with others about how to complete a task.

Thus, at this stage, students with the help of the teacher:

- compare their expectations with what they are actually offered to study;
- they experiment, try to do in practice something from what they learn, based on their existing ideas, knowledge, skills, regardless of whether they are sufficient;
- analyze the experience gained;
- revise their expectations and express new ones;
- reveal the main thing, make sense of theoretical ideas, concepts;
- monitor the course of their own thoughts;
- draw conclusions about the material;
- connect the content of the lesson with personal experience;
- ask questions about the content of the lesson;
- practice thinking skills and strategies.

This is the main stage of the lesson, which takes up to 30-35 minutes.

The final part or reflection. By the end of the lesson, when students have understood his ideas and completed exercises to build skills, you should move on to the next stage. It is necessary for students to think about what they have learned, what they have learned, ask themselves what it means to them, how it changes their vision and how they can use it. This third stage of the lesson is the stage of students' reflective activity, the most important phase for the development of critical thinking, which is reflective in nature.

At this stage, students together with the teacher:

- summarize the main ideas;
- interpret these ideas;
- exchange opinions;
- express a personal attitude;
- test these ideas;
- evaluate the acquired knowledge;
- ask yourself additional questions; [3].

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