

ENHANCING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION

Kamolova Mashhura

1st year student of the Faculty of
English Philology of the

Uzbekistan State World Languages University

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Abstract

In the modern educational systems, the role of critical thinking skills is becoming increasingly important. Therefore, developing such a skill is most students' priority, nowadays. This article examines the significance of critical thinking and its impact on students' academic and personal growth and explores some practical methods to foster these skills. As the findings suggests, learners with a strong analytical thinking abilities are more capable of achieving academic success and addressing real-world problems in their everyday life.

Keywords

Critical thinking, analytical ability, modern education, cognitive development, educational methods, problem-solving skills, flipped classroom, collaborative learning

Annotatsiya

Zamonaviy ta'lim tizimlarida tanqidiy fikrlash ko'nikmalarining roli tobora muhimlashib bormoqda. Shuning uchun ushbu ko'nikmani rivojlantirish ko'pchilik talabalar uchun ustuvor vazifaga aylangan. Ushbu maqola tanqidiy fikrlashning ahamiyati, uning talabalar akademik va shaxsiy rivojlanishiga ta'siri hamda bu ko'nikmalarni rivojlantirishning amaliy usullarini tahlil qiladi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, kuchli analitik fikrlash qobiliyatiga ega bo'lgan o'quvchilar akademik muvaffaqiyatga erishish va real hayotdagi muammolarni hal qilishda ancha samaraliroqdir.

Kalit so'zlar: tanqidiy fikrlash, analitik qobiliyat, zamonaviy ta'lim, kognitiv rivojlanish, ta'lim usullari, muammolarni hal qilish ko'nikmalari, flipped classroom, hamkorlikda o'qish

Аннотация

В современных образовательных системах роль навыков критического мышления становится всё более важной. Поэтому развитие таких навыков в настоящее время является приоритетом для большинства студентов. Данная статья рассматривает значение критического мышления, его влияние на академическое и личностное развитие студентов, а также анализирует практические методы развития этих навыков. Результаты показывают, что обучающиеся с развитыми аналитическими способностями более успешно достигают академических результатов и эффективнее решают реальные жизненные проблемы.

Ключевые слова: критическое мышление, аналитические способности, современное образование, когнитивное развитие, методы обучения, навыки решения проблем, перевёрнутый класс, совместное обучение

Introduction

Modern education is emphasizing the development of students' ability to think independently and critically instead of focusing on memorizing facts. In turn, Critical thinking is considered one of the essential and must-learned skills of the 21st century. Since, it enables learners make well-reasoned decisions by analyzing information, solve complex problems

effectively, think independently as well as enhances creativity and innovation. As a result, the integration of higher-order thinking skills into contemporary education has become essential.

The importance of critical thinking

- **Academic achievement**

Cognitive skills help students understand the topic by analyzing information rather than relying on memorization of the fact. For example, While studying subjects such as history or literature in which certain information is difficult to memorize, students can perform well by analyzing causes and effects. Therefore, explaining answers logically instead of guessing or memorizing may lead to high results on exam performance.

- **Problem-solving skills**

Learners are able to overcome difficult situations by addressing practical problems effectively. They find logical solution to real-life issues even in a moment of panic. This is like a situation where students solve equations using step-by-step reasoning in mathematics instead of memorizing formulas only. Thus, in real life if a student is confronted by financial issues or time management problems, he or she can find effective and practical solutions through thinking logically.

- **Independent thinking**

Having one`s own opinion is the another benefit that critical thinking ability can give.

Rather than relying completely on teachers or textbooks, learning how to support their ideas with strong points and evidence builds students` confidence and intellectual independence, improves self-esteem. In one activity, students evaluate each other's work and offer comments. This method helps students analyze and evaluate their peers' work critically, which improves their capacity to evaluate and improve their own concepts and arguments.[1]

- **Decision-making ability**

By developing analytical thinking, individuals strengthens their ability to evaluate multiple options before making a decision. For instance, while choosing a proper profession, people objectively consider advantages and disadvantages of several career path, which leads to reasoned decisions and successful outcomes in life.

- **Creativity and innovation**

Critical thinking promotes creativity by allowing students to examine issues from different perspective and give own innovative ideas. As an example, in project-based activities, learners are supposed to design unique approaches to solve environmental problems such as improving recycling system or using energy-saving methods to reduce energy consumption. This form of thinking plays a vital role in creating innovative approaches in modern society.

But we cannot overlook some challenges that students face in developing higher-order thinking skills.

1. Traditional teaching methods

Class activities or home tasks still focus on memorization rather than analysis. Only requirement from students is learning definitions by heart and repeating them from textbooks instead of encouraging modern teaching style like interactive discussions and full explanations. This, actually, limits their opportunity to think analytically and independently.

2. Exam-oriented education

In most educational institutions, the main purpose is to pass the exam. As it is the case, students` priority will be memorizing the answers instead of understanding the main concept. For instance, in multiple-choice questions, students tend to guess easily rather than think deeply and analyze the real meaning of the context. The task of distinguishing main ideas from secondary information—such as structuring key facts from a Grade 5 Ancient World History textbook paragraph—reveals that only a small portion of students can complete it successfully, indicating that many students, even by the end of their undergraduate studies, still lack this essential analytical skill.[3]

3. Limited teacher support

There may be lack of interactive teaching methods that can promote critical thinking. Lessons may rely on lectures instead of group discussions and case studies where students can have a chance to practice reasoning skills. Another point is that some students may have low self-confidence, since they are afraid of making mistakes in front of their peers while expressing themselves. For instance, in group discussions, even though they have concrete points, they may stay silent. This prevents active classroom engagement and critical analysis. In this case, it is teachers` job to conduct the class in a more interactive way in order to make their students interested in lesson, improve the class engagement and encourage thinking critically with a strong confidence. Findings indicate that skills in handling information—such as processing, transforming, and presenting it in an appropriate format—are primarily developed through individualized student support. In this process, students` research activities are directed and supervised by an academic mentor.[3]

Ways to develop critical thinking abilities

1.Group discussions and debates

Students share different viewpoints and learnt to defend their ideas with evidence.

In a debate about the advantages and disadvantages of studying abroad, learners must to support their arguments which, in turn, improves communication and debating skills as well. Teamwork also plays a crucial role in building interpersonal and collaborative abilities. Teaching approaches that promote student cooperation and interaction are effective in fostering this skill.[4]

2.Asking open-ended questions

Educator should use questions that do not have a single answer and can allow a number of responses. Instead of asking “What is the definition?”, questions such as “What is the real concept?” or “Why do you consider this trend is important?” helps to support cognitive development. Regularly employ open-ended questions in lessons prompts students to think deeply and express their reasoning, moving beyond simple recall of facts.[2]

3.Case studies

Case study is an effective method for developing critical thinking, as it allows students evaluate possible solutions and make informed decisions by analyzing realistic situations specifically. In business, for example, students could find what is the main reason for company`s failure such as poor management and marketing strategies or financial mismanagement. That`s why The combination of theory and practice, especially in fields such as engineering and computer science, is highlighted as an effective means to develop practical and theoretical skills. [4]

4.Flipped classroom

The flipped classroom model is teaching method where students learn theories at home and then discuss them in the class which allows more time for active learning during lessons. Learner are given videos and online resources to learn the topic on their own outside the classroom which promotes independent learning. Study PS12 combined flipped classroom with mobile learning and PBL, showing how technology can support diverse learning preferences and promote the practical use of knowledge. The most frequently used approach combination was the integration of PBL with other teaching methods.[4]

Conclusion

In modern educational system, the importance of critical thinking can not be overstated, as it plays a crucial role in shaping students` intellectual abilities in addition to improving decision-making and problem-solving skills which help to achieve further lifelong success. Although there are certain obstacles to implement these skills, though innovative teaching strategies and applying new methods in education, educators can successfully develop these competencies. Therefore, the primary focus should remain on integrating critical thinking into contemporary education.

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