MODERN APPROACHES AND PRACTICAL EXAMPLES IN EDUCATION BASED ON CRITICAL THINKING

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Abstract. *This thesis discusses the reforms in general secondary and higher education systems, and the benefits of applying critical thinking in these processes. It also offers recommendations for utilizing critical thinking in the educational process.*

Keywords: *traditional knowledge, topic evaluation, Eastern education, data analysis, free expression of ideas, "SWOT" analysis, "SEE-THINK-WONDER" method, "Six Thinking Hats" method.*

INTRODUCTION

Critical thinking is not merely about doubting something – it is the art of forming opinions, finding logical connections between facts, and approaching events in a deep and multifaceted way. Especially in the education system, it is important to develop this skill because during this period, students are in the process of developing their ability to perceive and analyze information. Teachers enhance students' thinking styles through their approaches, techniques, and methods. Unlike traditional methods of delivering knowledge, critical thinking helps students become thoughtful, inquisitive, and attentive individuals. This process not only increases the effectiveness of education but also encourages youth to become active and inquisitive members of society.

A.N.Shuman proposes a comprehensive approach to the concept of critical thinking. According to him, critical thinking involves the emergence of non-argumentative methods regarding a topic. This approach combines the critique of old ideas with the introduction of new ones. He also identifies the following characteristics: consistency, complexity, sequence, multi-perspective thinking, and metacognition. Through this, Shuman advocates for a holistic approach to critical thinking, suggesting that evaluating topics should not rely on simplistic or pre-formed opinions but rather on deep and reasoned analysis. This approach encourages not repeating old ideas but generating new ones.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

To date, the topic of critical thinking has been studied in various aspects by scholars from both the CIS and abroad. Notably, the need to teach students independent and critical thinking has been emphasized by great Eastern thinkers such as Al-Khwarizmi, Al-Farabi, and Avicenna. For example, Al-Farabi, in his work The Virtuous City, stresses the importance of developing critical thinking. According to him, to attain true knowledge, people must think independently, examine evidence carefully, and analyze different

viewpoints. In his ideal society, every citizen should be able to express their thoughts logically and coherently.

Therefore, it is advisable to begin cultivating critical thinking skills as early as the age of four or five, as this is when its foundation can be laid. Naturally, working on such processes with young children requires carefully crafted, simple, and clear methods. First, their imagination must be developed—teaching them the shapes, colors, and names of objects around them is essential, as they need to fully comprehend and perceive the items they use. Then, their thinking can be developed through image-based games, puzzles, construction sets, mental arithmetic, and logical questions. Asking questions like “Who/what is this?”, “Why?”, and “How?” can also enhance their thinking capabilities.

In school-aged children, the methods become slightly more complex because their basic conceptual understanding has already developed. Critical thinking is not just about arguing or objecting; it is the ability to deeply analyze information, draw logical conclusions, and make informed decisions. The earlier these skills are developed, the better children will be at solving real-life problems. Various models exist to organize the thinking process, including:

– Personal confidence;
– Active participation in work;
– Engaging in discussion with friends and teachers;
– The ability to listen to others’ opinions.

During lessons, it is recommended to ask students open and analytical questions such as “Why is it so?”, “What if it were different?”, or “Which situation is correct?” These types of questions develop critical thinking and help students justify their opinions. New ideas, suggestions, and mutual discussions emerge around the topic. In later stages, activities such as “debates” are held—where students express their viewpoints and respond to others, demonstrating their critical thinking through well-founded reasoning. The importance of developing critical thinking in students can be explained through the following:

1. Improves problem-solving skills: Critical thinking enables students to identify problems, evaluate evidence, and develop solutions. Through critical thinking, students can explore and evaluate alternative solutions and choose the most appropriate one.

2. Encourages creativity: It drives students to think beyond conventional boundaries and consider alternative perspectives, leading to creative solutions and ideas.

3. Assists in decision-making: With critical thinking skills, students learn to evaluate various options and consider their pros and cons, leading to evidence-based and thoughtful decisions.

4. Enhances communication skills: It helps students articulate their thoughts and ideas more clearly and effectively.

5. Prepares students for the future: As students advance in their education and careers, they face increasingly complex problems that require critical thinking. Developing these skills early prepares them for future success.

Today, in a world of rapidly advancing technologies and an overwhelming flow of information, students must not only possess high-level knowledge but also apply it critically. Therefore, developing critical thinking in higher education institutions has become a pressing issue. Individuals who cannot present their ideas in a structured and orderly manner may face difficulties, even if their conclusions are correct. Thus, the thinking process must be structured, with clear cause-and-effect relationships. Additionally, in assessing critical thinking, the abilities of analysis and synthesis play a vital role, especially as students step into adult life and begin personal development.

According to research conducted in Uzbekistan, many students still lack well-developed critical thinking skills. For example, in an experiment conducted by M. Qurbonov involving 300 students, the following results were found: Creative and problem-based thinking – high level in 25% of students; Analytical thinking ability – medium level in 40% of students; Evidence-based reasoning – insufficient in 35% of students. These results show the need to develop strategies for enhancing critical thinking skills in higher education institutions in Uzbekistan.

CONCLUSION

Critical thinking plays a vital role not only in academic success but also in professional life. Students should be presented with more real-life scenarios during the learning process, and they should solve them using their personal reasoning. In modern education, students are not just passive recipients of knowledge but creators of it. Therefore, they must be able to present their ideas in public and defend them against opposing views. The following recommendations are proposed by the author for fostering critical thinking in education:

– During lessons, students should explain taught theorems and rules using their own reasoning. This helps deepen their understanding and improves memory retention. Even in complex situations, they can explain them scientifically.

– Starting from primary school, children should be introduced to political processes and current events and asked to express their opinions. This method helps them analyze surrounding events properly and learn to comment on political matters correctly.

– Using the “SWOT” analysis method more frequently is beneficial. It guides their thinking in the right direction and teaches them to make objective evaluations. It also allows them to assess the consequences of a situation or problem.

– The “SEE-THINK-WONDER” method helps students better understand a topic and express their thoughts freely. Visual aids such as pictures or videos are shown, and students must describe what they see. Since this method is conducted individually, it allows personalized instruction and accurate guidance.

– The “Six Thinking Hats” method involves various thinking styles, each represented by a different hat:

White Hat – focuses on facts, data, and recommendations.

Red Hat – explores emotional responses and social impacts of issues.

Black Hat – identifies potential risks and mistakes.

Yellow Hat – considers positive aspects, benefits, and advantages.

Green Hat – encourages idea generation and solution-finding.

Blue Hat – manages the overall process, identifies key issues, and suggests ways to achieve goals.

This method helps develop teamwork skills, organizes opinions, ensures meaningful discussion, and leads to comprehensive understanding and easier solution development. It can be effectively applied in both secondary and higher education settings.

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