

THE IMPORTANCE OF CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

*Чернець Марія Олександрівна,
старший викладач кафедри іноземних мов,
Київський національний університет технологій та дизайну*

Nowadays critical thinking is one of the most important issues in the field of education. Being a useful method critical thinking is crucial to language teaching process as well, as it helps students in different areas from their studies to different challenging situations in life.

The term ‘Critical Thinking’ first appeared in academic circles and literature in the mid-20th century. But many different signs of critical thinking as a phenomenon in action can be found throughout all human history. A well-known Greek philosopher Socrates proposed a system of inquiry which is to question everyday beliefs and to find the truth on the solid grounds of real evidences. [3]

Nowadays, the word “critical” may imply or suggest disapproval, which is not always true of critical thinking. A critical evaluation of an argument, for instance, might conclude that it is valid. The foundation for critical thinking has offered the following definition “the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.

Critical thinking can be therefore defined as a series of abilities that allow learners not only comprehend given information, but also to use logic and evidence in order to prioritize, classify information, find relationships, come to sensible conclusions and resolve difficult problems.

Being able to think critically students become really mindful of what and how they are reflecting. Even detecting a certain mistake or a different way of solving a problem, they explore it readily and willingly. Those students who have critical thinking skills are really motivated about their studies. They are able to notice certain challenges and chances for learning even in very complicated intellectual tasks.

Rather than relying on teachers and classroom time for instruction and guidance, students with critical thinking skills become more independent, self-directed learners. Researcher Jane Qijuan Zhang writes that critical thinking enables students to assess their learning styles, strengths and weaknesses, and allows them to take ownership of their education. According to Linda Elder and Richard Paul, authors of "Critical Thinking Development: A Stage Theory", students who know how to analyze and critique ideas are able to make connections across disciplines, see knowledge as useful and applicable to daily life and understand content on a deeper, more lasting level. [2]

Critical thinkers consider all options before they act. If time is an important factor, they consider the fastest method of achieving a goal. They may even discover a shortcut. Critical thinkers embody the phrase "work smarter, not harder." They are masters of efficiency. [2]

In the teaching process a few general problems can be found. As usual teachers don't encourage students to think. On the other hand students do not want to spend their time for thinking, if their teachers ask them to think for a few minutes, they take it as a waste of time. One more problem is classrooms which are not resourceful or the resources that are not properly used. Teaching does not cover whole class. Some students (especially slow learners) get frustrated, humiliated and develop inferiority complex because of the class domination by some quick learners.

Thus, a wide range of teaching methodologies can be used by educators to promote the development of students' critical thinking skills. Lower level activities: copying, reading aloud, silent reading and watching, memorizing, revising, simple comprehension, looking things up, etc. Higher level activities: imaginative writing tasks, collecting evidence, problem solving, deducing, reasoning tasks, application tasks, analysis tasks, synthesis tasks, evaluation, creation, summarizing, etc. [1]

Critical thinking skills can be applied to not only education, but any situation in life that calls for reflection, analysis and planning. Teachers should adopt suitable methods of teaching such as Socratic method, Inquiry method, problem-solving method etc. that are consistent with the development of critical thinking skill in students. Thus, a primary goal for educators is to provide students with opportunities

to struggle with concepts, find meaning and use logic in arguments so they may gain a deeper understanding of the world in which they live.

REFERENCES

1. Prem P. P. Critical Thinking in Language Classroom [Electronic resource] // Prasad Poudel Prem // Wordpress. – Electronic data. – [Mahendra Ratna Campus, Tribhuvan University] – Mode of access: <https://neltachoutari.wordpress.com/2013/01/01/critical-thinking-in-language-classroom> – Title from the screen.

2. Rayhanul S. M. What are the Importance and Benefits of "Critical Thinking Skills"? [Electronic resource] // Rayhanul S. M. // Linkedin. – Electronic data. – Mode of access: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/what-importance-benefits-critical-thinking-skills-islam>] – Title from the screen.

3. Richard W. California Teacher Preparation for Instruction in Critical Thinking: Research Findings and Policy Recommendations. [Electronic resource] // W. Paul Richard, Elder Linda, Bartell Ted // criticalthinking.org. – Electronic data. – [California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, Sacramento California, 1997] – Mode of access: <http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/a-brief-history-of-the-idea-of-critical-thinking/408> – Title from the screen.