



THE IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING OF TEACHER-STUDENTS OF THE EFL SPHERE

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Abstract

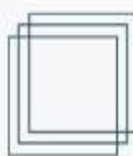
The article is devoted to one of the most urgent problems in teaching pedagogical university students – the formation of critical thinking. The basic structural elements of critical thinking are described, without knowledge of which it is impossible to form critical thinking in future teachers. It is emphasized that the basic structural elements are closely interrelated with the intellectual development of the individual. The article analyzes some of the existing definitions of critical thinking; the author's understanding of the content of the concept of "critical thinking of a teacher" is proposed.

Keywords: critical thinking, reflection, pedagogical thinking, intellectual development of students.

Introduction

Following the new State Educational Standards of general education, a teacher needs to be able to build an educational process in a modern educational environment. The educational process in modern conditions is aimed at:

- creating an experience of working with information, its application in non-standard and unusual life situations, ensuring self-development and self-actualization of students;
- formation of ways of activity applicable both within the educational process and in solving problems in real-life situations. The traditional methods of teaching have been replaced by updated methods:
- "Learning through asking questions", or "the process of guided discoveries";
- the method of diagnostic questions (the Socrates method) - the answers to which allow you to see and correct the remaining incomprehensible;
- explanation tasks – the student must explain something to a classmate or teacher; - creation by students of "memory cards", reference and other notes in which it is necessary to isolate the main thoughts and establish relationships between them [1, p.19]. The requirements for the personnel conditions for the implementation of the basic educational program have also changed:
- the level of qualification of teachers and other employees of the educational institution;
- continuity of professional development of teaching staff of an educational institution. The purpose of professional development is to update theoretical and practical knowledge. As a result of professional development, the teacher masters new methods of solving professional problems improves his professional level, which is especially important in the constantly changing conditions and requirements of society. The technology of developing students' critical thinking is one of the popular pedagogical



technologies used in the construction of a lesson in an information-based educational environment.

What is critical thinking? How to develop it in teacher-students?

Critical thinking is a natural way to interact with ideas and information. Skills are needed not only to master information, but also to critically evaluate, comprehend, and apply. The profession of a teacher is special – the future of students as citizens of the country depends on the results of our activities, how successful it will be from the right choice of profession by graduates, developing their conviction in self-improvement and continuous continuation of education throughout their lives. The main condition for the successful use by teachers of technologies aimed at the development of critical thinking is the teacher's understanding and acceptance of the idea of the need for the development of critical thinking. In addition, to teach children to think critically, the teacher must be able to do it himself. So it is necessary to develop the critical thinking of teachers. Each teacher works at his level of creativity, constantly increasing it.

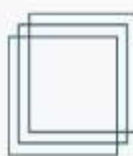
At first, a young teacher is characterized by using ready-made recipes and recommendations, following the script of a lesson or event without taking into account the characteristics of the class team and its working conditions. Admittedly, this level is still devoid of elements of creativity. Others are already characterized by a critical assessment of methodological recommendations, they can abandon some elements of the lesson, replacing them with more effective ones for these conditions – this is a sufficient level of skill. Still, others have a certain system of work. When preparing for lessons, they do not use specific developments, but general provisions and ideas – this is a high level of skill. And the fourth is characterized by the construction of its methodological system, which is constantly being improved based on the data of pedagogical science and advanced pedagogical experience – this is the pinnacle of pedagogical skill. For a teacher to be interested in high results of educational and innovative activities, in improving his professional competence, he must have a self-evaluating activity.

Adequate self-esteem and the ability to evaluate their activities are the most important signs of conscious self-regulation of the individual [2, p.11]. To carry out this type of activity requires creative thinking - thinking that allows you to use previously acquired knowledge to create new ones. A teacher should be able to think critically and correctly evaluate the results of their professional actions.

As one of the methods of organizing the process of awareness of your professional development, you can use an algorithm consisting of questions:

1. What is the purpose of my upcoming work?
2. What is known and what should be done to find the missing information?
3. What thinking skills will allow me to achieve my goal?
4. Has my goal been achieved?

The English thinker B. Russell proposed the principles that became the basis for the formulation of judgments in the theory of critical thinking: An opinion that contradicts the statements of experts who have agreed cannot be considered correct. No opinion should be considered correct if the experts did not agree on it. An ordinary person should refrain from expressing an opinion on issues in which experts do not have sufficient grounds to formulate a certain opinion.



The analysis of the scientific literature shows that if a sufficient number of studies are devoted to the problem of the formation of the teacher's pedagogical thinking, then the problem of the formation of the teacher's critical thinking has not yet been comprehended by pedagogical science.

In the pedagogical literature, critical thinking is considered as one of the aspects of reflection [1, p. 18]. Therefore, it seems appropriate to reveal the phenomenon of reflection as a characteristic of human consciousness and thinking in the beginning.

Recently, reflection as the most important quality of regulation, choice, and evaluation of actions and actions has become the subject of discussion and research by philosophers, psychologists, and educators. The interest of pedagogical science in this property of the subject is explained by the formation of philosophical and educational paradigms that affirm the ideas and principles of education in freedom, the principles of personality-oriented education.

In the study of reflection as a phenomenon of human consciousness and thinking there are two directions associated with the two main meanings of the word "reflection". First, reflection is "the principle of human thinking, directing it to comprehend and realize its forms and prerequisites; a substantive examination of knowledge itself, a critical analysis of its content and methods of cognition; the activity of self-knowledge, revealing the inner structure and specifics of the spiritual world of man" [2, p. 49]. It is this meaning of the term that interests us in this article. Secondly, reflection is the process of reflection by one person of the inner world of another person, awareness by the acting individual of how he is perceived by the communication partners.

For a student to use his critical thinking, he needs to develop several qualities, among which D. Halpern highlights:

- Readiness for planning. Thoughts often arise chaotically. It is important to arrange them, to build a sequence of presentations. The orderliness of thought is a sign of confidence.
- Flexibility. If a student is not ready to accept the ideas of others, he will never be able to become a generator of his ideas and thoughts. Flexibility allows you to wait for a judgment until the student has a variety of information.
- Perseverance. Often, when faced with a difficult task, we postpone its solution for later. By developing perseverance in straining the mind, the student will surely achieve much better results in learning.
- Willingness to correct your mistakes. A critically thinking person will not justify his wrong decisions but will draw conclusions, use the mistake to continue learning.
- Awareness. This is a very important quality, which implies the ability to observe oneself in the process of mental activity, to track the course of reasoning.
- Search for compromise solutions. The decisions made must be perceived by other people, otherwise, they will remain at the level of statements.

What gives the use of this technology to students and teachers. Critical thinking technology gives the student:

- improving the efficiency of information perception;
- increasing interest in both the material being studied and the learning process itself;
- the ability to think critically;
- the ability to take responsibility for their education;



- the ability to work in collaboration with others;
- improving the quality of student's education;
- the desire and ability to become a person who studies throughout his life.

Critical thinking technology gives the teacher:

- the ability to create an atmosphere of openness and responsible cooperation in the classroom;
- the ability to use a learning model and a system of effective techniques that contribute to the development of critical thinking and independence in the learning process;
- become practitioners who know how to analyze their activities competently;
- become a source of valuable professional information for other teachers

The technology of developing critical thinking presupposes equal partnerships, both in terms of communication and in terms of constructing knowledge that is born in the learning process. Working in the mode of critical thinking techniques, the teacher ceases to be the main source of information, and using the techniques of technology, turns to learn into a collaborative and interesting search.

EFL lessons contribute to the development of critical thinking through a variety of materials and interactive approaches. The technology of developing critical thinking through reading and writing stands out among innovative pedagogical ideas by a successful combination of problematic and productive learning with the technological nature of the lesson, effective methods, and techniques. Using the technology of developing critical thinking in EFL lessons, the teacher develops the student's personality primarily through direct teaching of EFL, resulting in the formation of communicative competence that provides comfortable conditions for cognitive activity and self-improvement. The teacher stimulates the student's interests, develops his desire to practically use a foreign language, as well as to study, thereby making it possible to achieve success in mastering the subject.

A teacher working within the framework of critical thinking technology should be well aware that his work will be productive if he is chosen correctly:

- informative material that promotes the development of critical thinking;
- method (separate technique, strategy) of the lesson.

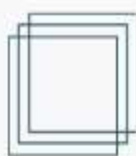
When receiving new information, students should learn to view it from different points of view, draw conclusions about its value and accuracy. It is necessary to attract information in EFL lessons, in which the student must realize that the study of language is more related to his personality and interests than to the methods and means of teaching set by the teacher.

According to the technology of critical thinking development, a modular lesson consisting of three stages is used:

Each phase has its own goals and objectives, as well as a set of techniques aimed first at activating research, creative activity, and then at comprehending and generalizing the acquired knowledge.

The first stage is a "challenge", during which students activate their previously existing knowledge, arouse interest in the topic, and determine the goals of studying the upcoming educational material.

The second stage is "comprehension". This stage allows the student to get new information, comprehend it, correlate it with existing knowledge, analyze new information and existing knowledge.



The third stage is "reflection" - reflection. At this stage, the main thing is a holistic understanding, generalization of the information received, the formation of each of the students' attitudes to the material being studied.

A set of techniques of critical thinking technology aimed at the formation of lexical skills

1. Art gallery. The students are divided into 4 groups according to the group generator app. The teacher plays music and the students have to draw what comes to their mind when they think of a perfect teacher. The activity lasts for 2-3 minutes. After finishing the drawing process, the teacher asks groups to go around the pictures and describe them to the team members. The students have to answer the following questions:

-what do you see in this picture?

-what did the painter think of while she was drawing?

-what is your reflection on this scenery?

This activity assists to express one's imagination through pictures, and think critically to describe the picture. At the same time, students will practice speaking, listening, and vocabulary skills during this process.

2. Golden fish. This activity is based on the grammar structure 'I wish, I...'. The teacher asks students to close their eyes and imagine what she says: "Close your eyes and imagine you are at the sea, walking along the beach. Suddenly, you felt hungry and decided to fish. You brought your fishing rod and throw its rope into the water. And, to your surprise, you caught a golden fish. The fish begged you to free him and offered you to fulfill one of your wishes. Think about your wish". Students open their eyes and write their wishes using the above-mentioned grammar structure. Having written, the Ss are divided into groups and tell their wishes to the members. The listeners should find mistakes in the sentences and give suggestions to achieve this wish. **e.g.** – "I wish I could study in Turkey and live there for several years"

- Then you have to learn the Turkish language and get ready to enter the Turkish universities, consult with people who have been there.

In this activity, students will be able to use their critical thinking by advising their friends, will learn to work collaboratively, and will practice listening to others' opinions.

3. If I were you.... The teacher asks students to find one problematic situation that could happen in everyday life. One student says her problem and others should give advice using grammar structure "If I were you....". the teacher can play a piece of music during the activity.

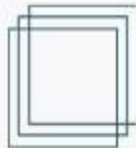
e.g. – " I can't sleep at night, help me!"

- " If I were you, I would read a fiction book"

- ...

Being involved in this activity, students will develop their way of thinking as they try to find solutions to the problem of their friends.

In conclusion, we would like to note that foreign language lessons contribute to the development of critical thinking through a variety of materials and interactive approaches. When performing any task, students should understand the main idea, highlight the problem, compare it with what they already know in this area to draw a



conclusion and formulate their point of view on a specific issue or problem. This requires the formation of certain intellectual skills. Students should be able to analyze, evaluate the significance of the information collected, structure the information received, argue their point of view – all these are critical thinking skills.

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