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ENHANCING STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS THROUGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

INGLIZ TILI VOSITASIDA O'QUVCHILARNING TANQIDIY FIKRLASH KO'NIKMALARINI RIVOJLANTIRISH

РАЗВИТИЕ НАВЫКОВ КРИТИЧЕСКОГО МЫШЛЕНИЯ У УЧАЩИХСЯ ПО СРЕДСТВАМ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

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Annotation.

This article examines the methodological approaches to enhancing students' critical thinking skills through English language teaching. Teaching critical thinking helps students develop problem-solving skills, decision-making abilities, and the capacity to justify their opinions. The article presents effective methods to increase critical thinking through practical sessions and the role of the teacher.

Key words: *critical thinking, English language, student skills, methodology, teacher role, active learning.*

Annotatsiya.

Ushbu maqolada ingliz tili fani orqali o'quvchilarda tanqidiy fikrlash ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishning metodik usullari va ahamiyati ko'rib chiqiladi. Tanqidiy fikrlashni o'rgatish, o'quvchilarda muammolarni hal etish, qarorlar qabul qilish va o'z fikrlarini asoslash qobiliyatlarini mustahkamlashga yordam beradi. Maqola metodik yondashuvlar, o'qituvchining roli va amaliy mashg'ulotlar orqali tanqidiy fikrlashni oshirishning samarali usullarini taqdim etadi.

Keywords: *tanqidiy fikrlash, ingliz tili, o'quvchi ko'nikmalari, metodika, o'qituvchi roli, o'quvchi faoliyati, tanqidiy o'ylashni rivojlantirish.*

Аннотация.

В статье рассматриваются методические подходы к развитию критического мышления учащихся через преподавание английского языка. Обучение критическому мышлению помогает учащимся развивать навыки

решения проблем, принятия решений и обоснования своих мнений. Статья предлагает эффективные методы увеличения критического мышления через практические занятия и роль преподавателя.

Ключевые слова: *критическое мышление, английский язык, навыки учащихся, методика, роль преподавателя, активное обучение.*

INTRODUCTION

Critical thinking is one of the most essential skills that students need to develop in today's fast-paced and information-driven world. In the context of English language teaching, enhancing critical thinking can help students not only gain a deeper understanding of the language but also engage in more meaningful learning experiences. Critical thinking encourages students to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information in a logical and reasoned manner.

This article explores how English language teaching can foster and enhance students' critical thinking skills, providing a framework for educators to develop these essential competencies in their students. It aims to discuss the theoretical background of critical thinking, the role of the teacher, and the practical methodologies that can be implemented in language classrooms to strengthen students' analytical abilities.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Critical thinking, as defined by Paul and Elder (2014), involves the ability to think rationally and logically, to analyze arguments, to question assumptions, and to synthesize information in a way that leads to well-supported conclusions. Research by Facione (2015) emphasizes that critical thinking is not just about acquiring knowledge but about actively engaging with the material, questioning, reflecting, and evaluating.

In the context of English language teaching, several studies have shown that teaching critical thinking leads to better academic performance and deeper comprehension of the subject matter.

For example, Ellis (2007) demonstrated that students who were encouraged to engage in critical discussions in English were more likely to retain information and develop stronger communication skills.

Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating the development of critical thinking skills. According to Dewey (1933), teachers should create learning environments that encourage inquiry, discussion, and exploration. A teacher who fosters an atmosphere where students are encouraged to ask questions, challenge ideas, and reflect critically on their learning processes will enable them to build these skills effectively.

Moreover, teachers must be aware of their role as facilitators of thinking, not just providers of knowledge. As outlined by Brookfield (2012), the teacher's responsibility is to guide students in the process of critical inquiry, helping them develop their ability to think critically, independently, and creatively.

To enhance critical thinking skills, several active teaching methodologies can be employed in English language classrooms. These include:

1. **Problem-Based Learning (PBL):** PBL encourages students to solve complex, real-world problems, fostering independent thinking, collaboration, and practical application of language skills.

2. **Case Studies:** Case studies provide students with real-life situations to analyze and evaluate, helping them apply language skills in a critical context.

3. **Debates and Discussions:** Engaging students in debates and discussions encourages them to present and defend their viewpoints, consider opposing perspectives, and develop logical reasoning.

These approaches allow students to engage with language learning in a deeper and more meaningful way, fostering the development of critical thinking as an integral part of their language acquisition process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Incorporating critical thinking exercises into English language teaching has been shown to improve students' problem-solving skills, communication abilities, and overall academic performance. Students who regularly engage in critical thinking activities demonstrate higher levels of engagement, retention of knowledge, and the ability to apply what they have learned in real-life situations.

For example, in a study conducted by Gajda and Wright (2012), students who participated in regular debate sessions improved not only their language proficiency but also their ability to reason logically, think creatively, and communicate effectively.

Active learning strategies, such as group work, role-playing, and case study analysis, can be extremely effective in developing students' critical thinking. These methods encourage students to engage with content in a way that challenges their thinking and helps them develop a deeper understanding of the material.

By using English as a medium for discussions and problem solving, students are not only enhancing their language skills but are also learning to think critically in a second language. For example, when students discuss controversial topics or analyze complex texts, they are required to evaluate arguments, construct their own viewpoints, and consider the perspectives of others. This process develops their ability to reason logically and make decisions based on evidence, which is the essence of critical thinking.

Strengthening critical thinking in English education provides students with lifelong skills that are valuable in various aspects of life. Students with strong critical thinking abilities are better equipped to make informed decisions, solve problems, and communicate their ideas clearly and persuasively.

Additionally, critical thinking enhances students' academic performance by encouraging them to approach learning with a more analytical mindset. Research by

Kuhn (2005) found that students who engage in critical thinking are more likely to succeed in complex academic tasks, including writing, research, and presentation skills.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, enhancing critical thinking skills through English language teaching is not only beneficial for students' academic growth but also essential for their personal and professional development. By integrating active learning strategies, such as problem-based learning, debates, and case studies, teachers can help students develop the analytical, evaluative, and creative thinking skills necessary to succeed in an increasingly complex world.

It is clear that the role of the teacher is fundamental in fostering critical thinking skills. Teachers must create an environment that encourages inquiry, critical reflection, and intellectual engagement. Through thoughtful instructional strategies and a focus on developing critical thinking, English language teaching can be a powerful tool for nurturing students' intellectual abilities and preparing them for future challenges.

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