

Development of Critical Thinking in Students as the Primary Goal of the Educational Process

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Abstract

The concepts of critical thinking and creative thinking are both gaining increasing importance in the world today. Because every people are face with numerous decisions to make and problems to solve. Decision making and problem solving is the very core in many aspects of life, yet some decisions making can be very difficult to accomplish. Critical thinking is an important skill to acquire by obtaining this skill, a person will be able to make an appropriate decision. A student who practices good critical thinking skills has obtained high self-confidence. Intellectual independence is also another quality to acquire by an individual who practices critical thinking skills. Critically active minds are guaranteed to survive in the 21st century world where ideas require progressive, intellectual and rational development. The implementation of such ideas ultimately leads to personal and professional success.

Keywords- Critical thinking, Students, Educational process, Development

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Introduction

In 21st century, it's really important to develop the abilities of critical thinking in students through education. Early years foundation stage is providing better guidance for children at very tender age because they believe in individual abilities of children. Because critical thinking involves logic as well as creativity. It may involve inductive and deductive reasoning, analysis and problem solving as well as creative, innovative and complex approaches to the resolution of the issue and challenges in educational process.

Definition of critical thinking- "Critical thinking", thinking about your thinking while you're thinking in order to make your thinking better"- Richard W. Paul

'Critical', derived from the Greek word 'Kritikos' meaning to judge, arose out of the way analysis and socratic argument comprised thinking at that time. (MC Gregor, 2007) , Then word 'Kritikos' passed to latin as 'Criticus' that is type of spreading to world language from it (Hancerlioglu, 1996).

According to critical thinking co-operation (2006) critical thinking is an ability which is beyond memorization.

Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating information gathered from observation, experiences, reflection, reasoning or communication, as a guide to belief and action (Michael Scriven and Richard Paul (2003).

Then critical thinking has been refined and developed further by Richard Paul and Linder Elder into the Paul-Elder framework of critical thinking. According to the Paul-Elder framework, critical thinking is

Analysis of thinking by focusing on the parts or structures of thinking ("The element of thought")

Evaluation of thinking by focusing on the quality ("The universal intellectual standards")

Improvement of thinking by using what you have learned ("The intellectual traits")

Critical thinking in education

Enhancing student's critical thinking skills is particularly essential in a liberal education model, which believes in teaching students how to think and not what to think. Critical thinking helps students to think in an analytic and rational way. It encourages students to make life decisions cautiously and after evaluating all aspects. Also, by using critical thinking skills in education, students can enhance their ability to solve problem and make effective decisions. In education, critical thinking helps in valuing peer perspectives, better interactions within students and approaching problems in a systematic manner. Critical thinking in the classroom helps students think in different dimensions.

Here are some of the other reasons why critical thinking is important in education:

- 1) **Enhancing creativity and curiosity-** Critical thinking develops sense of curiosity which leads to students analyses and assimilate information and ideas.
- 2) **Promoting self-reflection-** Basically, critical thinking is self-monitored, self-disciplined and self-corrective thinking. It helps students to reflect and understand their points and figure out which based on personal experiences and understands.
- 3) **Nurturing problem-solvers and innovators-** A good critical thinker will be able to separate facts from opinions and examine the issue before making rational decisions towards solving a problem. They are also able to produce a bias-free solution.
- 4) **Fostering allied life skills-** Creative thinking helps to develop allied life skills such as organizational skills, communication skills among students. It encourages confidence and independence in students. Students who use critical thinking skills approach course material with more thoughtfulness as well as effectiveness, ask more difficult questions and engage more actively in learning process and students also manage their own learning.
- 5) **Critical thinking enhances language and presenting skills-** With help of critical thinking students improve logical structure of text and comprehension abilities and express their own ideas.

Teaching strategies to promote critical thinking in classroom-

Critical thinking is an essential skill that all students will use in almost every aspect of their lives.

There are some techniques to engage students and help strengthen their skill:

1. **Encourage students to question everything.**
2. **Activate student curiosity-** Teacher can activate a student's curiosity by using the inquiry-based learning mode, which involves posing questions for students to discover the answer themselves.
3. **Incorporate project-based learning-** In project-based learning, students engage in higher order thinking while gathering information and making decisions throughout various stages.
4. **Connect students with real world issues-** Through this approach students connect to real world issues and understand the relevance this issue had in their lives.
5. **Offer diverse perspectives-** To support diverse viewpoints in the classroom teachers use various primary sources such as documentaries, articles from people who have experienced also invite guest speakers who can offer varying perspectives on same topic.

6. **Assign tasks on critical writing** - Writing tasks encourage students to reflect their own point of view and demonstrate their critical thinking like a research paper, an essay etc.
7. **Promote collaboration** - Collaborative learning is helpful in developing critical thinking in students. Teacher should use it through group discussions, classroom debate, peer interaction etc. It allows students to have a deep understanding of subject matter and also sharpens their communication skills.
8. **Provide feedback** - Providing feedback is another effective method for teaching students how to improve critical thinking skills. Giving students positive and constructive criticism improves their performance.
9. **Modelling good critical thinking skills** - Good critical thinking skills include asking open - ended questions, analyzing data and evaluate sources.

Conclusion

Critical thinking is a central concept in educational reforms that call for schools to place a greater emphasis on skills that are used in all subject areas and that students can apply in all educational, career and their lives also. Teaching students to use critical thinking may require a much more careful planning and selection prior to construction which have to be matched to desire learning outcomes. Because critical thinking provides opportunities for students to think and to show what they know and also provide abilities to the surrounding world to find and estimate objective way of receiving information to compare and analyze various point of view understand complexity of the public believes.

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