Nurmukhanbetova A.A.,
Issabayeva B.K.

On Critical thinking

Nowadays critical thinking is really one of the relevant present-day topics. The problem of how to teach students to ask questions about some situation or phenomenon, as well as to find answers to these questions, doesn't leave teachers indifferent. The purpose of this article is the formation of students' critical thinking. Today students need to master the skills of critical thinking, find their own solution to the problem, reinforcing their reasonable arguments. The article suggests what critical thinking is and gives some examples of skills to think critically. The main tools of critical thinking are the actual knowledge as well as the ability to think critically, i.e. an ability to analyze and assess any phenomena, situation and information received. Thus, the issue is of particular interest as it is related to the question how to teach students to think. This ability is called critical thinking as a process of intellectual development.

Key words: critical thinking, knowledge, analyze information, solution, evaluation, a sense of curiosity.

Нурмуханбетова А.А.,
Исабаева Б.К.

Сыни тұрғыдан ойлау әдістемесі туралы

Қазіргі кезде бұл тақырып шетел тілін оқыту үдерісінде өзекті болып табылады. Студенттерді қандай да бір жағдаятқа немесе құбылысқа дұрыс сұрақ қоя білуге, сонымен қатар өздеріне қызықты сұрақтардың нақты жауабын таба білуге үйретуде оқытушы маңызды роль атқарады.

Бұл мақаланың мақсаты – студенттерде сыни тұрғыдан ойлауды қалыптастыру болып табылады. Студенттер сыни тұрғыдан ойлай білу дағдылары мен іскерліктерін меңгеріп қана қоймай, сонымен бірге берілген мәселеге немесе жағдаятқа нақты дәлелдер келтіре отырып, өз бетімен шешім қабылдай білуге дағдылануы қажет. Бұл мақалада сыни тұрғыдан ойлау әдістемесіне нақты анықтама беріледі, көптеген мысалдар келтіріледі, және студенттердің сыни тұрғыдан ойлау алуы үшін қандай дағдылар мен іскерліктерді меңгеру қажеттігі көрсетіледі. Сыни тұрғыдан ойлау әдістемесінің негізгі құралы болып нақты білім табылады. Нақты білім – бұл білім алушының сыни тұрғыдан ойлай алу дағдысының қалыптасуын қамтамасыз ете отырып, алынған ақпаратқа, жағдаятқа немесе белгілі бір құбылысқа талдау жасай білу қабілеттілігін білдіреді.

Осы қарастырылған мәселелердің бәрін қорытындылай келгенде, студенттерді қалай ойлай білуге үйретуге болады деген сұрақ туындайды. Студенттердің мұндай ойлай білу қабілеттілігі өз кезегінде білім алушылардың интеллектуальды даму үдерісін басшылыққа ала отырып, сыни тұрғыдан ойлау деп аталады.

Түйін сөздер: сыни тұрғыдан ойлау, білім, сұрыптау жасау, мәлімет, шешім шығару, бағалау, ынтасын арттыру.

Нурмуханбетова А.А.,
Исабаева Б.К.,

О критическом мышлении

В настоящее время данная тема является действительно актуальной. Как научить студента правильно задавать вопросы по поводу какой-либо ситуации или явления, а также находить ответы на интересующие их вопросы, не оставляет равнодушными преподавателей. Цель данной статьи – формирование критического мышления студентов. Студентам необходимо овладеть навыками критического мышления, находить собственное решение проблемы, подкрепляя его обоснованными доводами. В статье дается определение критического мышления, а также приводятся примеры, какими навыками должен овладеть студент, настроенный мыслить критически. Основными инструментами критического мышления являются фактические знания, а также умение мыслить критически, т.е. умение анализировать и давать соответствующую оценку какому-либо явлению, ситуации и полученной информации. Таким образом, особый интерес вызывает вопрос, связанный с тем, как научить студента мыслить. Данное умение и называют критическим мышлением, представляющим собой процесс интеллектуального развития.

Ключевые слова: критическое мышление, знание, анализировать, информация, решение, оценивание, чувство любопытства.

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Nurmukhanbetova A.A.[1], Issabayeva B.K.[2],

[1]ст. преподаватель, [2]ст. преподаватель Казахского национального университета имени аль-Фараби, г. Алматы, Казахстан,
e-mail: bayana_i@mail.ru

ON CRITICAL THINKING

At present critical thinking has become one of the topical problems under discussion. So, first of all let's start with the definition of what critical thinking is and in what way we can teach it to our students.

As we see, the term consists of two words: critical in the meaning of being «marked by careful evaluation» and thinking, which means «to reason», «to visualize; to imagine», «to invent» and «to consider». In our opinion, one of the most original definitions comes from R. Paul, a well-known expert on the subject:

- «Critical thinking, is thinking about your thinking while you're thinking in order to make your thinking better» [1]. Another one comes from R. Spear:»Critical thinking does not produce final solutions to the topic being discussed; its goal is to clarify the issue and take a step in the direction of understanding. It's an exciting game we all can play. A game which often begins with the question «Why?»[2].

At first glance some of the definitions seem to contradict each other, yet they have much in common. Thus, critical thinking

-Is logical and systematic;
-Is a process;
-Is open-ended;
-Involves suspended judgment, understanding, and evaluation;
-Is about taking responsibility for our own thinking;
-Leads to decisions- what to do or believe.

But what does it mean on a practical level? When speaking on the subject, G. Fearside starts by drawing the following figure on the blackboard:

- «What is it?»- he asks. At first, there is usually no answer, but a bit later someone can see a pattern emerge. «A star» is often the first response. «A house» is another one. Then the answers come in quick succession: «An open envelope», « a pentagram», etc. « But what is it', really?»- he asks. The answer is quite simple: five dots, marked in chalk. The patterns we see come from our mind. Their meaning is derived from the relationship to each other.

This exercise shows two basic instruments that are necessary for real learning: factual knowledge and an ability to think critically about it, i.e. to analyze, evaluate and assimilate information.

The dots on the blackboard represent factual knowledge. These facts can be acquired in many ways, though often the primary methods are through memorization. Naturally, they form the basis of thinking, but individually they hold little meaning independent of each others.

Critical thinking connects the dots, helps us draw a complete picture. It can be compared to the process of putting A+B=C (A plus B together to equal C). But critical thinking is more than simply solving equations. It also studies the implications of C, even questions the very premises of A and B.

So, the problem is that we should provide students with two different things: 1) the subject matter «what to think» and 2) the correct way of understanding and evaluating this subject matter «how to think». This second ability is called critical thinking.

S. Ferret suggests attributes of a critical thinker. Let's consider just some of them:

- Critical thinkers have a sense of curiosity. It is not enough just to think critically, for critical thinking does not exist in a vacuum – it is a process that cannot be separated from a sense of curiosity. If we think we know all the answers, we will find the new ones, and our knowledge will stop growing.

- Critical thinkers are able to admit a lack of understanding or information.

According to D. Ellis in Becoming a Master student [3], critical thinking is « the willingness to change one point of view as we continue to examine ideas that may seem obvious. Such thinking takes time and the readiness: I don't know.

- Critical thinkers are able to adjust opinions when new facts are found.

In today's New Technologies Age, this approach is particularly important. Knowledge is growing at a pace perhaps unprecedented in world history, and today's «facts» are constantly changing in light of new research and discoveries.

- Critical thinkers are interested in finding new solutions. Are we still using the same lesson plans worked out some 10 years ago? The same books, the same teaching techniques? Being teachers, we should constantly try to find the new ways to update our methods from attending workshops to accessing the Internet.

- Critical thinkers listen to others attentively and are able to give feedback.

From ours experience mention should be made that communication in class should be a dialogue, not a monologue, a dialogue with information we read or gain to summarize, analyze, and evaluate ideas we come across.

The handout produced by W.Laurier University [4] goes on to list sample critical thinking questions, grouped by type:

- Summary and Definition (e.g «Who? What? When?»)

- Analysis (e.g « How? Why? What are the reasons for X? What are the causes of X? What are possible solutions to X?»)

- Hypothesis (e.g «If X, then What? If X had happened, then what would be different?»)

- Evaluation (e.g «What are the advantages or disadvantages of X? Do I agree or disagree? What is the support for my opinion?»

When discussing the «Socratic» method of questioning and teaching in class, the students' attention was focused on the way Socrates taught his pupils.

While asking people about what they believed in and why- always why – he met every answer with a new question and each answer after that with another question.

Socrates used to say that he could never teach anyone anything. We suppose it was the very first attempt of teaching people how to think. This method of questioning and teaching has always been respected since then.

Asking the right questions is important of course, but there is also an art of waiting for answers. According to G. Fowlers a 17-second rule, whenever she asks a question, if the students do not answer it immediately, she mentally counts for 17 seconds before either repeating the question in another form of providing hints to the answer. As any teacher knows 17seconds is quite a long time in a silent classroom, but Fowler's point is this: we must demand accountability from our students. If we are ready to provide an answer to our own questions when students do not immediately answer them, we are training them that they need not be prepared. Thus, they will not be accountable for information and, as a result, they will not be required to think.

Thus, using the Critical Thinking Strategies at the English lesson makes the process exciting and motivates students for the following:

- to know more trying to find some new data on the topic or event under discussion;
- to make progress in speaking, writing and listening;
- to listen to each other more attentively;
- to become real speakers.

It makes students possible to improve their knowledge and achieve good academic results.

New methods of education also imply new types of teaching that will promote not only powers of memory but also skills for practical work and creativity.

The most widespread format for a practical session at the University are seminars. They manage to create the atmosphere of scientific creativity and mutual understanding between students and their teachers. Teachers generally focus their attention on the content aspect of a seminar: concept formation, research development and business communication skills.

Students, on the other hand, set different goals for themselves: they want to get some practical examples to help them understand a difficult material presented at a lecture. Very often the arsenal of strategies used during seminars is very small:

- discussion
- explanation of a new material
- students' oral responses
- written assignments

The seminars are supposed to be more interesting if they were organized in a different way:

- group work opportunity;
- discussions and debates;
- brainstorming
- using schemes and diagrams

self-analysis

It is known that a real problem can be solved much easier. That's why a teacher should use newspapers or journals devoted to hot topical business, economic, ecological, social problems, etc.

In conclusion it should be noted that forming the qualities of a good critical thinker is of great importance not only in our classroom but in our live as well. In fact, critical thinking might be said to be the scientific process of an intellectual living.

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