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IMPROVING STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING

Sayfullayeva Yulduz
Central Asian University
y.sayfullayeva@centralasian.uz

Abstract: *this article addresses effective strategies for fostering critical thinking among students. Recognizing the importance of critical thinking for both academic success and addressing real-world problems, the study addresses several pedagogical models and instructional strategies that facilitate higher-order thinking. By integrating technology, collaborative learning, and inquiry-based learning, teachers can create environments conducive to fostering critical analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information. The findings stress the need to foster critical thinking among students to prepare them for handling the complexities of contemporary society.*

Keywords: *critical thinking, education, pedagogy, student engagement, inquiry-based learning, technological integration, collaborative learning.*

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly changing world, critical thinking has emerged as an essential skill for students to learn in order to prepare them to deal adeptly with complex issues. Education systems are realizing the need to discard the traditional model of simple rote memorization and implement teaching methodologies that encourage students' critical thinking. This shift not only enhances academic performance but also prepares students for informed citizenship and constructive

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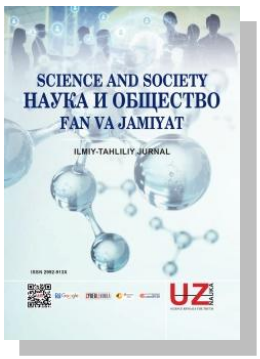

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problem-solving in various contexts.[1] This article tries to recognize and explore strategies that teachers can use to enhance critical thinking skills in students to promote a generation that can reason analytically and think innovatively.

MAIN PART

In an era of rapid technological advances and a surfeit of information, the ability to think critically has never been more crucial. Critical thinking enables students to analyze situations, make sensible choices, and solve complex problems efficiently. As educators, it is vital that we cultivate these skills in the classroom. Using multiple pedagogic strategies and a learning culture that promotes question-asking and reflection, we can significantly enhance the critical thinking capacity of students.

Above all, one must understand what critical thinking is. Critical thinking can be referred to as the ability to think reflectively and independently. Critical thinking entails a number of skills like analysis, evaluation, inference, and deduction. Such students possessing good critical thinking skills can decide whether a source of information is credible or not, identify bias, and construct good arguments. Thus, it is not merely a question of preparing students to be successful in terms of academics but also preparing them to deal with the complexities of everyday life and societal problems.

One of the fundamental ways of developing critical thinking is through active learning. Traditional teaching methods, in the majority of instances, are characterized by passive learning and do not challenge students. Through the

[1] Achilov, O. R. (2017). IMPROVING STUDENTS'CRITICAL THINKING THROUGH CREATIVE WRITING TASKS. In International Scientific and Practical Conference World science (Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 19-23). ROST.

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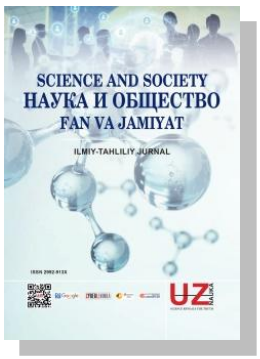

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incorporation of active learning techniques such as group discussion, case studies, and problem-based learning, the instructor can initiate critical thinking. The approaches challenge students to participate actively in learning, collaborate with others, and interact with real-world problems, thereby instilling deeper understanding and analysis. Furthermore, the integration of technology in the learning environment can facilitate critical thinking. The utilization of digital tools allows for access to large volumes of information and resources. However, this also presents the challenge of being able to distinguish credible information from misinformation. Teachers can use technology to facilitate students in critically evaluating online sources, conducting research, and utilizing digital platforms to learn cooperatively. For instance, discussion through social media or forums can interest students while enhancing their analytical and evaluative skills.

Another effective approach is incorporating inquiry-based learning into the curricula. Inquiry-based learning puts the learners at the center of the learning process, and they are encouraged to ask questions, form hypotheses, and investigate issues.[2] This form of learning fosters a culture of questioning and leads learners to inquire further about subject matter. By structured inquiry, teachers can guide students to construct critical questions and apply reasoning to make conclusions. Not only is this reinforcing critical thinking but also cultivating a love of learning for life.

In addition, cultivating a classroom climate that appreciates open discussion and multiple viewpoints is critical. As students feel free to contribute

[2] Haynes, A., Lisic, E., Goltz, M., Stein, B., & Harris, K. (2016). Moving beyond assessment to improving students' critical thinking skills: A model for implementing change. Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, 16(4), 44-61.

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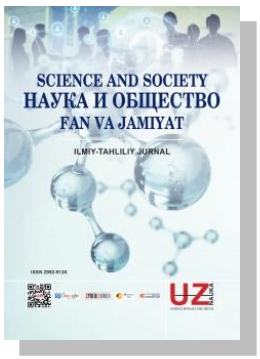

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their ideas and disagree with one another, they delve more thoroughly into the content. Fostering discussions that test out alternative points of view engenders critical examination and allows students to build their own picture of complicated matters. Teachers can promote this by establishing ground rules for respectful conversation and leading discussions so that they value reasoning more than opinions.

Assessment methods also play a role in the development of critical thinking. Regular tests have a tendency to test for memorization and do not portray a student's ability to think critically. Alternative methods of assessment, such as project assessment, reflection, and presentations, can more effectively evaluate the critical thinking ability of students. These methods allow for space for students to demonstrate their ability to analyze information, synthesize ideas, and articulate their justification.

Also, interdisciplinary education would enhance critical thinking. By combining ideas from various disciplines, the students can recognize interconnections and interrelevance among subjects. A project that involves science, mathematics, and social studies is a case in point. It can cause students to think critically about the impact technological advancements will have on society. Such projects, which are interdisciplinary, not only reinforce critical thinking but also prepare students for the collaboration that is the norm in modern workplaces.[3]

Teacher professional development is another necessary component in the encouragement of critical thinking in students. Teachers themselves need to be

[3] Supriyatno, T., Susilawati, S., & Hassan, A. (2020). E-learning development in improving students' critical thinking ability. Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences, 15(5), 1099-1106.

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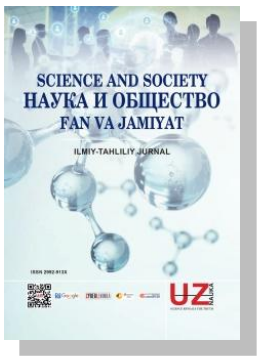

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trained and equipped in order to most effectively apply strategies for stimulating these skills. Workshops, seminars, and planning groups can offer teachers the assistance they need to create exciting learning environments. Teacher professional development pays dividends in the long run by having a positive impact on students, since well-rounded teachers are more effectively able to motivate and guide their students toward critical thinking.[4]

Improving students' critical thinking is a multifaceted endeavor that requires intentional strategies and a supportive classroom environment. By adopting active learning techniques, integrating technology, encouraging inquiry-based methods, promoting open dialogue, employing diverse assessment strategies, and fostering interdisciplinary connections, educators can cultivate critical thinkers who are well-prepared for the challenges of the future. As we move forward in education, it is imperative that we prioritize critical thinking as a fundamental skill, ensuring that our students are not only consumers of information but also discerning evaluators and innovative problem solvers.

CONCLUSION

Augmenting students' critical thinking is not merely an educational goal but a necessity to prepare them for the uncertain and ever-changing nature of the world they will inhabit. By adopting diverse pedagogies and creating engaging, inquiry-based learning environments, educators can successfully enhance students' analytical minds. Going forward, it is crucial that educational systems place top

[4] Mahdi, O. R., Nassar, I. A., & Almuslamani, H. A. I. (2020). The Role of Using Case Studies Method in Improving Students' Critical Thinking Skills in Higher Education. International Journal of Higher Education, 9(2), 297-308.

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priority on developing critical thinking, and in doing so, allow students to gain the capacity to thrive in their future endeavors and contribute positively to society.

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