THE ESSENCE OF USING CRITICAL THINKING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LESSONS IN GYMNASIUMS

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Today, in the context of implementing reforms in the system of national education, the formation of students' ability to think creatively and critically is of paramount importance. The school should form a creative personality who is able to effectively and unconventionally solve life's problems, is able to think independently and generate ideas, as well as to argue his/her own position. The principles of modern education are not to provide information to students, to train them with knowledge, but to develop a critical way of thinking, thinking skills.

According to the Conception of the New Ukrainian School critical thinking is one of the ninth crosscutting skills, which together with key competences create an infrastructure that provides the grounds for successful self-fulfillment of the student as a personality, citizen and professional [1].

There are many different definitions of critical thinking, but the most complete explanation of the term was given by scholars Michael Scriven and Richard Paul. They defined critical thinking as the "intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action." Based on this statement, critical thinking transcends content and context to play a role in **reasoning, decision making, and problem solving**. As such, critical thinking requires more than just the acquisition of information or the demonstration of problem solving or decision-making skills. When students engage in critical thinking, they mitigate bias and preconceptions by thinking rationally, reasonably, and empathetically. By doing so, they acknowledge complexity and endeavor to examine it through logical analysis and deep inquiry [2].

So, in short, critical thinking is a way of approaching and solving problems based on arguments persuasive, logical and rational, which involves verifying, evaluating and choosing the right answer to a given task and reasoned rejection of other alternatives solutions. It means asking probing questions like, "How do we know?" or "Is this true in every case or just in this instance?"

Currently, there are not many techniques for the development of critical thinking in the methodology of teaching a foreign language. The most famous technique is the technology for the development of critical thinking through reading and writing, which was developed by K. Meredith and J. Steele [3]. This technology offers a system of specific methodological techniques, which is universal, since it can be used in various subject areas. Within the technology of thinking development, there are three technological stages:

Stage 1 – **a challenge.** The goal of this stage is the formation of personal interest in obtaining information. At this stage, students must realize the following tasks:

- updating existing knowledge on the selected topic. At the same time, the teacher is required to clearly organize the process of updating the knowledge obtained earlier, which are necessary for the material perception of the new topic;
- motivation for cognitive activity. The various ways in which the so-called "information void" is created, which students want to fill;
- independently determine students' directions for learning new material, identify those aspects that would be desirable to discuss (critical thinking – independent thinking).

Stage 2 – comprehension. Students get acquainted with new information. The first phase encourages the student to ask the questions "What does this mean for me?", "Why do I need it?", and the second – to implement the content of these questions in the process of a certain educational and cognitive activities. During this stage, two main tasks are solved:

- how to organize active processing new information?
- how to correlate new material with previously known and learned?

The main principle of the comprehension stage is that the teacher should give students the right / attitude to individual search for information with subsequent group discussion and analysis.

Stage 3 – **reflection.** It means the organic integration of new experience and new knowledge, that is, the material must be fully assimilated. Students should reflect on what they have learned and how to incorporate new concepts into their ideas; discuss how it changed their thoughts, visions, behaviour. It requires:

- self-systematization of the acquired material;
- determining the directions of further mastering the topic: under what conditions it can be applied.

Within the educational technology of critical thinking development there are many technological techniques. By combining these techniques, teachers can adapt the lesson to the specific material and the level of students' development.

At the ***"Challenge" stage***, the following techniques can be applied: "Know-Want to Know-Learned," illustration forecasting, pair or group brainstorming, "True-False," "Thick and Thin Questions," "Guess Tree," "Alphabet," keeping a "logbook" in the classroom, etc.

At the ***"Comprehension" stage***, the system of marking the text "Six Hats," "Zigzag," "Fishbone," "INSERT," "Bloom's Chamomile," "Logical Chain," "Merry-Go-Round," and "Plus-Minus-Interesting" tables can be applied.

Being at the final ***"Reflection" stage***, the teacher can combine the above techniques, and also to address to group summarizing, discussing the results, returning to the problem posed at the beginning of the lesson and seeing if it has found a solution. The following techniques can be applied at this stage: "Clusters," "Diamond," "Mind Map," "Cinquain," "Wheel of English," etc.

The development of critical thinking involves the formation of the ability to solve a problem, that is, the ability to see it, analyze it from different points of view, highlight its components, consider the problem as a whole, evaluate various solutions and choose the best one. J. Bransford & B. Stein [4] identified the IDEAL model of problem-solving which can be used in a range of contexts and in the process of analyzing the situation. While traditional teaching is based on ready-made answers that are presented to students as a given, the technology for the development of critical thinking is focused on questions as the main driving force of thinking. The scholars mentioned emphasize five components of thinking that are applicable to a wide variety of situations. They include the ability to **Identify** problems, **Define** and represent them with precision, **Explore** possible strategies, **Act** on these strategies and **Look** at the effects.

I – Identify a problem. The ability to identify the existence of problems is one of the most important characteristics of successful problem solvers. What are the essential elements of the problem? Is it a problem that is similar to others that you may have solved? Describe in detail the nature of the problem in the context of other problems you had encountered.

D – Define a problem. Once a problem has been identified it must be defined with more precision. Define the problem through thinking about it and sorting relevant information. Describe how you analysed that problem and identified the key elements which had to be addressed.

E – Explore solutions. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each solution? IDEAL problem solvers explore a variety of strategies that can help them succeed.

A – Act on strategies. Describe what you have done to solve the problem.

L – Look back and evaluate the effects of your activity. Describe the outcomes, reflecting on the success or otherwise of your actions.

The fourth (*Explore*) and fifth (*Look*) components of the IDEAL problem-solving framework are to act on the basis of a strategy and look at the effects.

To illustrate the benefits of the technology in foreign language lessons in gymnasiums it should be analyzed some techniques of enhancing and promoting critical thinking. But this will already be the matter of another publication.

References

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