



## **CRITICAL THINKING IS ESSENTIAL IN XXI CENTURY TEACHING.**

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| <b>Article history:</b>   | <b>Abstract:</b>   |
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| <b>Received:</b> 11 <sup>th</sup> February 2023<br><b>Accepted:</b> 11 <sup>th</sup> March 2023<br><b>Published:</b> 17 <sup>th</sup> April 2023  | This article focuses on the issue of how critical thinking is important in teaching and the ways to develop significantly this skill with students in all stages of education. Furthermore there is some information about the features of critical thinking and the activities are given as samples for using in the classroom when the teachers develop their students` critical thinking abilities. |
| <b>Keywords:</b> Critical thinking, analyze information, digital world, develop the critical thinking skills, features of critical thinking, making judgments, biases and assumptions, evaluating sources, memorization, self-esteem, learner autonomy. |  |

### **INTRODUCTION**

When learners learn a foreign language they have various kinds of needs which influence their learning. Critical thinking is considered one of these learners` needs in teaching and learning process. What is critical thinking itself? Critical thinking is the ability to effectively analyze information and form a judgment and to think critically, one must be aware of his or her own biases and assumptions when encountering information, and apply consistent standards when evaluating sources. How can it influence in teaching foreign languages? Are there some features of critical thinking in the digital world of XXI century? In this article it was discussed and shared some thoughts for the following questions.

### **MAIN BODY**

As we mentioned above this article is about the conscience of critical thinking in learning and teaching foreign languages and ways of developing this skill in the modern classroom of current period. In order to achieve something new for himself/herself, a person should be aware what he/she wants and how to do it and in teaching it is called as learners` needs. One of the most important needs in the world teaching is critical thinking. We can contemplate it as significant skill among other ones. Now it is time to mention why teachers should develop their learners` critical thinking skills in the classroom.

Critical thinking is important for making judgments about sources of information and forming your students` their own arguments. It emphasizes a rational, objective, and self-aware approach that can help students to identify credible sources and strengthen their conclusions. In the classroom, critical thinking teaches students how to ask and answer the questions needed to read the world. Whether it's a story, news article, photo, video, advertisement, or another form of media, students can use the following

critical thinking strategies to dig beyond the surface and uncover a wealth of knowledge. Let`s have some activity for developing critical thinking and it is called "A Layered Learning Approach". Begin by having students read a story, article, or analyze a piece of media. Then have them excavate and explore its various layers of meaning. First, ask students to think about the literal meaning of what they just read. For example, if students read an article about the deforestation in the world during the 21 century, they should be able to answer questions such as: *What was involved? What happened? Where did it happen? Which details are important?* This is the first layer of critical thinking: reading comprehension. Do students understand the passage at its most basic level? Then teach students to ask the tough questions: *What information is included? What or who is left out? How does word choice influence the reader? What perspective is represented?* These questions force students to critically analyze the choices behind the final product. In today's age of fast paced, easily accessible information, it is essential to teach students how to critically examine the information they consume. The goal is to equip students with the mindset to ask these questions on their own.

Critical thinking goes hand in hand with information literacy to help your students form opinions rationally and engage independently and organize their learner autonomy. There are vast activities to use critical thinking in the classroom.

1. In this expanded response to reading from a critical situation, students are encouraged to respond through forms of artistic interpretations, dramatizations, singing, sketching, and designing projects. For example, students might read an article and then create a podcast about it or read a story and then act it out.



2. This activity requires students to take an article or story and transform it into something new. For example, they might turn a news article into a cartoon or turn a story into a poem. Alternatively, students may rewrite a story by changing some of its elements, such as the setting or time period.
3. In this type of activity, students are encouraged to take action and bring about change. Students might read an article about endangered orangutans and the effects of habitat loss caused by deforestation and be inspired to check the labels on products for palm oil. They might then write a letter asking companies how they make sure the palm oil they use doesn't hurt rain forests.
4. In this student led discussion strategy, students pose thought-provoking questions to each other about a topic. They listen closely to each other's comments and think critically about different perspectives.

As it is given in the introduction part of the article, that whether there are some features of critical thinking in the digital world of XXI century and here we can say with confidence that critical thinking is an increasingly important element for students of all ages in nowadays, but teaching them appropriately can often be a challenge for school teachers. In modern teaching despite myths that critical thinking skills are only applicable to subjects like science and math, the reality is that these skills are not only vital for success in all subject areas, but everyday life as well. Critical thinking goes beyond memorization, encouraging students to connect the dots between concepts, solve problems, think creatively, and apply knowledge in new ways. So, developing critical thinking skills in elementary education are on the top place in teaching of current age. Here we can add some more examples for developing elementary school students' critical thinking skills.

1. Asking questions, especially open ended questions, gives elementary school students a chance to apply what they've learned and build on prior knowledge. It also allows them to problem-solve and think on their feet, and boosts self-esteem by providing an opportunity for students to express themselves in front of their peers.
2. Since a large part of teaching critical thinking skills revolves around applying knowledge and evaluating solutions, elementary school teachers should encourage decision-making as much as possible. This enables students to apply what they've learned to different situations, weigh the pros and cons of a

variety of solutions, then decide which ideas work best.

3. Group projects and discussions are another excellent way for elementary school teachers to encourage critical thinking skills. Cooperative learning not only exposes students to the thought processes of their classmates, it expands their thinking and worldview by demonstrating that there's no one right way to approach a problem.
4. Connecting different ideas is a key to teaching critical thinking. For example, elementary school teachers can ask students if they know anyone who has to take a bus to work, and if so, why it would be important for that person to also have a train schedule. Questions like these help children consider different situations (delayed buses, for example) and potential solutions (taking the train instead), helping them apply prior knowledge to new contexts.

By having these kind of activities children learn in different ways and can come from vastly different backgrounds, it's essential that future elementary school teachers receive an education that helps them effectively reach various types of students so they can learn to think critically and meet the challenges of living in a diverse, complex world. Utilizing critical thinking skills could be seen as a change in the paradigm of teaching and learning. Engagement in education will enhance the collaboration among teachers and students. It will also provide a way for students to succeed even if the school system had to start over. Currently vital role of teachers are to promote the use of 21st-century tools in the classroom and, more importantly, thinking skills. Some essential skills that are the basis for critical thinking are:

- Communication and Information skills
- Thinking and Problem-Solving skills
- Interpersonal and Self- Directional skills
- Collaboration skills

These four bullets are skills students are going to need in any field and in all levels of education. So teachers need to teach their students to think critically and for themselves. One of the goals of education is to prepare students to learn through discovery. Providing opportunities to practice being critical thinkers will assist students in analyzing others' thinking and examining the logic of others.

### **CONCLUSION.**

In conclusion I can say that developing students' critical thinking skills in teaching is not easy but at the same time it is very essential. It helps learners to be aware of analyzing and thinking critically



in all subjects of school curriculum. In order to develop learners' critical thinking effectively, teachers should select the right activities and use these ones with the students in practice significantly. Since it helps teachers to make their classroom as a safe place as possible.

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