The Implementation of Critical Thinking Strategies into Education and Language Teaching

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ABSTRACT

Critical thinking has been essential part in education process. The critical thinking expands the learning experience of learners and makes foreign language more meaningful for them. This paper defines the concept of critical thinking and emphasizes the effectiveness of critical thinking. Moreover, this article suggests the implementation of critical thinking into education and language learning process through some strategies.

Modern higher education sets itself the task of expanding the abilities of students, forming a personality who can adapt to life in the information space, where international communication has become widespread. The development of economic, industrial and trade relations between countries, the need for cooperation between educational and cultural institutions, indicates the need to train a highly qualified specialist who knows a foreign language. So learning foreign language has become a critical skill in today's globalized world. The critical thinking is the most effective and inseparable part of language learning process. It is obvious that the change, formation and development of human personality qualities are directly related to the efficiency of the process of teaching and learning. Every methodical innovation also improves the quality of human personality. "Critical thinking is considered as an active process, in which students acquire scientific knowledge, as well as, self-confidence increases in the process of thinking together, he understands the value of his thoughts and ideas , learn how to participate actively in the process and exchange ideas with friends and the teacher. Moreover, their responsibility increases, the ability to listen to others' opinions is formed."[1]

Strengthening students' logical and critical thinking are directly related to improve teaching English, to develop critical skills among students. The role of critical thinking is significant in preparing learners for social life and changing world. Moreover, the development of critical thinking enriches language learning by expanding it beyond language skills. Meanwhile, explaining critical thinking as a process, Cottrell (2017) defines critical thinking as a "complex process of deliberation"[2](p.2) which require an extensive series of attitudes and skills such as:

➢ to distinguish the positions, claims and assumptions of others,

➢ assessing evidence for various viewpoints,

➢ objectively analyze competing claims and facts,

➢ to be able to read between lines and to detect incorrect or unjust conclusions,

➢ acknowledging strategies used to make those positions more acceptable,

➢ reflecting in a systematic fashion on problems, applying rationale and perspective to work,

➢ making claims on whether the arguments are legitimate and reasonable

➢ to present a perspective in an effective manner which managed to convince others.

Implementing critical thinking into education process requires a deliberate approach and strategy. There are some strategies;

1. Encourage inquiry-based learning: Encourage learners to explore topics and questions that interest them, and provide opportunities for them to investigate and find answers through independent research and collaboration.

2. Use open-ended questions: Use open-ended questions that encourage learners to think deeply and consider multiple perspectives, such as "How do you think...", "Why do you suppose...", or "What do you think might happen if...".

3. Teach Socratic method: Teach learners the Socratic method of questioning, which involves asking a series of questions to encourage critical thinking and expose contradictions in reasoning.

4. Use case studies: Use real-life case studies to engage learners in critical thinking and problem-solving, and encourage them to apply what they have learned to new situations.

5. Encourage reflection: Encourage learners to reflect on their own learning processes and to identify areas where they need improvement, and provide opportunities for them to set goals and track their progress.

6. Use graphic organizers: Use graphic organizers such as Venn diagrams, flowcharts, and concept maps to help learners visually organize their thoughts and ideas and see relationships between concepts.

7. Teach critical reading skills: Teach learners critical reading skills such as identifying bias, evaluating evidence, and recognizing logical fallacies, and provide opportunities for them to practice these skills through reading and analyzing complex texts.

8. Use debates: Use debates to engage learners in critical thinking and persuasive writing, and encourage them to argue both sides of an issue to develop their critical thinking skills.

9. Encourage brainstorming: Encourage brainstorming sessions where learners can generate and share ideas without fear of judgment, and teach them techniques for generating and evaluating ideas.

10. Use role-playing exercises: Use role-playing exercises to engage learners in critical thinking and problem-solving, and encourage them to take on different roles and perspectives to develop empathy and understanding.

11. Encourage self-assessment: Encourage learners to regularly self-assess their own critical thinking skills, and provide opportunities for them to receive feedback from peers and instructors.

12. Use rubrics: Use rubrics to assess learner performance and provide clear criteria for evaluating critical thinking skills, and provide opportunities for learners to peer-edit and receive feedback on their work.

13. Teach problem-solving strategies: Teach learners various problem-solving strategies such as the Six Thinking Hats technique, lateral thinking, and the Eisenhower Matrix, and encourage them to apply these strategies to real-life scenarios.

14. Encourage collaboration: Encourage collaboration among learners to promote critical thinking and teamwork, and provide opportunities for them to work together on projects and presentations.

15. Use scenario-based learning: Use scenario-based learning to engage learners in critical thinking and problem-solving, and provide opportunities for them to apply what they have learned to realistic scenarios.

16. Encourage storytelling: Encourage learners to tell stories that illustrate their critical thinking processes, and provide opportunities for them to share their stories with others.

17. Use game-based learning: Use game-based learning to engage learners in critical thinking and problem-solving, and provide opportunities for them to apply what they have learned to interactive games and simulations.

18. Teach decision-making skills: Teach learners decision-making skills such as deciding and thinking independently

To conclude, By integrating critical thinking into language instruction, teachers can help learners develop a deeper understanding of language and its uses, and improve their ability to communicate effectively in different contexts. Educators can also create a comprehensive and intentional approach to teach critical thinking that prepares learners for success in today's fast-changing world.

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