

CRITICAL THINKING THROUGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Annotation: This article explores the integration of critical thinking skills in English Language Teaching (ELT). It highlights the importance of developing learners' higher-order thinking abilities through language learning and provides practical classroom strategies and examples for fostering analytical, reflective, and evaluative skills. The article also outlines the theoretical foundation behind critical thinking and its role in communicative competence and lifelong learning.

Keywords: Critical thinking, English language teaching, higher-order thinking, learner autonomy, communicative competence, interactive methods, reflective learning

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматривается интеграция навыков критического мышления в процесс преподавания английского языка (ELT). Подчеркивается важность развития у учащихся способностей к мышлению более высокого порядка через изучение языка. Также представлены практические стратегии и примеры для формирования аналитических, рефлексивных и оценочных навыков. В статье изложены теоретические основы критического мышления и его роль в развитии коммуникативной компетенции и непрерывного образования.

Ключевые слова: Критическое мышление, преподавание английского языка, мышление высокого порядка, автономия учащихся, коммуникативная компетенция, интерактивные методы, рефлексивное обучение.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada ingliz tilini o'qitishda (ELT) tanqidiy fikrlash ko'nikmalarini integratsiya qilish masalasi ko'rib chiqiladi. Til o'rganish orqali o'quvchilarning yuqori darajadagi fikrlash qobiliyatlarini rivojlantirishning





ahamiyati ta'kidlanadi. Maqolada shuningdek, tahliliy, reflektiv va baholovchi ko'nikmalarni shakllantirish uchun amaliy dars strategiyalari va misollar keltirilgan. Tanqidiy fikrlashning nazariy asoslari va uning kommunikativ kompetensiya hamda uzluksiz ta'limdagi o'rni ham yoritilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: Tanqidiy fikrlash, ingliz tilini o'qitish, yuqori darajadagi fikrlash, o'quvchi mustaqilligi, kommunikativ kompetensiya, interaktiv usullar, reflektiv ta'lim.

In the 21st century, education must go beyond rote memorization and focus on equipping learners with critical thinking skills to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information. English Language Teaching (ELT) provides a rich environment for fostering such skills, as language learning inherently involves comprehension, interpretation, and meaningful communication. Incorporating critical thinking into ELT not only enhances language proficiency but also prepares learners for real-life problem-solving, decision-making, and intercultural understanding.

1. Defining Critical Thinking in ELT

Critical thinking involves the ability to think clearly and rationally, understanding the logical connection between ideas. In ELT, this means teaching learners to question information, infer meaning, and form reasoned conclusions. According to Paul and Elder (2006), critical thinkers “raise vital questions, gather and assess relevant information, and come to well-reasoned conclusions.”

2. Why Integrate Critical Thinking in ELT

- **Improves language skills:** Learners engage more deeply with language when they analyze and evaluate texts or arguments.
- **Fosters learner autonomy:** Students become independent thinkers and decision-makers.
- **Promotes active learning:** Encourages participation, collaboration, and exploration of diverse perspectives.

3. Strategies for Teaching Critical Thinking in ELT

a) Socratic Questioning



Teachers can stimulate critical discussion through open-ended questions such as:

- "What do you think the author's intention is?"
- "Do you agree with this viewpoint? Why or why not?"

This strategy encourages deeper engagement with reading and listening materials.

b) Debates and Discussions

Organizing debates on global issues (e.g., climate change, social media) helps students practice persuasive language, use evidence, and evaluate arguments.

Example:

Topic – "Should mobile phones be allowed in schools?"

- Group A: Proponents
- Group B: Opponents
- Outcome: Students present structured arguments, counterarguments, and conclusions.

c) Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

PBL places students in real-world scenarios where they must use English to solve problems collaboratively.

Example:

Task – "Design an eco-friendly school"

- Skills: Vocabulary for environment, modal verbs, presentation skills
- Thinking: Research, critical evaluation of solutions, teamwork

d) Analyzing Texts and Media

Students can examine biased news articles, social media posts, or advertisements to identify persuasive language, logical fallacies, and hidden messages.

e) Reflective Journals

Encouraging students to write journals on their learning process promotes metacognition—thinking about thinking. Prompts include:



- “What did I learn today?”
- “What would I do differently next time?”

Conclusion

Integrating critical thinking into English Language Teaching enriches both language acquisition and cognitive development. Through inquiry-based tasks, reflective activities, and meaningful communication, learners develop into thoughtful, articulate, and responsible global citizens. Educators should continuously seek innovative strategies to balance language instruction with the cultivation of critical and independent thought.

References

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