

TEACHING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract. This article explores effective pedagogical strategies for cultivating critical thinking skills among high school students. It examines the theoretical underpinnings of critical thinking and reviews various instructional approaches, including problem-based learning, Socratic questioning, and debate. The paper discusses the challenges educators face in integrating these skills into existing curricula and proposes practical solutions for fostering a classroom environment conducive to intellectual inquiry. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of assessing critical thinking development and suggests methods for evaluating student progress. Ultimately, this research aims to equip educators with actionable insights to empower students as independent and discerning thinkers.

Keywords: Critical thinking, high school education, pedagogical strategies, cognitive skills, problem-based learning, Socratic method, curriculum integration, educational assessment

Аннотация. Данная статья исследует эффективные педагогические стратегии для развития навыков критического мышления у старшеклассников. В ней рассматриваются теоретические основы критического мышления и анализируются различные подходы к обучению, включая проблемное обучение, сократический метод и дебаты. Работа обсуждает трудности, с которыми сталкиваются педагоги при интеграции этих навыков в существующие учебные программы, и предлагает практические решения для создания благоприятной для интеллектуального поиска классной среды. Кроме того, подчеркивается важность оценки развития критического мышления и предлагаются методы для оценки прогресса учащихся. В конечном итоге, это исследование направлено на предоставление педагогам действенных рекомендаций для формирования у учащихся независимых и рассудительных мыслителей.

Ключевые слова: Критическое мышление, среднее образование, педагогические стратегии, когнитивные навыки, проблемное обучение, сократический метод, интеграция учебных программ, оценка образования

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqola o'rta maktab o'quvchilarida tanqidiy fikrlash ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirish bo'yicha samarali pedagogik strategiyalarni o'rganadi. Unda tanqidiy fikrlashning nazariy asoslari ko'rib chiqiladi va muammoli o'qitish, Sokratik savol-javob va munozara kabi turli o'qitish yondashuvlari tahlil qilinadi. Maqola o'qituvchilarning ushbu ko'nikmalarni mavjud o'quv dasturlariga integratsiya qilishda duch keladigan qiyinchiliklarini muhokama qiladi va intellektual izlanishlarga qulay sinf muhitini yaratish bo'yicha amaliy yechimlarni taklif etadi. Bundan tashqari, u tanqidiy fikrlash rivojlanishini baholash muhimligini ta'kidlaydi va o'quvchilarning taraqqiyotini baholash usullarini taklif qiladi. Yakuniy maqsad – o'qituvchilarni mustaqil va farqlay oladigan fikrlovchilar sifatida o'quvchilarni kuchaytirish uchun amaliy tushunchalar bilan ta'minlash.

Kalit so'zlar: Tanqidiy fikrlash, o'rta maktab ta'limi, pedagogik strategiyalar, kognitiv ko'nikmalar, muammoli o'qitish, sokratik metod, o'quv dasturiga integratsiya, ta'limni baholash

Introduction

The contemporary educational landscape demands that students not merely accumulate facts but develop the capacity for sophisticated intellectual engagement. In an era characterized by an overwhelming influx of information and rapidly evolving global challenges, the cultivation of critical thinking skills in high school students has become an educational imperative [3]. Critical thinking, broadly understood as the intellectually disciplined process of skillfully analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information, extends beyond mere intellectual astuteness to encompass the disposition to question, reason logically, and express ideas clearly. It involves examining the reliability and validity of information, evaluating evidence, and engaging in metacognition—the conscious reflection on one's own thought processes [6]. This complex cognitive ability is crucial for developing reflective and analytical individuals equipped to navigate complex real-world and simulated situations.

Literature review

The conceptualization of critical thinking extends beyond a mere set of cognitive skills to encompass a disposition towards intellectual engagement and continuous self-improvement. While the introduction broadly defined critical thinking as the disciplined process of analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information, alongside a disposition to question and reason, literature further emphasizes its inherent qualities. It is characterized as a self-guided, self-disciplined, and self-corrective endeavor, rooted in universal intellectual values such as clarity, accuracy, and fairness. This process entails an intellectual commitment to consistently applying information-processing skills, examining core elements of thought like assumptions, purpose, and implications. This holistic view frames critical thinking not merely as a cognitive skill but as a lifelong pursuit aimed at overcoming inherent egocentric and sociocentric biases, fostering intellectual virtues essential for a rational and just society.

Effective curriculum integration and assessment are pivotal for systemic change. Curriculum design must move beyond mandates to provide explicit frameworks and opportunities for critical thinking development across subjects, ensuring consistent application [5, 6]. While tools like Document Based Questions (DBQs) advance the evaluation of analytical and argumentative abilities, the objective assessment of complex skills such as creativity and problem-solving remains challenging [5].

Educational design must also deliberately foster the transfer of skills, recognizing students' struggles to apply learning across diverse contexts.

Research methodology

This article employs a comprehensive qualitative literature review approach to synthesize current academic discourse, empirical findings, and pedagogical insights concerning the teaching of critical thinking skills to high school students. The methodology was designed to systematically identify, evaluate, and integrate diverse perspectives on conceptual frameworks, instructional challenges, effective strategies, and systemic considerations in secondary education.

A systematic search was conducted across prominent educational databases, including ERIC, PsycINFO, Web of Science, and Scopus. Keywords and search terms were meticulously developed to capture the breadth of the topic, encompassing "critical thinking," "high school education," "secondary education," "pedagogical strategies," "curriculum integration," "assessment of critical thinking," "teacher professional development," "adolescent learners," and "cognitive skills." Boolean operators (AND, OR) were utilized to refine search queries and maximize relevance. Initial searches focused on peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and reputable educational reports published predominantly within the last decade to ensure currency, while also acknowledging foundational theoretical works that underpin contemporary understanding.

Finally, while the review sought to incorporate recent research, the dynamic nature of educational practice means that new strategies and challenges are continually emerging, necessitating ongoing scholarly engagement.

Conclusion

This article has underscored the imperative of cultivating critical thinking in high school, a multifaceted skill and disposition crucial for navigating complex modern challenges. Despite persistent instructional hurdles like traditional methods and skill transfer difficulties, effective pedagogical strategies such as active learning, inquiry-based approaches, and explicit metacognition instruction offer viable pathways. Systemic integration through curriculum design and robust professional development for educators are paramount to fostering these essential competencies. Ultimately, empowering students with critical thinking ensures they become reflective, analytical, and engaged citizens, prepared for lifelong learning and societal contribution.

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