ПЕДАГОГІКА І ПСИХОЛОГІЯ РОЗВИТКУ ТВОРЧОЇ ОСОБИСТОСТІ

METHODOLOGICAL TECHINQUES OF DEVELOPING CRETIVITY AND CRITICAL THINKING IN THE ENGLICH CLASSROOM

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Resume:

The objective of this article is to demonstrate the techniques that foster the formation and development of critical thinking skills in a learner and provide a creative atmosphere in the English classroom. The research focuses on the benefits of short-classroom, easily-prepared language activities helping to develop creativity and critical thinking in a learner and provide a creative atmosphere in class as well as recommendations how to incorporate them into a learning environment and thus to supplement the longer teaching procedures that make up the main body of the English course. The methods of research involve analyzing and generalizing pedagogical and methodological literature on the issue of "critical thinking" as well as observation, induction, deduction, and the method of ideal modeling. Current approaches to the problem of critical thinking formation are considered; a set of teaching techniques that can be used at the English lessons with various age groups is suggested. Moreover, the latter can be adapted according to different language proficiency levels. The use of short-classroom language activities aimed at developing creativity and critical thinking at the English lessons not only helps improve students' use of language and their communication skills, but also makes lessons much more effective, entertaining, and enjoyable.

Key words:

creativity, critical thinking, short-classroom language activities, communication skills, methodological techniques.

Анотація:

Єлісєєв Ігор, Надольська Юлія. Методичні прийоми розвитку креативності та критичного мислення на заняттях з англійської мови

У статті продемонстровано методичні прийоми, які сприяють формуванню і розвитку навичок критичного мислення в учнів і створюють творчу атмосферу на уроці англійської мови. Дослідження зосереджено на перевагах коротких мовленнєвих завдань, які допомагають розвинути творчі здібності та критичне мислення в учнів і створюють творчу атмосферу на уроці, а також на рекомендаціях, як включити їх в навчальне середовище і, таким чином, доповнити більш тривалі навчальні процедури, які складають основну частину курсу англійської мови. Методи дослідження містять аналіз і узагальнення педагогічної та методичної літератури з проблеми «критичного мислення», а також спостереження, індукцію, дедукцію і метод моделювання. Розглянуто сучасні підходи до проблеми формування критичного мислення. Запропоновано методичні прийоми формування критичного мислення, які можна використовувати на уроках англійської мови з різними віковими групами різних рівнів володіння англійською мовою. Визначено, що використання особливих методичних прийомів, спрямованих на розвиток творчих здібностей і критичного мислення на уроках англійської мови не тільки допомагає учням поліпшити їх комунікативні навички, але й робить уроки більш ефективними, цікавими і приємними.

Ключові слова:

креативність, критичне мислення, короткотривалі мовленнєві вправи, комунікативні навички, методичні прийоми.

The relevance of the research topic is due to the fact that developing such skills as flexibility, fluency, complexity, originality, curiosity, risk taking, elaboration and imagination are important for the development of learner's creativity. Challenging questions or open-ended questions alongside with choosing appropriate strategies and teaching techniques with various games and activities, short-classroom ones in particular, develop critical thinking and creativity that gives a rise to individual ability to think and make correct decisions independently.

The aim of the article is to demonstrate the techniques that foster the formation and development of critical thinking skills in a learner and provide a creative atmosphere in the English classroom.

The tradition of teaching critical thinking goes back to the early 20th cent. It was introduced by the American philosopher, psychologist and educator John Dewey (1859–1952) who is widely recognized as the father of critical thinking in education. The technology for development of critical thinking through writing and reading was suggested by the International Reading Association of the University of Northern Iowa and Hobart and William Smith Colleges. The authors are Charles Temple, Ginny Steel, Kurt Meredith. This technology is a system of strategies and methodological techniques designed for use in various subject areas, types and forms of work (Templ,1998).

History of critical thinking as a concept in British and American higher education is outlined and related to Bloom's taxonomy of lower-order and higher-order thinking skills. J. S. Renzulli (Renzulli, 2011) emphasized the importance of developing learner's creativity. Creative skills can be formed by asking open-ended questions or challenging questions, with various games or activities, and everyday events that learners experience. Also J. Duchovičová (Duchovičová, 2017) emphasised the importance of choosing appropriate strategies and teaching techniques that develop critical thinking, creativity

and autonomous learning. E. Reid and E. Kováčiková touched the problems of techniques supporting high level thinking (Reid, Kováčiková, 2018).

In relation to learners, the use of critical thinking technology allows:
- to increase the efficiency of information perception;
- to increase interest, both in the studied material and in the learning process itself;
- to be able to think critically;
- to highlight causal relationships;
- to be able to work in collaboration with others;
- to reject unnecessary or incorrect information;
- to understand how different pieces of information relate to each other.

Using critical thinking technology regularly, the teacher:
- knows how to create an atmosphere of openness and responsible cooperation in the classroom;
- uses a learning model and a system of effective methods that contribute to the development of critical thinking and independence in the learning process;
- becomes a practitioner who knows how to competently analyze his/her activities.

The aim of the article involves the following *specific tasks*:
1) to analyze the concept of «critical thinking»;
2) to consider techniques for development of critical thinking at the English language lessons;
3) to carry out practical assignments to develop critical thinking and creativity.
4) to make recommendations for teachers.

The research material includes pedagogical and methodological literature on critical thinking and creativity development, and materials in teaching methodology created by the authors of the article.

Research methods used in the article are as follows:

1. Studying, analyzing and generalizing pedagogical and methodological literature on «critical thinking».

2. Observation; hypothetical-deductive method, as a way of constructing and justifying scientific knowledge; inductive method, as a logical research method associated with generalizing the results of observations; deductive method, as a process of logical inference; the method of ideal modeling, when models appear in the form of proposals, classification, development of skills.

The basis of any education is a human language development. A foreign language has unlimited opportunities for humanitarian upbringing of learners and thus involving them to a foreign language culture. Nowadays a foreign language is both a source of receiving professional information and providing communication. But the communication is considered to be effective when a human has got and transmitted information correctly. Thereby, a communicative language competence is effective when a human possesses critical thinking. Modern school is aimed at having a habit of every learner to actively take part in important team decision making, to form, express, defend his/her own point of view and respect that one which differs. According to A. Tofller (Toffler, 1974), the technologies of the future do not need millions of people ready to perform endless monotonous work in unison or carry out an order without a twinkling of an eye, but those who can make critical decisions, find their own ways in a new surrounding, set relations in the reality that is changing fast.

Many definitions for critical thinking have been suggested by scholars and educators; let us mention a few names: M. Lipman (Lipman, 1991), S. P. Norris and R. Ennis (Paul, Elder, 2002), and H. Siegel (Starkey, 2004). Critical thinking as information-based thinking, conscious perception of their own intellectual activity and the activities of other people, contributes to the development of learners' ability to logically analyze educational information and use their personal approach, the ability to raise new questions, find arguments, and make independent thoughtful decisions. «Critical thinking» is largely understood as logical skills that can be «tacked onto other learning» (Reid, Kováčiková, 2018). Norris (Norris & Ennis, 1989) explains critical thinking as «a rational decision about what to do or what to believe».

However, there is not much difference among these definitions. As L. Elder and R. Paul (Elder & Paul, 1994) state that critical thinking refers to people's ability to take responsibility for their own thinking and develop appropriate criteria and standards for analyzing their own thinking. Moreover, as V. P. Maiorana (Maiorana, 1992) maintains, critical thinking aims at achieving understanding, and evaluating different perspectives, and solving problems.

D. Perkins (Brandt, 1989), who proposed creativity through design, explains that «the creative thinker must be critically aware, because creative thinking, except in the simplest situations, involves generating and moving opportunities and reworking them». Not only a wide range of knowledge, but also thinking process can impact on learner's ability to learn a foreign language quickly and effectively, while critical thinking makes the process more enjoyable and the course more meaningful for the learners. They are becoming much more motivated and inspired by the lesson.

A. Uberman considers games as effective tools for learning because they offer students a

hypothetical environment in which they can explore alternative decisions without the risk of failure. Thought and action are combined into purposeful behavior to accomplish a goal. Playing games teaches us how to strategize, to consider alternatives, and to think flexibly (Uberman, 1998). We think that providing a constructivist classroom environment through games, learners and their learning are becoming central.

It should be emphasized that people who think critically try to live reasonably, rationally and empathically. By thinking about everything objectively, they are able to easily solve complex problems and tasks, process information, and take opinions into account. It should be noted that we do not need critical or creative thinking to make the right decision in our daily communication, while still a number of functional informational or situational clichés require a lot of thought to draw a conclusion. Language is not only grammatical structures and vocabulary; it is the embodiment of cultural and national values. Thus, languages are culturally determined. Since cultures are different, traditions and mentalities are reflected in the language, its vocabulary, grammatical structures, modality, etc. You cannot think in the language you are learning the same way as in your mother tongue. People with critical thinking are used to confusing switching between languages.

The study by R. Mahyuddin et al. (Mahyuddin, 2004) implies that «language learners with critical thinking ability are able to think critically and creatively to achieve curriculum goals; are able to make decisions and solve problems; are able to use their thinking skills and understand the language or its content; are able to view thinking skills as continuous learning; and, finally, are intellectually, physically, emotionally, and spiritually well-balanced». We would like to add, that learners with critical thinking ability are well socialized beyond the boundaries of the classroom.

The formation of critical thinking includes the following stages:
1) updating knowledge, arousing interest in the topic, setting goals for a particular material;
2) understanding new information, critical reading and writing;
3) reflection, forming personal point of view on the material being studied;
4) generalization and evaluation of information (problems), identification of ways to solve it, identification of one's own capabilities.

Educational and cognitive activity of a learner based on critical thinking is considered as an important didactic direction, the dominant of which are: search for a clear question, justification, approval, formation of alternatives; striving for maximum subject reliability; using sources or linking

to them; following the main goal; holistic consideration of the situation; keeping the focus of the original (main) task; choosing a point of view, personal attitude and its change if there are sufficient grounds; consistent consideration of parts of a complex whole; influence of worldview and tolerance to other feelings, level of knowledge and depth of judgment, predisposition to use critical thinking skills in life.

When teaching learners critical thinking the teacher helps them look at any life situation from different points of view by asking questions: Why is this so? Who is favored in this situation? What can one find out? What can one do? The critical learner does not complain about the problem, but tries to solve it.

Methods of critical thinking form the ability to work in pairs, small groups, quickly and efficiently process any text, and flexibly enter the situation. The creative problem-based nature of English language teaching contributes to the development of imagination and a sense of novelty.

We are confident that it is very important how a teacher starts the lesson. The beginning of the lesson is the activation of the thinking process. Learners' understanding of what they will do in the classroom and how well they will do it depends on how the educational goal is set. The teacher should use the methods that allow them to set their own goal based on the topic of the lesson. Here we suggest using such methods as «brainstorming» and «forecasting». We believe that a teacher should use various methods, from the simplest to the most complex: from those that involve working in a team to those that require a certain level of self-organization, when learners first work with the teacher as a partner, and then in groups on their own. For example, when in team groups we offer «hints» that relate not only to the content, but also to the procedure. Using the «gallery overview», learners develop their skills of linking new information with the products of their activities. The game «Magic Microphone» teaches express a positive or negative reaction when conducting a discussion on a burning topic or problem. Having a certain life experience and a point of view on the world around them, learners can implement their ideas through creative projects. The implementation of the project helps them analyze new information, read additional literature, train and show their leadership skills. To make an interesting and exciting project, you need to think critically, respond quickly to opponents' questions, and take an active public position. The following are examples from our practice on working with certain topics:

Learning Foreign Languages:
· Make a list of ideas on how you can make learning English more like learning your own language.

· Make up a project «What makes a good teacher of a foreign language».

School Life:

· Agree or disagree with the following statements: «Classmates are of more important influence than parents on a child's success at school»; «When you are having a fun you are not learning»; «All you need is ignorance and confidence then success is sure» (Mark Twain); «Success makes life easier, it doesn't make living easier» (Bruce Springsteen).

Crime and Punishment:

· Do you agree or disagree with the following sayings: «Punishment should fit the crime», «An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth»?

Leadership:

· Create a portrait of a leader as you see him/her to be. Explain your choice.
· Discuss with your partner who can be a leader in your class. Give reasons to support your answer.

Thus, one can conclude that interactive methods in the educational process allow to intensify the process of understanding and creative use of knowledge in solving practical problems; learners form productive approaches to mastering information; establish friendly relations with the teacher; increase motivation in solving the problems discussed; give an emotional boost to their research activities. Moreover, in an interactive atmosphere, each learner is successful, benefits from the result of teamwork, and the whole process becomes interesting.

Developing Creativity through Short-Classroom Language Activities

In English classrooms, creativity is mainly manifested through productive skills: speaking and writing. Pair work, group work, finishing unfinished stories, role-playing games, and simulations would be suitable techniques for practicing speech activity. Learners should be encouraged to speak fluently about various topics, such as their dreams, problems, feelings, ideas, life experiences, etc. Writing can be practiced with older learners in the form of completing or beginning a story, self-made stories, plans, poems, inventions, etc. Project is a great technique for developing creativity and a high level of thinking. However, age and proficiency must be taken into account.

Sometimes when planning a lesson we find ourselves in need for such items as:

1) a quick warming-up at the beginning to get learners into the right mood for learning;
2) an idea for a brief vocabulary review before starting a new text;
3) a light filler to provide relief after a period of intense effort and concentration;
4) a brief orientation activity to prepare a change of mood or topic;
5) a game or amusing item to round off the lesson with a smile.

A teacher may find short-classroom language activities useful in the following situations: to supply extra content for a lesson, or an English club, or an English party; for helping a group of new students to get to know each other, or for keeping students profitably busy when the teacher unexpectedly has extra time.

Each of following techniques is described briefly, with examples in most cases. Concerning learning value, we feel strongly that even in brief, enjoyable transition activities the learners can and should continue to practice, learn, increase knowledge and improve thinking. In most cases, activities are suitable for a variety of levels, from elementary to advanced one. The teacher is probably the best judge of the appropriateness of a particular activity for his students. The following activities are designed to be completed in about five minutes of the lesson, but some can be even shorter and others can be lengthened. For the most part, the only materials for the teacher are the blackboard and the chalk, and for the learners – their current textbooks, pens and notebooks. When integrating assignments into a lesson, the teacher should try to link each short assignment to what came before or after, by topic, mood or language. In order to explain the organization of an activity, a teacher should give an example of what is to be done. However, once the activity is clear, it is advantageous if the learner(s) can take over the teacher's role.

Now we present these activities with procedures:

1. If I Had a Million Dollars

Aims: to practice conditionals; to develop speaking skills on the basis of imaginative situations.

Procedure: Tell the students to imagine that a million dollars (or an equally large sum in the local currency) is to be won by the person who can think of the most original (or worthwhile, or exciting) thing to do with the money. Listen to their ideas and decide who has won.

2. If I Were Here

Aims: to practice conditionals; to develop the skill of sharing ideas.

Procedure: The students note down the answer to the question: «If I weren`t here, where would you be?» Share ideas. Then introduce a slight variation: «If you weren`t here, where would you like to be?»

Other similar questions: «If you weren`t yourself, who would you like to be?» Or: "If you weren`t living now, when would you have liked to live?"

3. Imaginative Descriptions

Aim: to develop speaking skills of description

Preparation: Any two pictures large enough for the class to see clearly.

Procedure: Hold up two pictures chosen at random and ask the students to suggest a possible relationship between them. Encourage imaginative, even ridiculous ideas. For example, a picture of a car and a packet of cigarettes. Possible answers:

Student A: They are both dangerous to other people, not only to the driver or to the smoker.

Student B: They give a lot of taxes to the government.

Student C: The driver of that car wants to stop smoking so that he can pay for the car.

Student D: I don't like it when people smoke in a car.

Note: The connections can be personal, or they can be more objective and part of other people's experience, as in the examples above.

Variations: You can ask the students to imagine a connection between any two items: picture/picture; text/text; picture/text. The texts can be short or long, written or spoken.

4. Three-Picture Story

Aim: to develop fluency of speech and imagination.

Preparation: Select three pictures which are large enough to be seen by the whole class. The first one should show one or two people. The second and the third ones should be an object, a situation or an event. The second and third ones do not need to show the people in the first picture.

Procedure: Display the first picture. Ask the students to call out anything they want to say about it. Your role is to stimulate observation and invention and then to gather the suggestions and to put them into a story form. As the students offer more ideas, you add them to the story, continually retelling it from the beginning. After a few moments, you can display the second picture and later the third. As you see your five minutes coming to an end, ask the students to suggest a conclusion. Try to retell the completed story before the time is up. This is an example of how the story might begin:

Teacher (Showing the first picture): What do you see in the picture?

Student: There are two people.

Teacher: Yes. Anything else?

Student: They are a man and a woman. They are lovers.

Teacher: What are their names?

Student: James and Samantha.

Teacher: Well. Where are they? What time is it?

Student: It's evening. It's perhaps in the country or a park.

Teacher (Assuming a story-telling style): Well, it was late in the evening. James and Samantha didn't know where they were, it was so dark. They thought they must be in the country.

Teacher (Showing the second picture): What do you see in the picture?

Student: It's a car. It's going very fast.

Teacher: It was late in the evening. James and Samantha didn`t know where they were, it was so dark. They thought they must be in the country. Suddenly they saw a car. It was travelling very fast, etc.

Since discussions are flexible and momentous in the range of topics and the format, they can inspire learners' enthusiasm to critically think upon topics from different perspectives. To do so successfully, learners need to work in pairs and groups to describe the content of discussion, to define, personalize, to discuss the problem and its alternative solutions, and finally to evaluate the whole process.

5. Invention Technique: Reversing

Aim: to develop speaking skills of discussion

Procedure: Write the name of a manufactured product on the board, for example, a book. Ask the students to list the characteristics of a book. For example:

· it has words;
· it has pages;
· it is made of paper;
· it is printed;
· you can buy it in a bookshop;

Now ask the students to try to imagine complete opposites of all the characteristics of the object. For example:

· it has no words in it, only pictures/symbols/numbers;
· it doesn't have pages;
· it isn't made of paper, it's made of steel/rubber/plastic/air;
· it's written/painted;
· you can't buy it in a bookshop, it's free.

Ask the students if they can design a new object by choosing some of these «opposite» ideas and seeing if any of them could make sense. For example:

· It could look like a book but it could be empty like a box. You could hide things in it.
· It could look like a book but it could be a computer.
· It could look like a book but it could be a sandwich box.
· It could look like a book but be solid. Supermarkets could give them away and you could put a lot of on your shelves and people would think you were intelligent.
· It could look like a book but be television. Children would buy them and their parents and teachers would think they were reading when really they would be watching television programs.

6. Amazing Facts

Aim: to develop listening skills

Procedure: Your students and you may like the idea of having a regular five-minute slot in your lesson called «Amazing facts». In this session you have five minutes in which to inform the class about

something they may not be familiar with and which is likely to amaze them. The obvious source of information is the Guinness book of world records, available in most countries, including Ukraine. Books of statistical information from governmental and non-governmental sources or from specialist institutions are another source. Here is a brief example: «People often say that it always rains in Britain, but the annual rainfall in London is only 61 cm. In Brussels it is 72 cm., in Lisbon it is 68 cm., in Milan it is 94 cm. and in Geneva it is 86 cm».

7. Selling Freezers to Eskimos

Aim: to develop listening skills.

Preparation: You will need a picture of an object.

Procedure: Give the picture to a student. Challenge him/her to «sell» it to the class by arguing why they really need it. This activity can be done seriously or humorously. For example:

Student (holding up a picture of a home knitting machine): We are all tired at the end of the day. We can watch television or we can go to the entertaining centre with our friends. But if we go to the entertaining centre every night it costs a lot of money. Knitting is the answer! Knitting is relaxing. We can give the jerseys, etc. to our friends or we can sell them. So we can relax, express ourselves and make money! Who wants one?

The students then decide whether the sales talk was persuasive or not.

8. Sentence Starters

Aims: to develop writing, speaking and listening skills

Procedure: Write on the board: ***Being young is…*** Ask the students to call out what they think could be added to this sentence beginning. If there is time, ask the students to work with a neighbour, to select four of the lines, put them in order and then to find a fifth line which they feel makes the writing more like a poem. For example:

Being young is being with friends.
Being young is losing friends.
Being young is taking examinations.
Being young is wondering.
Whether there will be a future.

Other Sentence Starters: (1) *Being old is* ... ; (2) *Boredom is* ... ; (3) *Love is* ... ; (4) *A friend is* ... ; (5) *Without you* ... ; (6) *I remember* ... ; (7) *I've forgotten* ... ; (8) *I wish I* ... ; (9) *If I could ... then I would* ... ; (10) *When I'm 64 I'll* ... .

Variation: Dictate the beginning of a sentence. Each student writes it down and then finishes it as he/she wishes.

9. Comparing Things

Aims: to practice comparatives, «both»; opposites/similarities.

Procedure: Present the class with two different, preferably, concrete nouns, such as: an elephant and a pencil; the Prime Minister and a flower; a car and a person, preferably using vocabulary the class has recently learnt. Students suggest ways of comparing them. Usually it is best to define in what way you want them to compare, for example, by using comparatives: *A pencil is thinner than an elephant.* Or by finding differences: *The Prime Minister is noisy in Britain and a flower is silent.* Or similarities: *Both a car and a person need fuel to keep them going.*

Variation: You can give a whole set of related nouns together, for example, names of different foods, animals, household objects, or well-known people. Then each student can choose which two of them they wish to compare in each response.

If you have a little more time, start by electing a set of such items from the students, and writing them up at random on the board. As each student suggests a comparison, link the two items with a line. Then you can go back later and see if participants can remember what sentence is represented by each line.

One can provide many more techniques suitable for practicing communicative activities involving different forms of thinking conceptualizing of which is hierarchical, whereby complex thoughts take a higher and more valuable place than cognitively simpler ones, and it is important to master cognitively lower thoughts before progressing to higher ones.

According to P. Santos (Santos, 2016), the development of thinking skills should be an additional goal of teaching English along with the development of communicative and intercultural competencies. We believe that discussions, debates, and criticism are the main techniques for developing high-level thinking skills.

Conclusion

English lessons foster critical thinking through a variety of material and interactive techniques. In this case, English is both a goal and a means of teaching. When completing an assignment, learners should understand the main idea, recreate the logic of presentation, highlight the problem, compare it with what they have already learned in this area, and determine what additional information one needs to draw a conclusion and formulate the point of view on a specific question or problem. As one can see, this requires the formation of certain intellectual skills. Learners should be able to analyze the collected data, assess their significance, choose the necessary ones, structure the information, then synthesize it to use it in solving the problem, argue their point of view. These are all critical thinking skills which are so important for everyone to acquire especially nowadays, in terms of war, when media is full of fakes and russia fascist propaganda.

It is highly recommended that teachers assist their learners to become effective critical thinkers, i.e. to help them acquire both the critical thinking skills and critical attitudes to deal with the changes and challenges given rise in the information age.

The techniques described above have many advantages in the development of high-level thinking skills – analysis, evaluation, creativity, and critical thinking.

Using short language activities in the classroom not only helps to improve the learners' communicative skills, but also it makes lessons much more effective, entertaining and enjoyable. Higher thinking operations belong to the most valuable, and need to be developed through different educational practices, short-classroom activities in particular, as they provide plenty of opportunities to enhance critical thinking.

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