Liudmyla Roienko
Senior Lecturer, The Department of Philology and Translation
Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design (Kyiv)

DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

The study of critical thinking skills is of great interest to scholars and is one of the dominant areas of research in educational contexts in different countries. New information technologies and globalisation processes require the development of an active creative personality as a prerequisite for life success. These variables require new skills, such as critical thinking, as the basis of human education.

Why is critical thinking important in today's world? Critical thinking is connected with the following aspects: problem-solving, lifelong learning, autonomy, the ability to work independently, collaboration, the ability to work in teams, multi-perspective thinking, seeing the world through someone else's eyes, employment, making the world a better place.

The concept of critical thinking skills focuses entirely on a person's ability to correctly evaluate certain types of statements. From this point of view, a person is a critical thinker if he or she has the skills and abilities necessary to evaluate statements correctly.

Critical thinking can also be described as a scientific method that ordinary people apply to the ordinary world. This is true because critical thinking is consistent with the generally accepted method of scientific research: a question is posed and a hypothesis is formulated, evidence is researched and collected, the hypothesis is tested against the evidence, and a conclusion is drawn at the end of the process. All research skills depend on the ability to think critically. Thus, critical thinking is scientific thinking .

D. Kluster introduced the most specific and meaningful classification of the stages of critical thinking formation, which is widely used in general education institutions.

The first stage is actualisation, during which it is best to use the 'brainstorming' technique, which requires students to review their existing knowledge on the topic, set goals, objectives, etc.

The next step in developing critical thinking in foreign language lessons is comprehension. This stage is characterised by a more complex structure and more difficult tasks to perform, and it takes up the bulk of the lesson. It is here that learners move on to the direct acquaintance with information and its processing.

The final stage is reflection, which is based on a discussion of the topic presented. At the same time, students have the opportunity to evaluate their own views and habits and compare them with those of other students.

Students should learn to think as members of a community and express their thoughts and experiences freely. For critical thinking, it is important to recognise the importance of creative thinking; be able to identify problems and focus on the relevant topics and issues needed to solve them; distinguish between relevant and irrelevant conclusions; in the absence of sufficient evidence, be able to find another way to solve a problem; anticipate the consequences of alternative actions; be able to justify your decision; be able to explain alternative ways of solving a problem; identify valid or false assumptions; develop sound and convincing arguments; distinguish between primary and secondary sources of information, identify their possible bias on important issues; draw conclusions and generalisations (Khodakovska, 2017).

How to think critically. Here are the steps a student can take to use critical thinking to solve problems in their studies: 1. Identify the problem. 2. Draw conclusions about why the problem exists and how it can be solved. 3. Gather information or data about a problem through research. 4. Organise and sort the data and findings. 5. Develop and implement solutions. 6. Analyse which solutions worked and which did not. 7. Identify ways to improve the solution.

Some approaches to adding critical thinking activities in the foreign language classroom:

1) playing role plays and verbal activities. Here it is recommended to put the students in small groups or teams to maximize speaking time for all, vary the tasks to make it interesting, give students choices, use active listening.

2) problem-solving and puzzles. In this case it is recommended to give different problems to different students, allow for open-ended solutions (more than one "right"

answer), encourage respect for other points of view and ways of thinking, let students create puzzles and problems too (Nguyen Thi Cam Le, 2005, 6).

While organising activities it is important for a teacher to ask thought-provoking wh- questions that encourage students to think deeply and require complex language to respond, not just "yes" or "no". The examples of possible questions:

Analysis Questions: Why did the main character behave in such a way? What are the reasons to do something? What is the main concern related to …?

Hypothesis Questions: What would happen if …? What will happen if?

Evaluation Questions: Is it logical or illogical to do something? What is your solution to the conflict (problem)? What are the advantages or disadvantages for something?

Classroom climate contributes to critical thinking. In an open and democratic classroom, students feel free to express their opinions and feel confident doing so.

Thus, the technology of forming students' critical thinking in the process of learning a foreign language involves the formation of cognitive interest by developing internal motivation for purposeful learning, supporting students' cognitive activity, encouraging them to compare the information received with personal experience and forming analytical judgements on its basis.

REFERENCES:

1. Ходаковська О. (2017) Впровадження методів критичного мислення на заняттях з іноземної мови. [Електронний ресурс] Режим доступу: Khodakovska_355-367.pdf Дата звернення 30.03.2025.

2. Nguyen Thi Cam Le (2005) From passive to participant active thinker learner-centered approach to materials development. *English teaching Forum*. №3, Vol. 43. P. 2-9.