



YOUNGSTERS' CRITICAL THINKING DEVELOPMENT

Petrosyan Nelya Valerevna

Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages, Senior Teacher

e-mail: nelly_petrosyan@mail.ru

Index:140100,Phone number: +998933319570

Abstract

This article is dedicated to the formation of critical thinking abilities of youngsters. The digital society aggressively imposes its own standards of living on people. The amount of information around us is growing exponentially. Even adults sometimes find it difficult to separate the necessary from the unnecessary, the truth from the lie. Being constantly involved in the Internet, people lose the purposefulness of thinking and activity, stop controlling themselves, wasting their mental strength on momentary, unnecessary things. It is even more difficult for children as immature rush to everything bright, dynamic and exciting. Despite the negative impact, Internet and mass media sources help to create critical thinking abilities of youngsters.

Keywords: Critical thinking, immature, modern techniques, digitalization, youngsters, consumption, Internet, evaluation, information

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqola yoshlarda tanqidiy fikrlash qobiliyatini shakllantirishga bag'ishlangan. Raqamli jamiyat agressiv ravishda odamlarga o'z hayot standartlarini qo'yadi. Atrofimizdagi ma'lumotlarning miqdori chidamli ravishda o'sib bormoqda. Hatto kattalar ham ba'zan keraksiz, haqiqatni yolg'ondan ajratish qiyin bo'lishi mumkin. Internetda doimo ishtirok etadigan odamlar fikrlash va faoliyatning maqsadga muvofiqligini yo'qotadilar, o'zlarini nazorat qilishni to'xtatadilar, ruhiy kuchlarini darhol, keraksiz narsalarga sarflaydilar. Bolalar va yoshlar uchun bu yanada murakkab, chunki ular yorqin, dinamik va hayajonli narsalarga shoshilishadi. Salbiy ta'sirga qaramasdan, Internet va ommaviy axborot vositalari yoshlarning tanqidiy fikrlash qobiliyatini rivojlantirishga yordam beradi.

Kalit so'zlar: Tanqidiy fikrlash, immaturlik, zamonaviy texnologiyalar, axborotlashtirish, yoshlar, iste'mol, Internet, baholash, axborot.





Аннотация

Данная статья посвящена формированию способностей к критическому мышлению у молодежи. Цифровое общество агрессивно навязывает людям свои собственные стандарты жизни. Объем информации вокруг нас растет в геометрической прогрессии. Даже взрослым иногда бывает трудно отделить необходимое от ненужного, правду от лжи. Будучи постоянно вовлеченными в Интернет, люди теряют целеустремленность мышления и деятельности, перестают контролировать себя, тратя свои душевные силы на сиюминутные, ненужные вещи. Для детей и молодежи это еще сложнее, так как они устремляются ко всему яркому, динамичному и захватывающему. Несмотря на негативное воздействие, Интернет и средства массовой информации помогают развивать у молодежи способности к критическому мышлению.

Ключевые слова: Критическое мышление, незрелость, современные технологии, информатизация, молодежь, потребление, Интернет, оценка, информация.

Introduction

Much has already been said and written about the negative impact of the Internet on younger generation. Nevertheless, public education continues to pursue a course towards informatization and digitalization. Students are placed in such conditions that without gadgets and the Internet, learning becomes impossible.

How can children survive in such conditions? Following the principle "you can't change the situation – change your attitude to it", the educational system offers to vaccinate children against all the evils of the information space – to form their critical thinking. It would seem that this is an excellent solution, because it is critical thinking that helps us to refrain from trusting dubious sources and keep ourselves under control without clicking on random links.

However, critical thinking is necessary not only for the reasonable consumption of Internet content and security in the network space. Children need it both in their studies and in building relationships with their peers. Such thinking is necessary to resist harmful influences, overcome obstacles, and adequately perceive one's own mistakes and failures. Without it, a reasonable choice, self-development and the achievement of serious goals are unthinkable. Obviously, people needed critical thinking at all times and somehow they developed it. But only now we are seeing how critical thinking is being forcibly and massively formed in children with the help of special technologies, starting from preschool age (Zair-Bek, 2004).





How does critical thinking work? Let's start with a little introspection. What do we do when we think critically? Here I advise you to postpone reading and answer this question to yourself. Since there are many teachers among our audience, it is convenient to present a check of student notebooks — it itself inclines us to critical thinking and here all its mechanics will be seen most vividly and demonstratively, as in the palm of your hand (Zelentsov, 2009).

So, you are checking your arithmetic homework. Reading the notes made by a student in a notebook, you mentally ask yourself questions. Are all the tasks completed? Are they solved correctly? If you do not have ready-made answers in front of your eyes, you will have to go all the way to solve each problem yourself. And even if you did it in advance, your preliminary actions are an integral part of the work review, and therefore a necessary component of critical thinking.

We go further. Are the explanations for the actions written correctly or has a plan for solving the problem been drawn up? Does the student fulfill your requirements for the design of the work? Are there any spelling or punctuation errors? What mark should be given to the student, taking into account his individual capabilities, progress and diligence? After all, the mark should encourage the child to continue working hard on himself and correcting shortcomings, and not drive him into despair. Perhaps you need to write some personal motivating or highlighting important points comment.

But even after setting a mark, you continue to reflect. Why did the student make this or that mistake? Perhaps there are so many shortcomings due to inattention? Of course, because he usually does not make such stupid mistakes, and this time the handwriting is kind of uneven, without effort, and the letter in the word is skipped, and he was sluggish in the first lesson today. Didn't get enough sleep because I sat down late for lessons yesterday? I'll have to talk to my mother. There is no last task in the other notebook. Couldn't decide or didn't write it down in the diary? And this student's decision went the wrong way from the very beginning. Why did he choose this option? What was his train of thought? What should be a competent work on the mistake made? What should be done to help the student understand and master this topic well?

As a result, you make decisions: to give one child a three for correctness and a five for accuracy — he clearly tried and surpassed himself in the beauty of writing; to check the entry in the diary of another; to leave the third after school to sort out an incorrectly solved problem. You ask the fourth one to additionally output a line of the number 8 — he began to write it very carelessly. With the fifth, you need to additionally work out the written division on sticks — I missed a zero twice in the private, I don't understand that the digit is empty and why this is so. And with a





beginner, you still need to think about how to start working on errors. This example clearly shows the characteristic features of critical thinking.

Features of critical thinking. You do not take the information on faith, but check it. If we are talking not just about data coming from outside, but about a certain product of mental activity (someone else's or your own), which in our example has become homework on arithmetic, then the course of thought itself is checked (the teacher solves the problem).

As can be seen from the example we are considering, developed critical thinking focuses not only on incoming information – it looks more broadly at its context, at what is behind the brackets: causes, goals, consequences, prospects, the ability to influence the development of events, and so on. Why did the student make a mistake? How can I help him learn this topic well? What is the correct mark to put? These are questions that illustrate this feature of critical thinking. A person sees an element (an object, a phenomenon, a fragment of information, a task) not in isolation, but in a system of related processes and phenomena. That is, critical thinking is inseparable from systemic thinking (Zelentsov, 2009).

Critical thinking involves not only the evaluation of information (right or wrong), but also the active development of thought (how to evaluate the work in order to motivate the student; how to explain to him the misunderstood material, and so on). That is, mature critical thinking is creative in nature. If this is not true, then what is true? If this choice or action is bad, then which one will be good and correct in this situation? If a mistake is made, how can I fix it? This leads to the conclusion that critical thinking is a necessary condition for solving new non-standard tasks.

Critical thinking presupposes the existence of an adequate internal coordinate system. To correctly evaluate the information, we compare it with certain criteria (in the example with checking notebooks, this is the correct answer, our own decision, and so on).

One of the definitions of critical thinking adopted in cognitive psychology is: "it is the process of evaluating or categorizing in terms of previously acquired basic knowledge." The basic knowledge in this case is the coordinate system in which we are looking for a place for a new one.

What is the basic knowledge in our example? Our knowledge of the subject being taught, as well as pedagogy and age psychology, an understanding of the methodology and logic of the elementary school arithmetic program, certain conclusions and effective techniques that we came to based on our own pedagogical experience, an understanding of the individual characteristics and life situations of our students, and so on. We understand that visual thinking prevails in children at primary school age.



We realize that without consolidation, skills are quickly destroyed. We know the methodology of mastering written division on sticks and clearly understand how the practice of consistent and conscious actions with sticks implies a correct understanding of the number of units of each category in the particular. We know that a particular student had to overcome himself in order to accurately arrange the work. And so on, and so on. And we use all this knowledge to properly evaluate the work done by the student and help him move on.

What happens if our coordinate system is not enough to uniquely qualify the incoming information? We try to supplement it, enrich it with new information (for example, we go deeper into the study of the methodology or ask the child himself, his mother, at what time he did his homework yesterday). Thus, our coordinate system is developing and improving, allowing us to solve more and more complex and diverse tasks.

And if the information that is subject to critical comprehension is beyond us, that is, there is no internal coordinate system necessary for its evaluation at all? If there is no place for this information at all in our picture of the world? Obviously, in this case, critical thinking cannot work, because it is devoid of any grounds. Let's assume as a thought experiment that you, an elementary school teacher, were asked to write a review for a doctoral dissertation on nuclear physics. Or to identify a malfunction in the aircraft engine. Or head the Ministry of Health. A sane person (he is also a person with developed critical thinking), having soberly assessed his capabilities, will refuse to perform such a task and will offer to entrust it to a specialist, that is, a person who has the necessary knowledge for solving an internal coordinate system.

And if the person is not sane? If, under the influence of vanity, fear of condemnation or external coercion, he frivolously takes up such work? The assessment of the information will be inadequate, the conclusions will be erroneous, the decisions will be unfounded or only visible. Such work will cause continuous harm to both the performer himself and the people around him, and the scale of this harm directly depends on the level and scale of the task itself.

When a person does not have enough resources to cope adequately with the situation, his psyche begins to defend itself. Regression occurs. Critical thinking is not able to solve the problem, and instead of it, pseudo-critical thinking is used-impulsive, controlled by emotions. A person denies everything, panics from the unsolvability of the problem, or trusts random opinions, the reliability or even plausibility of which is not able to assess. Anyone who does not have the critical thinking necessary to solve the tasks facing him becomes a convenient object of manipulation. And, finally, the most important thing. If this is really critical thinking aimed at finding the truth, it is





possible only when a person feels that he has sufficient grounds to make judgments about this matter or about his own and others' judgments in general. This means that he trusts himself, as a person stands on firm feet. That is, in order for genuine critical thinking to be possible, a person must have sufficient inner integrity and maturity that gives her the moral right to make any judgments with a clear conscience, not for show and for the sake of the value of the truth itself.

When does a person mature for critical thinking? The whole childhood is somehow a period of dependence on others, which is not accidental. It is thanks to this need of the child to depend on an adult (or, as psychoanalysts say, attachment) that it becomes possible to raise and educate children, transfer cultural and spiritual experience. This is a very important need, thanks to which human civilization, and humanity itself, is preserved and developed on Earth.

Childhood is a long way from complete psychological fusion with the mother, which we observe in a child of the first year of life, to psychological maturity and self-sufficiency. Imbued with knowledge, experience, values, relationships, ways of behavior in certain situations and all that is difficult to sort out on the shelves, but what is life in its entirety next to a strong and wise person, the child gradually acquires an inner core and spiritual strength, that is, the quality that is very much appreciated and called self-confidence. However, everything that he is able to do now has become possible because he has lived something similar together with a significant adult or next to him, being confident in his support or watching him and empathizing with him. It is no coincidence that it is so difficult to form self-confidence in an adult with the help of autosuggestion and other psychotherapeutic techniques. The work of a psychotherapist with a client who has such a request is always very long, the transformation of life is slow and unstable, with slips. It's like a crane from a fairy tale: if it pulls out its nose — its tail will get stuck, if it pulls out its tail — its nose will get stuck. This is because self-confidence does not appear overnight, but matures throughout childhood.

So, only by becoming an adult, a person acquires genuine critical thinking — or does not acquire it. It is unlikely that someone who is not confident in himself, is dependent, is afraid of someone else's assessment, or vice versa, is an arrogant and selfish person, for whom it seems more important than to be, and for whom the recognition of his own mistake is like the collapse of his personality. Of course, such people will condemn and criticize something, but the thinking that will work at the same time, as we have already found out, can only be called pseudo-critical, that is, a surrogate of real critical thinking. And it doesn't matter how old such a person is — 18 or 75; they are still easy to manipulate. The problem is that he never found inner





integrity and maturity. How to develop critical thinking in a child? At first glance, it seems that in order to educate a child's critical thinking, it is necessary to teach him as early as possible to identify any incoming information as true or false ("I agree–I disagree", "I believe–I don't believe"), to doubt everything that you see, hear and read. Then the child will form a habit or even a skill to think critically.

This path is often followed by those who develop and implement various "technologies for the development of critical thinking". In fact, this is a systematic training of entering a metaposition. Many exercises have been developed for this purpose. For example, a child reads a text and highlights in blue what he knows, in red-what he learned for the first time, and in black — what he does not agree with. Or a student is given a paragraph of a math textbook, built in the form of a story about guys solving examples, and the child needs to guess what grade the teacher gave to each of these guys. Or a task is offered where you need to assess whether the father of an imaginary family has correctly distributed the family budget. We can give other examples, but let's stop here.

Having analyzed, what was said earlier, we do not consider this approach appropriate. It will not bring the desired result and will not, as some hope, become an effective vaccination against manipulation in the future. It is like if we began to pull the sprout up, so that it would grow faster and bear fruit. The result will be the opposite — we will only pull out the plant by the root. Due to untimely, psychological inconsistency with age, such a training tactic can even cause harm. Let's explain why (Matyash, 2018). Earlier in the article, we saw that critical thinking is not just the level of development of a separate mental process. This is a phenomenon that is related not only to thinking, but also to the personality as a whole. We think it would not be a mistake to say that critical thinking can be considered as one of the criteria for personal maturity. It would be absurd to try to invent such a "technology" that will force a child to reach the psychological maturity of an adult already at preschool or primary school age — only time and life experience can do this. This means that it is a meaningless task to form a full — fledged critical thinking in a preschooler or a younger schoolboy with the help of certain techniques and exercises. It will be an illusion. According to the age of the child, to help the prerequisites of critical thinking to be formed: to maintain and develop natural curiosity, to lay strong systemic knowledge, to teach to see the relationships (causes and effects, chains of events, similarities and differences, etc.), as well as to develop the thinking characteristic of children at this age stage, to form the will and correct values.

With the beginning of school education, logical thinking begins to develop actively. But it must be based on sensory experience - it is this that gives logical categories and





reasoning weight and a sense of truth. Therefore, teaching subjects must be visual, otherwise there is a great danger of destroying this sense of truth, the emerging internal criterion of truth – the basis of critical thinking. This criterion is not purely logical – it is a special inner experience of the truth of a thought, decision, feeling, value as their correspondence to the inner picture of the world. Therefore, in primary school, it is important to build a systematic knowledge of subjects without interrupting sensory experience. A younger student in some cases can already assess whether this or that information is true. In such situations, it is obvious to him. And it is much more important for a child to live and consolidate the experience of this evidence than learn to prove or refute something logically.

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