



PEDAGOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF DEVELOPING STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING

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ABSTRACT. This article comprehensively analyzes the theoretical and practical foundations of developing critical thinking in students of higher educational institutions. The main purpose of the research is to identify effective pedagogical mechanisms for forming critical thinking competence in the educational process. The work substantiates the role and importance of problem-based learning, interactive methods, debates, case studies, and media education technologies. It also highlights methodological approaches aimed at developing students' analytical thinking, reasoning, and independent conclusion-making skills. The research results show that when interactive approaches are applied, students' learning activity, level of independent thinking, and ability to solve problematic situations increase significantly. The article proposes an effective model for developing critical thinking.

Keywords: critical thinking, interactive methods, problem-based learning, media education, analytical thinking, independent decision, pedagogical technologies, competence

INTRODUCTION. In the context of modern globalization and the information society, new requirements are being imposed on the higher education system. Today, students are required not only to acquire ready-made knowledge but also to possess the skills of critically analyzing information, selecting it, making reasoned decisions, and thinking independently. In this regard, critical thinking competence is becoming an integral quality of a modern specialist.

The sharp increase in the flow of information and the presence of contradictory and sometimes unreliable data from various sources require students to adopt a high level of analytical approach. Especially in the digital media environment, the widespread dissemination of fake information, manipulative content, and subjective views further increases the need to develop critical thinking. In such conditions, a student should not be merely a passive recipient of information but should become an active subject who analyzes and evaluates it. However, practice shows that in higher education institutions, the educational process is often organized on the basis of a traditional, reproductive approach. This leads to passive assimilation of knowledge by students and insufficient development of independent and critical thinking skills. The insufficient use of interactive methods and the lack of problem situations in the teaching process further aggravate this problem.

In particular, issues of developing critical thinking have been studied by foreign scholars based on various approaches, focusing on the analytical, reflective, and evaluative activities of the individual. At the same time, in modern educational conditions, developing innovative methods and technologies for fostering critical thinking remains one of the pressing scientific issues.

The scientific novelty of this article lies in proposing a comprehensive approach to developing critical thinking and substantiating the integration of interactive and media-based methods in organizing the pedagogical process. The research results contribute to improving the effectiveness of teaching in higher education and developing students' independent thinking competence. Transformational processes occurring in the modern education system require the

priority of a personality-oriented approach. In such an approach, the student is considered not a passive object but an active subject of the educational process.

Therefore, developing students' critical thinking is one of the important directions of the pedagogical process today. Normative documents aimed at developing the higher education system also define the formation of students' competencies in independent thinking, analysis, and decision-making as a priority task [1].

The concept of critical thinking is interpreted differently in scientific literature; however, in general, it is considered as the ability of an individual to analyze information, evaluate it, and draw reasoned conclusions. This process is closely related to reflective thinking, in which an individual reconsiders their thoughts, identifies mistakes, and corrects them [9]. At the same time, critical thinking is manifested as a complex intellectual activity that combines logical, analytical, and creative thinking components [10].

The scientific heritage of Eastern thinkers also pays great attention to the development of thinking culture. In particular, Abu Nasr Farabi substantiated the importance of logical thinking and reasoning in the process of scientific cognition and emphasized the leading role of intellect and thinking in acquiring knowledge [2]. According to his views, a person should not only receive knowledge but also analyze it and draw reasoned conclusions. According to Farabi's teaching, to achieve true knowledge, a person must have a developed culture of logical thinking. He evaluated logic as a "tool of correct thinking" and emphasized its importance in avoiding incorrect conclusions and identifying truth. In this regard, his views directly correspond to such components of modern critical thinking theory as reasoning, justification, and conclusion-making.

In addition, Farabi emphasized the importance of doubt and verification in the process of cognition. According to him, a person should not accept any knowledge without critical analysis but should verify it based on evidence. This approach corresponds to one of the main principles of modern critical thinking-evaluating information and determining its reliability.

Farabi also considered the development of human thinking as a step-by-step process, distinguishing levels such as sensory perception, imagination, and rational cognition. At the stage of rational cognition, a person performs higher-order thinking operations such as analysis, generalization, and drawing conclusions. This serves as an important theoretical basis for developing critical thinking in students.

Another great scholar, Abu Rayhan Beruni, relied on experimental and observational methods in scientific cognition and emphasized the necessity of verifying any information and approaching it with doubt [3]. This approach is considered one of the key components of modern critical thinking theory. Furthermore, Farabi once again emphasized the importance of doubt and verification in cognition. According to him, a person should not accept knowledge in a ready-made form but should carefully analyze it, verify it based on evidence, and reject it when necessary. This approach fully corresponds to the central principle of critical thinking-selecting information and evaluating its reliability. In Farabi's view, doubt is not denial but a means of reaching truth. In this sense, his ideas are in harmony with the concepts of skepticism and reflective analysis in modern scientific methodology. He also explained the development of human thinking as a gradual process, distinguishing stages of sensory perception, imagination, and rational cognition. At the initial stages, a person perceives reality through senses, then reconstructs it through imagination, and finally, at the level of rational cognition, performs higher-order thinking operations such as generalization, analysis, and conclusion-making. This stage forms the foundation of critical thinking, as it enables deep processing of information and independent decision-making.

Applying this approach to the modern pedagogical process, it follows that to develop critical thinking in students, they should not merely memorize knowledge but analyze, compare, and evaluate it. This requires creating problem situations in the classroom, activating thinking through questions and answers, and using tasks based on reasoning. In this sense, the principles of logical thinking, verification, and consistency proposed by Farabi serve as important theoretical and methodological foundations for forming students' critical thinking competence today.

Ibn Sina also emphasized the importance of logic, consistency, and generalization in the thinking process, substantiating the necessity of deep understanding of knowledge and the development of independent thinking [4]. He also paid great attention to the factor of independence in the process of cognition. According to him, a person should not accept knowledge in a ready-made form but should understand it independently, pose questions, and actively participate in the process of seeking answers. This approach is one of the main ideas of the student-centered education concept in modern pedagogy.

In modern Uzbek pedagogical science, the issues of developing critical thinking have also been widely studied. In particular, N.A. Muslimov considers independent and critical thinking as a key factor in forming pedagogical competence [5]. B.X. Khodjaev scientifically substantiates that it is possible to increase students' thinking activity through the use of interactive methods in the educational process [6].

Interactive methods play a special role in developing critical thinking. According to research, problem-based learning technology encourages students to conduct independent inquiry, as a result of which they acquire skills in analyzing problems, developing solution options, and making optimal decisions [7]. At the same time, debate and discussion methods develop students' abilities to reason, defend their opinions, and analyze opposing viewpoints [8].

In the context of the development of digital technologies, the importance of media education is increasing. The growth of information flow requires students to have the skills of selecting information, analyzing it, and evaluating its reliability. Through media education tools, students can identify fake information, understand manipulative influences, and make independent decisions [10].

Thus, the development of critical thinking in students is a multifaceted pedagogical process based on the integration of historical scientific heritage, modern theoretical approaches, and innovative pedagogical technologies. By effectively organizing this process, it is possible to train independent-thinking, analytical, and competitive specialists in the higher education system.

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