

INNOVATIVE METHODS OF DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Annotation: This article analyzes innovative methods for developing critical thinking in primary school students. Critical thinking helps students develop independent thinking, problem-solving skills, and logical reasoning abilities. The paper explores effective methods such as mind mapping, INSERT technology, Venn diagrams, debate questions, and role-playing games, discussing their impact on the learning process. Additionally, it examines how these approaches foster students' creative and analytical thinking skills.

Keywords: critical thinking, text analysis, primary school, innovative methods, evaluating ideas, comparison, assessment, Venn diagram, INSERT technology, question-and-answer method.

Today, developing students' independent thinking skills is considered one of the most urgent issues in the educational process. In particular, fostering critical thinking in primary school students enhances their preparedness for future learning experiences. Alongside traditional approaches, the use of innovative methods to develop critical thinking contributes to the expansion of students' logical, analytical, and creative thinking abilities. This article discusses innovative methods for developing critical thinking in primary school students.

What is Critical Thinking and Why is It Important?

Critical thinking is the ability of students to independently analyze given information, understand cause-and-effect relationships, justify their opinions, and solve problems. This skill fosters students' capacity to make independent decisions, draw accurate conclusions, and think logically.

As Shavkat Mirziyoyev has emphasized: "Today, it is essential for us to raise a generation of youth who think independently, possess modern knowledge and professional skills, are innovative, and take initiative."

This approach highlights the importance of nurturing critical thinking starting from the primary grades.

Innovative Methods that Contribute to the Development of Critical Thinking

Mind Mapping

Mind mapping is a graphic method that helps visually organize interconnected concepts around a particular topic or idea. This technique:

- Helps students gain a deeper understanding of the topic,
- Accelerates the process of analyzing problems and finding solutions,
- Allows students to express their thoughts in a visual form.

The INSERT Strategy

Through this method, students work with a text by using the following symbols to reflect on their thoughts:

- ✓ — information they already knew,
- — new information,
- ? — points they did not understand,

! — interesting or important facts.

This technique enables students to study the text in depth and apply a critical perspective.

Analyzing the Author's Position in the Text

Students are assigned to read a text and analyze the author's opinion based on the following aspects:

What is the author's main idea?

How reliable are their arguments?

Is there an alternative point of view?

This method enhances students' analytical thinking skills.

Organizing Discussions Based on Texts

Debates and discussions are among the most effective methods for developing critical thinking. Students are given topics based on the content of a text and are required to support their opinions with evidence.

Creating Alternative Endings for Texts

Students are asked to write different endings for a given text. This strategy improves their creative thinking and helps them gain a deeper understanding of the text's content.

Innovative Approaches and New Methods

Recent pedagogical research shows that using digital technologies to work with texts in primary education further enhances critical thinking. For example:

Interactive e-books – allow students to answer questions and add visual annotations while reading the text.

AI-based applications – analyze students' reading errors and provide personalized recommendations.

Online debate platforms – improve critical thinking by enabling virtual discussions based on textual content.

Venn Diagram

A Venn diagram helps compare the similarities and differences between two or more concepts. For example, by comparing two characters or two events, students can learn to think critically.

Controversial Questions Method

In this approach, students are presented with opposing viewpoints on a specific issue. For example:

"Is reading books more beneficial than watching television?"

"Which is more important: knowledge or experience?"

Students develop critical thinking by substantiating their opinions with arguments.

The "Flow of Ideas" Method

This method teaches students to find solutions to problems. For instance, the teacher presents a problem or question, and students gradually develop their ideas while searching for an answer.

Role-Playing

Through role-playing, students try to understand problematic situations by acting out certain roles. For example, they may assume the roles of historical figures or fairy tale characters and attempt to resolve a given problem.

Working with Texts as a Tool for Enhancing Analytical Thinking

Working with texts can be an effective tool for developing students' analytical thinking skills. In order to foster critical thinking, it is necessary to thoroughly analyze the text, understand

its content deeply, and seek answers through targeted questions.

Research shows that when analyzing texts, students ask various questions, which help them identify cause-and-effect relationships. This process contributes not only to academic success but also to their ability to make decisions in real-life situations.

Methodology

The study involved primary school students. An experiment was conducted with 4th-grade students, in which tasks were given to develop critical thinking based on pictures and texts. Students were assigned to understand a text, express their thoughts based on an image, identify causes and effects, and create alternative interpretations of events.

A total of 20 students participated in the study.

Results of the Study

Before the experiment, students' critical thinking levels were as follows:

30% of students had difficulty analyzing the text.

50% of students performed well in expressing thoughts based on images.

20% of students demonstrated a high level of critical thinking.

After the experiment, there was a significant improvement:

80% of students showed improvement in text analysis.

90% of students performed well in expressing thoughts based on images.

70% of students demonstrated a high level of critical thinking.

Students	Initial Result (%)	Final Result (%)
Text Analysis	30	80
Expression of Thoughts	50	90
Critical Thinking	20	70

The results of the study show that there is great potential for developing critical thinking in primary school students through working with texts. Students improved their reasoning based on pictures and texts, as well as their ability to analyze cause-and-effect relationships.

Moreover, this method enhances students' logical thinking and prepares them to make effective decisions in social life. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the methodology of working with texts is an effective tool for fostering critical thinking in primary school students.

Conclusion

Innovative methods are highly effective in fostering critical thinking skills in primary school students. Techniques such as mind maps, Venn diagrams, controversial questions, and role-playing activities help students express their ideas independently, analyze new information, and justify their arguments.

Working with texts is one of the most effective strategies for developing critical thinking. Through the use of the INSERT technique, analysis of the author's perspective, organizing debates based on texts, and creating alternative endings, students gain the ability to

substantiate their opinions, support arguments with evidence, and make independent decisions.

When integrated with modern technologies, these approaches can yield even more effective results. In the future, the widespread use of digital educational resources will play a crucial role in the development of critical thinking skills.

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