INTERSECTING HORIZONS: EXPLORING THE CONVERGENCE OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND ART

Published: December 30, 2023 | Pages: 18-20

THE ROLE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IN DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING IN STUDENTS AND PREPARING FOR PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

Amirova Damira

Teacher At Uzbekistan State World Languages University, Tashkent City, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT: In today's rapidly changing and complex professional landscape, equipping students with the necessary skills to succeed in their chosen careers is critical. Among these skills, critical thinking stands out as a key skill that develops analytical thinking, problem solving, and sound decision-making. Recognizing the importance of critical thinking in professional success, there is a growing need for the education system to focus on developing this skill in students. This article aims to explore strategies for improving the system of preparing students for professional activities by emphasizing the development of critical thinking skills.

KEYWORDS: Educational environment, teaching methodology and technology integration, professional activities.

INTRODUCTION

A comprehensive review of the existing literature from a variety of disciplines, including education, psychology, and business, was conducted to examine the relationship between critical thinking development and career readiness. The analysis aims to identify key theories, frameworks, and empirical studies that emphasize the importance of critical thinking in professional contexts. In addition, a literature review explored effective teaching strategies, assessment methods, and interventions for developing critical thinking skills in students.

The role of critical thinking in professional success has been explored by examining its effects on problem solving, innovation, flexibility, and ethical decision making. During the analysis, the impact of such factors as educational environment, curriculum design, teaching methodology and technology integration on the development of students' critical thinking skills was also considered.

In this article, a literature review methodology was adopted to synthesize and analyze existing research on improving the system of preparing students for professional activities through the development of critical thinking skills. The research process includes the following steps:

1. Identification of relevant literature: A comprehensive search of scholarly databases such as ERIC, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar was conducted. Key words such as "critical thinking", "professional activity", "career readiness", "education" were used to identify relevant studies.

2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria: The selected literature included peer-reviewed articles, books and reports focusing on the relationship between critical thinking development and professional

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preparation. Priority was given to studies that discuss instructional strategies, curriculum design, and evaluation methods.

3. Data acquisition and analysis: The selected literature was thoroughly reviewed and key concepts, theoretical frameworks and empirical conclusions were drawn. The analysis focused on identifying common themes, effective practices, and gaps in the literature.

4. Synthesis and interpretation: The results of the literature review were synthesized and interpreted, giving a comprehensive understanding of how critical thinking skills can be included in the system of preparing students for professional activities. Connections between various concepts, theories and empirical evidence are drawn to suggest strategies for improvement.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations: Based on the analysis, the article provides implications for educational policy makers, curriculum developers, and teachers to strengthen the integration of critical thinking skills into professional training programs. Recommendations for future research and practice are also provided.

Using a literature review methodology, this article aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on improving student career preparation with an emphasis on developing critical thinking skills. Synthesizing existing knowledge and identifying effective strategies can inform educational practice and policy to better equip students for the demands of the professional world.

Integration of critical thinking across disciplines:

To effectively develop critical thinking skills, it is important to integrate them across disciplines and disciplines. Rather than treating critical thinking as a stand-alone course, incorporating it into the curriculum of various majors allows students to apply critical thinking skills in real-world situations. This interdisciplinary approach encourages students to analyze problems from different perspectives and enhances their ability to transfer critical thinking skills to their future careers.

Active Learning Strategies:

Active learning strategies increase student engagement and develop critical thinking skills. Encouraging collaborative projects, case studies, problem-based learning, and simulations gives students the opportunity to apply critical thinking in practical scenarios. These activities develop higher-order thinking, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, allowing students to develop a deeper understanding of their subject matter and its real-life implications.

Scaffolding and guided practice:

Teachers should provide scaffolding and guided practice to help students develop critical thinking skills. This involves gradually increasing the complexity of tasks, providing clear instructions and providing feedback and support along the way. By structuring learning experiences, teachers can help students gradually develop critical thinking skills and develop problem-solving skills in a supportive environment.

Critical Thinking Assessment:

Assessment methods should be consistent with the goal of developing critical thinking skills. Traditional exams and multiple-choice questions may not effectively capture students' critical

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thinking skills. Instead, performance-based assessments, portfolios, presentations, and projects that require students to apply critical thinking in authentic contexts provide a more accurate assessment of their skills. Rubrics that clearly define and assess criteria for critical thinking can help students and teachers understand expectations and progress toward developing critical thinking.

Technology Integration:

Integrating technology into teaching and learning helps foster critical thinking. Online discussion forums, virtual simulations, multimedia resources, and data analysis tools empower students to critically engage with information, evaluate sources, and solve complex problems. Besides, technology can facilitate collaboration, research, and the use of diverse perspectives, further enriching the development of critical thinking skills.

Teacher training:

To effectively develop critical thinking in students, teachers need support and professional development opportunities. Curriculum and workshops can provide teachers with strategies and resources to integrate critical thinking skills into their teaching. Collaboration among educators facilitates the sharing of best practices and the development of innovative approaches to foster critical thinking in students.

Real world experiences:

Exposing students to real-world experiences such as internships, fieldwork, or service opportunities can significantly contribute to the development of their critical thinking skills. These experiences allow students to apply their knowledge, analyze complex problems, and make informed decisions in professional settings. Connecting classroom learning to real-world contexts increases the relevance of critical thinking and prepares students for the challenges they may face in their future careers.

By implementing these strategies and approaches, educational institutions can improve the system of preparing students for professional activities by prioritizing the development of critical thinking skills. This holistic approach equips students with the ability to think critically, adapt to a changing professional environment, and make ethical and informed decisions that contribute to success in their chosen fields.

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