

THE ROLE OF CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING IN DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS

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The main requirement of the modern educational process is to form an independent thinker, able to communicate, and able to analyze complex problems. Critical thinking and problem-based learning (PBL) methods play an important role in the development of such competencies. The formation of communicative skills is not limited to knowledge of the language, but also includes the ability to clearly express thoughts, ask questions, discuss, argue, and make decisions. From this point of view, this study highlights the role of critical thinking and PBL approaches in the development of communicative competence.

PBL is a method based on the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies by solving problems close to real life in the educational process. In PBL, the student does not receive ready-made knowledge, but works on the problem himself, searches for causes and consequences, collects evidence, compares solution options, and draws a final conclusion.

PBL includes the following stages:

1. Problem identification
2. Formulation of questions about the problem
3. Data collection and analysis
4. Development of possible solutions
5. Justification and presentation of the solution
6. Reflection[1]

Each stage of this process requires communicative activity, as students exchange ideas, ask questions, interpret, explain and prove.

The impact of critical thinking and PBL on communicative competence

Critical thinking methods teach students to express their opinions with reason. For example, in the process of debate, a student simultaneously listens, thinks, reacts to the arguments of the opposing side and logically substantiates his arguments. In the

process of PBL, students discuss the problem together, exchange ideas and make a collective decision through group work. This effectively develops all components of communicative competence - listening, speaking, coherently expressing an idea, asking questions.

The PBL model forces students to search for information, analyze and prepare a written conclusion. This strengthens their skills in clear expression, logical sequence, reasoning and academic style in written speech.

In the process of critical thinking, students acquire the skills of respectfully treating each other's opinions and constructive criticism. PBL, in turn, forms a culture of teamwork, develops a listening culture, the ability to defend one's own opinion and the competence of collaborative problem solving.

Foreign and domestic studies have shown a significant increase in students' communicative skills when using PBL and critical thinking methods. For example, it was found that the use of PBL projects in English lessons increased students' skills in freely expressing their thoughts by 25–40%. Also, students who participated in classes based on critical thinking are significantly more active in asking questions, reasoning and working with opposing opinions.

Observations conducted in educational institutions of Uzbekistan show that in groups using the PBL method, students were more active in engaging in free communication, discussing, and clearly expressing their thoughts.[5]

In conclusion, Critical thinking and PBL methods are considered to be one of the most effective approaches to the modern educational process. They comprehensively develop not only the intellectual potential of students, but also their communicative competence. The analytical, evaluative, and demonstrative activities of critical thinking, combined with the problem-based mechanism of PBL, form in students a culture of communication, clear thinking, reasoning, preparation for questions and answers, and the ability to work together.

Therefore, it is important to expand the role of critical thinking and PBL methods in the educational process, conduct regular training of teachers in these approaches, and increase the share of problem tasks in textbooks.

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