

USING CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN TEACHING ENGLISH

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Статья рассматривает обучение английскому языку и его правила.

The article is devoting to the creative and critical thinking skills in teaching English.

Teaching students to become effective thinkers is recognized as an important goal of education nowadays. If students are to function successfully in a highly technical society, then they must be equipped with lifelong learning and thinking skills necessary to acquire an information in the changing world. The aim of this article is to search how critical and creative thinking skills help in all the skills of teaching English and understand what the thinking skills are and how to help your students to develop their thinking skills in the English Language.

Through out history, philosophers, politicians, educators and many others have been concerned with the art and science of astute thinking. Some identify the spirit of inquiry and dialogue that characterized the golden age of ancient Greece as the beginning of this interest. Others point to the Age of Enlightenment, with its emphasis on rationality and progress.

In the twentieth century, the ability to engage in careful, reflective thought has been viewed in various ways: as a fundamental characteristic of an educated person, as a requirement for responsible citizenship in a democratic society, and, more recently, as an employability skill for an increasingly wide range of jobs.

Critical thinking is an important and vital topic in modern education. Using critical thinking skills in the English language classroom encourages learners to evaluate, analyze, argue, agree, explain, criticize their thinking and form conclusions about knowledge they already have as well as information they will gain in the future. To activate and develop critical thinking in their students, English language teachers need to put tasks and activities and make their teaching programs and materials to promote critical thinking.

Teaching English language through critical thinking enables learners to recognize a wide range of subjective analyses, to develop self-awareness, and to see linkages and complexities of the issue. Teachers should facilitate and encourage creative and critical thinking skills by viewing their learners differently from what they had presumed. They also need to change their pedagogical views and adopt a more flexible attitude towards their teaching and not to be dependent on textbooks. Also needed is the change of teachers' views of themselves. They are not providers but thinkers who constantly think of what could be done to encourage creative and critical thinking in their learners.

Teachers of English can use critical and creative thinking skills in various teaching skills as reading, listening writing, and speaking .Before giving the new theme it would be very effective to use critical thinking questions for brainstorming the new topic.

The following questions might be helpful in order to check student's knowledge on the new topic and to know how well they know the topic. Questions should depend on the theme. As an example, if you are going to take speaking skills and to discuss about the political life in Kyrgyzstan and April 7th situation around the White House, the following questions will help to brainstorm the topic.

What do you think about the situation? What made people to come there? Why people were so angry and aggressive? What happened there? Have you been there or seen it? , How did you find it? What benefits have you taken from that? What do you think about the future of our country?

If you take real life themes for discussions which your students experience in their own life your lessons will be more effective. Every student will be eager to take part participation in the discussion with high interest, because they know well the topic you are discussing. This approach makes to speak even shy students. You shouldn't interrupt your student or correct his grammar mistakes while he speaking. He should express his point of view on the given topic freely.

Socratic questioning tool is very helpful for using critical thinking skills in speaking. Socrates was one of the greatest educators who taught by asking questions and drawing out answers from his pupils. Here are types of questions that Socrates asked his pupils.

Get them to think more about what exactly they are asking or thinking about; why are you saying that? What does this mean? How does this relate to what we have been talking about? What is the nature of it? What do we already know about this? Can you give an example?

Creative writing in the English classroom is usually taught in a workshop format. Creative writings are the development of student's creative and critical thinking skills from idea, conception and research to style, tone and structure. Writing academic essays involves using critical thinking skills to analyze a problem or issue. Imagine that you have to write an essay in which you are to analyze an issue and explain your view. This requires critical thinking skills.

As an example, I asked my students to write an essay on the theme: "Should English language be an official language in the world?» and gave time for a week to think before the discussion as a prewriting activity. When I observed my students, I noticed them asking each other questions, discussing, agreeing and arguing on some points of their view about official language. The following agreements and arguments I have observed,: In Russia all the people speak in the Russian language, in Germany people speak in the German language too. Why don't we speak in our native Kyrgyz language in our capital city?

We know, that English language is very popular and it is a world language of communication, and what about our native Kyrgyz language?, It just has began to be official? Russian is an official language in our country. We have such an expression that says: Language is the face of every nation. .So everybody should love and respect their native language, they must know and speak in their native language. Unfortunately, most of the important official papers were written only in Russian and native people from the countryside don't understand the meaning of the documents. Most of our Kyrgyz people

in urban families speak in Russian in official places and in their communities. What is the reason of this...? Why people of other nationalities who live here don't learn and speak Kyrgyz though they have been living here side by side with native people for centuries. If somebody has a strong wish they can learn a desired language for a short period of time. As an example we can take Peace corps volunteers from the USA, speaking in Kyrgyz with local people of their community in rural places. Three or four months of hard work at learning Kyrgyz and practice with local people bring them success to learn Kyrgyz way of life, culture and traditions of another nation and at the same time share with theirs.

An academic essay on this topic would outline the alternative viewpoints, weigh up the evidence on both sides of the argument and seek to come to a view, based on the relative strengths and weaknesses of the content. I introduce essay writing process with the following steps; **Step 1**

Describing the problem.

To begin, students brainstorm to commit their initial ideas to paper, which requires them to make a list about how they would describe the English language becoming an official language in our country. Some brainstorming questions help them to begin the process are the following questions:

What do you think about English becoming as an official language in the world?

What is your viewpoint about Kyrgyz people who speak in Russian language in their families, teaching their children not to native language?

Do we lose our native language if the majority of people speak in another language, what can you say about it?

What do you think about the Russian language as an official language in our country?

Why do many young people prefer to learn English language?

What are the main reasons of leaving Kyrgyzstan of young people for other countries?

Leading questions make the students create more opinions solve the problem and come to conclusions. Students can create negative and positive statements, attitudes and conclusions. Students achieve success through brainstorming, research, writing, problem solving and group work. Here is a situation which makes a contribution to the solution of the problem of becoming an English language as an official language in the world. The following situation helps them to develop their critical thinking skills and prepare students to write an essay about becoming of English as an official language.

At the same time we can take this passage for using critical thinking in Reading skills.

Once John, one of the American citizens who worked at Gansy military base, went to a disco club and he met there a Kyrgyz girl named Gulzar and they liked each other and began to meet. Their friendship grew into love and after a year they decided to get married. But the problem was in what language they should communicate. Before the marriage, they wanted to plan their life. They will face many problems if they get married, the first problem was of course the language in which they would communicate and bring up their children. Gulzar wanted John to speak in Kyrgyz and asked him to learn Kyrgyz language. But John wanted her to learn English and communicate in English in their future life with their children. So they faced the problem of communication in their family and asked their friends for an advice in this situation, and we wanted to discuss it in group work and to find the solution of this problem.

Step 2 Discussion of the problem.

1. Learning English is not an easy thing; it takes time and hard work.
2. What is the reason of her getting married to a foreigner?
2. Both of them are not of the same religion
3. John lives far from our country. Gulzar will miss her motherland, parents and friends.
4. Gulzar doesn't know English well and she will have a cultural shock in the stranger country.
5. To become a member of the family with another culture will cause problems in their future life. Group is divided into two groups and tried to find the solution of this problem.

Step 3 Solution of the problem:

Love wins all the difficulties and ins and outs of the life.

Mutual love and respect each other.

To have common aims in life

D) There is not any problem of distance in the new Information age. Everywhere is Internet if she wants to see her parents and friends. She can use web camera

6. Communication with native speakers improves her English speech and she will become more intelligent and more educated person.
7. This event helps to exchange culture and traditions of both nations and opens the way to relationship between two countries.

Step 4 Writing essay.

While students were solving all these problems they developed their critical thinking skills and will be ready to write an essay about the role and the status of being English language official in the world. In general, students who develop critical thinking skills are more able to

-achieve better marks

-become less dependent on teachers and textbooks

-create knowledge

-challenge and change the structures in society which only benefit particular groups

Methodology on using critical and creative thinking skills in teaching English.

Using the vocabulary of critical thinking themselves. For example, asking questions such as: "What can you infer about the effects of this action from the statements given? What can you conclude about the person who took this picture from the evidence contained in the picture? Is honesty a necessary condition of friendship?"

Involving students in role plays or simulations of historical events where people held conflicting views. Organizing for "structured controversy." That is, involving students in discussions and debates which tackle more than one side of an issue and require students to back arguments with evidence and reference to consequences.

Being alert for and encouraging students to notice where material presented in texts, films and other communications over-simplify or distort reality as students understand it. Encouraging students to use qualifiers and recognize contradictions.

Supplementing regular textbooks with additional curriculum materials which could provide local, regional or provincial applications, appeal to more than one of the senses, offer alternative ways of knowing, or provide a wider variety of perspectives on the subject matter. Having students attend community meetings, watch television programs or read newspaper articles which express different viewpoints. Following this by an analysis of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the arguments, including analysis of the possible motives or human purposes underlying the viewpoints.

Having students attempt to solve real life problems where there is the possibility of more than one adequate solution and where several different types of information are required. Exploring with students the methods used to develop knowledge in a particular discipline or field. Asking students questions with multiple answers or several equally correct answers. Requiring students to defend their assertions with reasons. For example, when students answer a question the teacher would follow the students' answers, whenever appropriate, with a further question which asks the students why they believe this version or think their answers are reasonable, plausible or accurate.

Having students analyze the content of popular media - music, movies or TV - for the accuracy and completeness of its portrayals and the consistency of the reality presented with life as they know it. For example, exploring the contradictions between the existence of poverty and commercials which portray the acquisition of material possessions as being largely a matter of choice between competing brands rather than requiring that one have the money to afford them. Having students analyze the content of popular media using standards which compare the media's portrayal of human behavior with ideals, such as treating people with respect and tolerance and refraining from stereotypical, sexist or racist views. Inquiring into media's portrayal of the consequences of human actions.

Requiring students to analyze objects and artifacts, either man-made or in the natural environment, from a design perspective which examines their purpose, structure, model cases and the criteria for their evaluation. Using, and encouraging students to use, analogies and metaphors in descriptions, comparisons and attempts to understand new concepts, ideas, principles or theories.

In conclusion I would like to suggest English teachers to use critical thinking in all teaching skills because it is very important and gives effective results of teaching. Teachers and students will be independent from books and it motivates to work creatively. The result is good success both for teachers and learners of English in a short period of time. Everything is changing in the world and we teachers of English should change our methods of teaching depending on our students level of English..

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