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CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING AND CRITICAL THINKING IN ONLINE EDUCATION IN THE UZBEK HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Transformative learning is defined as the expansion of consciousness through the transformation of one's basic worldview and specific capacities. In online education it leads to develop many skills, and critical thinking is one of them. What is critical thinking, challenges of its promotion in online education, and potential strategies to overcome them are investigated in the article. The role of transformative learning in Uzbek higher institutions is defined as well.
Key words: transformative learning, critical thinking, online education, innovative technologies.

ПРОБЛЕМЫ И СТРАТЕГИИ ПРОДВИЖЕНИЯ ТРАНСФОРМАЦИОННОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ И КРИТИЧЕСКОГО МЫШЛЕНИЯ В ОНЛАЙН-ОБРАЗОВАНИИ В СИСТЕМЕ ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ УЗБЕКИСТАНА

Трансформационное обучение определяется как расширение сознания посредством трансформации своего базового мировоззрения и конкретных способностей. В онлайн-образовании это приводит к развитию многих навыков, и критическое мышление является одним из них. В статье исследуется, что такое критическое мышление, проблемы его продвижения в онлайн-образовании и возможные стратегии их преодоления. Определена роль трансформационного обучения в узбекских вузах.
Ключевые слова: трансформационное обучение, критическое мышление, онлайн-образование, инновационные технологии.

O'ZBEKISTON OLIY TA'LIM TIZIMIDA ONLAYN TA'LIMDA TRANSFORMATSION TA'LIM VA TANQIDIY FIKRLASHNI RIVOJLANTIRISH MUAMMOLARI VA STRATEGIYALARI

Transformativ ta'lim insonning asosiy dunyoqarashi va o'ziga xos imkoniyatlarini o'zgartirish orqali ongni kengaytirish sifatida belgilanadi. Onlayn ta'limda bu ko'plab ko'nikmalarni rivojlantirishga olib keladi va tanqidiy fikrlash ulardan biridir. Maqolada tanqidiy fikrlash, uni onlayn ta'limda targ'ib qilish muammolari va ularni bartaraf etishning potentsial strategiyalari ko'rib chiqiladi. O'zbekiston oliy o'quv yurtlarida transformativ ta'limning roli ham ta'kidlab o'tilgan.
Kalit so'zlar: transformativ ta'lim, tanqidiy fikrlash, onlayn ta'lim, innovatsion texnologiyalar.

Introduction.

Most people equate it with official education in schools, colleges, and universities when it comes to learning. These are the formal learning environments where students should get an excellent education. They believe that education may help people enhance their performance and capacity to find better and more fulfilling employment, also making more money in their chosen field. On the other hand, Lifelong learning encompasses all aspects of life, learning from womb to tomb. Education is just one of several different learning methods since there are several other ways to expand an individual's knowledge and gain practical skills during one's life. Therefore, lifelong learners are driven to learn and improve because they want to. It denotes a conscious and intentional effort on the part of persons. People grow and learn willingly because it may increase their awareness of the world over them and give them more and higher possibilities to enhance their standard of living. Finally, it contributes to one's career advancement. The concept of lifelong learning is partially overtrumped and densely connected with such terms as permanent education, recurrent education, continuing education, learning organization, and learning society.

Transformative learning is related to the critical reflection of learners via personal experience, suggestions, statements, feelings, and mental imaginations for creation and interpretation review.

Transformative learning leads to the change of the learner himself. The author or creator, founder of "transformative learning," is American sociologist Jack Mezirow. The transformative learning approach is founded on a sequential change of personal frame of reference, that is, worldview. The objectives of learning can be concrete, short-long, and materially-minded points Mezirow, in his article "Transformative learning: theory to practice," like to get a driver's license or promotion in career. However, according to the sociologist, the long-term goal of learning is to learn to think independently. Moreover, the teacher's task who works with adults is not to help them reach the short-term goals but to increase their critical thinking in the process. [1., 3p]

Considering our rapid changes in the social circumstances, institutions are constantly required to help students in developing critical and other skills that will aid their adaptability to changing environment during their lives. The assumption also suggests that in order to successfully educate their students, instructors should be adaptive as well. As indicated by the use of new technology in the classroom, updating instructional techniques is sometimes seen as unambiguous proof that an educator has successfully transitioned to a different learning environment. Teachers must possess not just technical skills but also content knowledge and pedagogical understanding in order to successfully utilize modern technologies in the classroom. In other words, it is called "technological pedagogical content knowledge," known as the "TPCK model." Teachers are more open to class reform and see their educational place as a knowledge society, which improves their readiness to experiment with technology in classrooms.

The use of technology in higher education, such as online learning, should promote learners' productivity, including developing critical thinking skills. Furthermore, integrating critical thinking with web-based activities, such as asynchronous online conversation, may provide students with an opportunity and chance to develop their interests and acquire a greater level of knowledge. However, this phenomenon makes it difficult for teachers to synchronize the introduction of critical thinking principles with their application in e-learning. The case study describes how internet-based or digital learning platforms might be used to promote critical thinking skills among higher education students. The purpose of this study is to look at the importance of critical thinking ideas in the online-based learning environment, as well as the obstacles that educators may encounter, and to suggest different solutions for overcoming such challenges.

Literature review.

Critical thinking is a widely known term referring to cognitive thinking. Many scholars have different interpretations and points of view when defining critical thinking. According to Scriven and Paul, critical thinking is the mentally structured process of conceiving, implementing, examining, assimilating, and evaluating knowledge obtained via observations, experiences, judgment, argument, or information exchange to understand and respond. According to the description above, critical thinking is a complicated and diverse process of grasping, perceiving, and evaluating specific information in a variety of settings. [2., 2p]

Critical thinking is more than simply a way of thinking; it is also a talent becoming more vital in the workplace. Critical thinking was scored higher than innovation and information and technology expertise by Chartrand, Ishikawa, and Flanigan as an essential talent necessary for future relevant work experience. Analyzing all of the critical thinking definitions listed above and its vital advantages in the workplace, it is clear that critical thinking is linked to cognitive ability and the process of higher-level thinking. Therefore, before entering the workforce, students must first have experience in critical thinking in the classroom.

Transformative learning theory by Mezirow was based on the concepts and methodologies of other philosophers, like Kuhn and Habermas. Disorienting dilemmas, frames of reference, meaning perspectives and schemes, perspective transformation, habits of mind, and critical self-reflection were among the contributions and notions drawn from prior philosophers that Mezirow employed as reference words. In general, the transformational learning theory refers to a method of learning based on a fundamental shift in adults' reference frames of set beliefs and expectations. The mind's concepts and knowledge, and practices in action are fundamentally transformed as a result of this shift in reference frames. As a result, this shift necessitates more excellent critical reflection and thought to build new frames of meaning. Only critical thought and reflection on the environment, content, method, or propositions may modify meaning structures in this transformation process. Critical thinking should be geared at shifting frames of reference so that ideas, attitudes, ethical beliefs and values, cultural meanings and understandings, as well as abstract and aesthetic ideals, might shift.

Challenges of critical thinking promotion in online education.

Online learning is becoming more significant in today's educational environment, owing to the fast rise of new technologies, as well as pandemic situations. Critical thinking skills may be developed via online learning activities. Online learning also includes teachers interacting with students in online procedures, activating consciousness in interpreting the instructions, making judgments about various information, and

finding answers and solutions. Critical thinking is seen as a crucial trait in the virtual learning environment, to be held by competent students and for long-term learning; as a result, students will be able to synthesize and evaluate sources of information and incorporate with web-based learning. This type of activity covers the implementation of critical and reflective behavior. Any online learning course would stimulate critical thinking to impart knowledge and facilitate coordinated dialogues. [3., 81p]

Furthermore, it is claimed that the cognitive component of the mental process is more amenable to being adapted to distance learning. Furthermore, since distant learning relies on online materials, instructors must be careful when selecting resources. The degree of critical thinking growth happened in various online venues due to its practical application, including internet conversations, discussion forums, and email. Because they emphasize the aspects of disputes and sharing of ideas, online forums have been proven to be helpful for teachers to coach and foster greater and much more analytical learning. Numerous studies have demonstrated that internet participation positively impacts students' academic achievement. Online-based learning may help to improve ideas and actions connected to critical thinking ideals.

Despite all of the advantages, incorporating critical thinking into available internet learning is a problem for educational practitioners, particularly instructors. A range of difficulties surrounding the application of critical thinking via online learning, including socio-cultural, theoretical, practical, methodological, and technological concerns, are provided. First and foremost, critical thinking is linked to the socio-cultural aspect.

Asian students, such as Japanese, Chinese ones, were unable to express the critical thinking notion in their writing course on English since Western-oriented critical thinking differs from the Oriental academic system and culture. Stapleton did this research in 2001. Furthermore, critical thinking is not just a cultural issue, but it is also rarely offered to learners on a social level. Critical thinking is a complicated concept, even in social practice. Although critical thinking is a new style of thinking, it should not lead students to be enthralled by the prospect of unexpectedly being shown the world in a new light thanks to special interests or empirical instruments for examining it.

However, the next, most essential element is how educators may choose a subject that meets the demands and comprehension of critical thinking. Theme identification is seen to be a valuable component in the development of reasoning as a talent that displays critical thinking behavior. According to Stapleton's study, Japanese ESL college students' lack of critical thinking was evident in their essay papers since they chose American issues. Therefore, instructors must pay close attention to contextualizing and placing themselves concerning the socio-cultural values established in teaching critical thinking in various settings.

Teachers and instructors in higher education must create and pick appropriate techniques and practices for teaching critical thinking via online participation. The growth of distance learning has exploded in recent years, pushing instructors to explore the best methods to structure their programs for students to achieve students' learning goals and engagement. It is obvious that some instructors are still learning how to utilize technology. Some teachers seem to be inexperienced with establishing and choosing the best techniques for teaching critical thinking using online-based tasks. [4., 80p] The problem gets more challenging because of the significant increase in online education in higher education and the focus on critical thinking. A widespread lack of faculty expertise with good online educational strategies has aggravated traditional obstacles in encouraging critical thinking. Technically, the current circumstances represent the natural conditions associated with technological supremacy.

Potential strategies to overcome the challenges.

There are many techniques to help educators fix the barriers of promoting critical thinking via online learning. The chosen technique in the teaching and learning procedure and other scientific and conceptual methods used by professors in virtual classes are all feasible options. Four major pedagogical factors lie underlying the e-learning structure: content, instructional techniques, practical patterns, and feedback. In terms of content, instructors are supposed to include critical thinking principles into assigned recommended reading and tasks to improve students' critical thinking skills. After students have read the materials, the assignment might alter their critical behavior and help them remember the topics. Furthermore, developing online activities is likely to engage any virtual learning environment. However, the effectiveness of implementing internet sources to promote students' critical thinking in the university environment was at least somewhat dependent on the participants' growth processes, previous experience with educational technology, and extent of interaction. [3., 87p]

It is significant that teachers as instructors perform an essential role in designing online learning activities. Some research suggests that teachers take on the role of online facilitator: describing course topics, holding conversations on track, exposing competing viewpoints to students, assisting students in navigating the online platform, and supporting suitable online comportment are all part of this procedure. Teachers'

being there is vital in making the conversation seem "critical." In order to promote critical thinking, teachers must have the capability, character, and inspiration to differentiate among the dialog that is required to be caused by divergence and more clarification to learners' thoughts; as a result, students will attempt to express and verbalize their judgments. In response to that declaration, instructors are required to distribute specific training and material via double communication between students even if teachers are not present in the learning gathering. The instructor's engagement in guiding the debate is critical in encouraging students' higher-order thinking methods. Theoretically, a teacher-led conversation in an online forum or on a digital learning platform is an excellent way to encourage learners to think critically. Hence, it has been concurred that well-made discussion questions are necessary for promoting high-level critical thinking abilities. Also, teachers are to give efficient time and model for students to analyze their thinking, synthesize their understanding from previous readings, and confidently comment in different group discussions.

Moreover, online collaborations between students and an instructor and students with other students should be successful. As part of an online community, all students should participate in a group activity, and offering group projects has been proved beneficial. Furthermore, group activities are a great way to practice and improve critical thinking abilities. Peer feedback activity increases students' critical thinking since each peer will formulate and antedate their replies. In a nutshell, this declaration is logical since the group and peer activities will allow students to be easy-going, respect others' perspectives, and exchange, discuss, and question one another's views. As part of active learning, the teacher can create a relevant project. As part of the learning process in the online environment, the students may be able to actively build new talents and perceive new experiences via the project guided through online learning.

On the other hand, in online environments, the above-mentioned suggested tactics' effectiveness depends on the instructors' competence, attentiveness, explanation, and progress. In addition, other research has shown that particular strategies taught in an online course may help students develop critical thinking skills. For example, students were allegedly encouraged to participate in questioning activities about certain health subjects, where they would argue and discuss crucial measures that needed to be made to address a particular health problem. Also, students have perceived the practice of an AOD (Asynchronous Online Discussion) panel as a community platform for inspiring commitment and developing critical thinking skills. [5., 50p]

The role of transformative learning in Uzbek higher education system.

Even though there are many differing and often contradictory viewpoints on critical thinking and transformative learning theories, many research works show that critical reflection or thinking is necessary for transformative learning and inspiration and motivation. Mature people are encouraged to be independent learners who can think for themselves. They develop their sense of the world not considering what they want to do, what they think is valuable, think or feel. Within family views, dispositions, and life experiences, religious and cultural values all influence these elements. This autonomous thinking process aids individuals in developing independent thinking skills, which are necessary for participation in and living in a democratic civil society and making ethically correct judgments. One of the most critical higher education goals is to teach learners to be autonomous thinkers. Students are likely stimulated to think critically under their individuality and modify the set principles of thinking, acting, or building resolutions. This can be reached when the teacher responds with positive support to students' participation in discussions, held either online or offline. Also, when tests, case studies, and other tasks are checked on time, and appropriate feedback is given, learners are aware that their labor is evaluated and assessed. [6., 110p]

The primary purpose of educational establishments such as institutions, universities, or colleges must be to incorporate students into the community and prevailing cultural and ethical ideals as people and citizens. As a result, the educational system and curriculum established and designed should consider the above-mentioned learning approaches and encourage people to engage in critical reflection to be critical citizens. It is essential, in this regard, to determine if residents will have sufficient support and a dynamic environment in which to change.

Conclusion.

To summarize, combining critical thinking with an online environment provides the whole package to represent current education. In all of its importance and optimism, critical thinking is becoming a sought-after talent in the globalized world. Teachers emphasize critical thinking principles, ideas, and conduct as the goal of today's higher education environment. Furthermore, technology, such as online learning, is a prominent component impacting several aspects of teaching and learning systems. Whether they like it, teachers must get acquainted with the technology. E-learning has proven to be a fantastic tool for encouraging learners to think critically. However, educators will face specific problems in terms of application and feasibility. These difficulties include sociocultural issues in establishing the critical notion

that many Asian nations encounter, particularly in the educational environment of Uzbekistan, Japan, and other eastern countries. Furthermore, technical and practical challenges linked to instructors' familiarity with the new online environment make it difficult for teachers to create and choose appropriate themes and procedures. Finally, instructors examine numerous ways to overcome such problems, including introducing the correct topic and engaging activities connected to the substance of essential ideas and well-made online debates and group assignments.

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