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THE IMPORTANCE OF CRITICAL THINKING FOR THE HIGHER SCHOOL FOREIGN LANGUAGES LEARNERS

Modern world compels people to make a number of decisions every day. The decisions made may have a significant impact on the quality of a person's life. Therefore today's learning is moving toward developing skills of critical thinking that will prepare young people to navigate the real world thereafter. So what is critical thinking and in what way it is essential for the higher school foreign languages learners are the issues to be considered.

According to critical thinking specialist G. Randy Kasten, the ability to think critically will benefit students both in studying and throughout their lives. It will help them to think creatively – “*outside the box*”. He calls this ability as “one skill separating innovators from followers.” New approach to the solution of the problem, this is what is desirable to see in the potential candidates.

Increasingly more and more employers are looking not for employees with highly specialized academic skills, but those with good thinking and communication skills, employees who learn quickly and can solve problems, think creatively, gather and analyze information meaningfully.

Many of the highest paying jobs require critical thinking skills, such as generating effective ideas and making important decisions. Job interviewers often ask applicants questions that test their ability to think critically. Critical thinking skills may also be a deciding factor when an employee seeks a promotion.

There are many professions where critical thinking is an absolute must, especially those in IT-sphere. Analysts, developers, engineers, reporters, and scientists of all kinds are among them. Critical thinking helps to analyse information, systematically solve problems, generate innovative solutions, plan strategically, think creatively, or present the work or ideas to others in a way that can be readily understood. That is why that must be of high interest for the students of IT-specialisation.

Numerous definitions of this term can be found, and Kasten suggests his one: “It is merely the ability to understand why things are the

way they are and to understand the potential consequences of actions. ”In other terms, critical thinking means making clear and reasoned judgments that is getting more and more vital nowadays.

Due to the growing abundance of information particularly incoming from Internet sources, friends, family and mass media, the necessity of learning how to evaluate what students see and hear every day quickly becomes evident, it will help them to identify false ideas and look beyond superficial appearances. It will also ensure their opinions to be well-informed and based on the best available facts.

It’s not an exaggeration to say that the ability to think critically is important for academic students learning foreign languages because it enables them to produce essays and papers that are free from personal or societal bias; it provides the opportunity for them to formulate their own opinions and to draw their own conclusions by analysing and seeing the connections between ideas. This happens regardless of outside influence.

In addition, employing critical thinking makes foreign language learners more open-minded and better able to understand others’ points of view. It keeps them from jumping to conclusions, and thus they become more empathetic and in a good position to get along with people of different background, race or nationality.

In conclusion, learning to master the skills of critical thinking can have a profound positive impact on nearly every aspect of life. It is one of the most important cognitive skills that students can develop.

Critical thinking is a core academic skill that teaches undergraduate and postgraduate students to question or reflect on their own knowledge and information presented to them. This skill is essential for students working on assignments and performing research. It’s also an invaluable skill in many workplace scenarios. So by improving the quality of both decisions and thoughts, critical thinking can make a difference in life, both personally and professionally.