

THE CONCEPT OF "CRITICAL THINKING" AND THE NEED TO FORM IT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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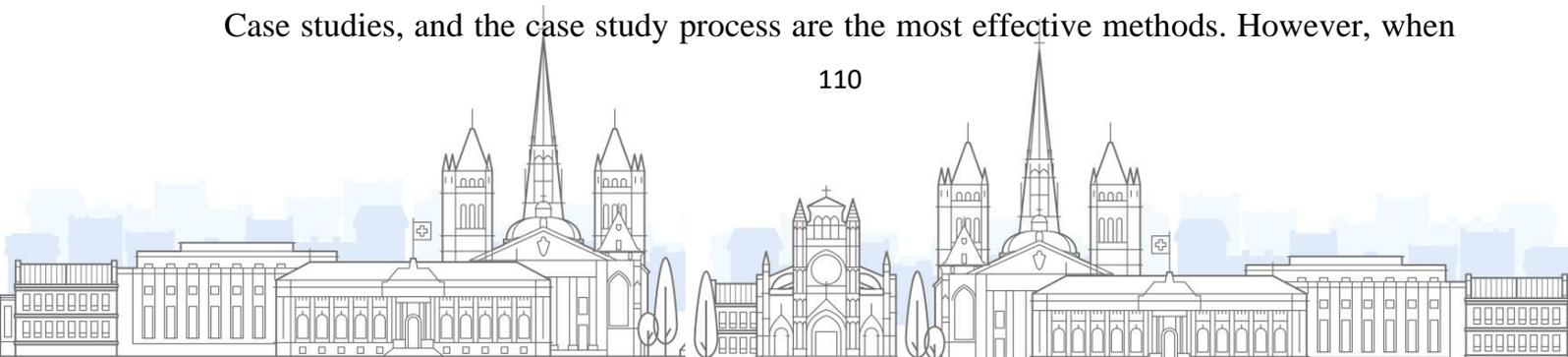
Abstract. *Critical thinking involves developing a person's ability to identify problems, analyze and synthesize information from any source, evaluate it, propose alternatives, and choose problem-solving methods. This belief and action is an intellectual and disciplined process of conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating data collected or generated through observation, experience, reasoning, learning, or association. The article discusses these issues.*

Keywords: *critical thinking, problem-solving, activity, discipline, confidence, analysis, synthesis.*

Critical thinking is a type of thinking characterized by activity, purposefulness, independence, discipline, and reflexivity. It involves developing a person's ability to identify problems, analyze and synthesize data from any source, evaluate them, propose alternatives, and choose problem-solving methods. Furthermore, critical thinking teaches us to make informed choices and to act based on sound perspectives. Teaching such thinking can be structured as the gradual formation of each of the mentioned thinking skills while simultaneously developing the characteristics of the student's thinking process.

M. Jumayeva, a researcher of critical thinking, defines it not as mere suspicion, but as a systematic analytical activity that encompasses intellectual discipline, validity in thinking, and a comprehensive approach to problems [1]. In our opinion, critical thinking is presented not only as a negative or suspicious attitude, but also as a process that requires a deep analysis of problems, drawing well-founded conclusions, and a comprehensive approach. This is especially important in the field of education, because it is necessary to teach students not only to perceive information, but also to analyze it and justify their conclusions.

Critical thinking is an intellectual and disciplined process of conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating data collected or generated through observation, experience, reasoning, learning, or association, guiding beliefs and actions [2]. In their research, they emphasized that Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Debates and discussions, Case studies, and the case study process are the most effective methods. However, when



a person needs to solve a task, make a decision, assess the situation, or draw a conclusion, critical thinking prevails. This type of thinking is built on principles such as validity, control, and purposefulness.

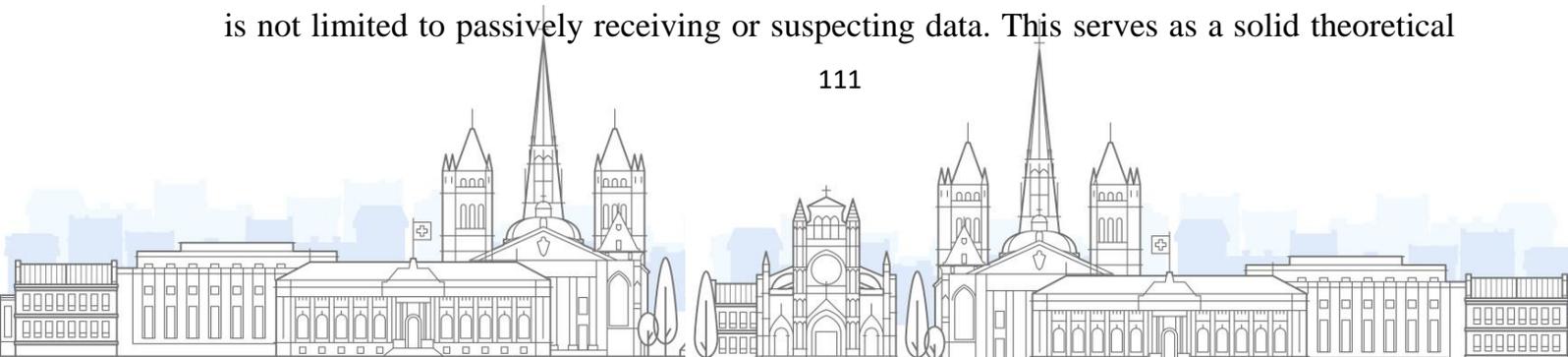
Al-Farabi developed a number of important proposals on the organization of critical thinking [3]. In his opinion, to be a good supervisor, it is necessary to follow three things:

- It is necessary to have a deep understanding of all principles based on a particular science.
- It is necessary to have the skill of drawing conclusions from the principles and information within the framework of this subject, that is, to master the rules of analysis;
- To distinguish truth from falsehood, it is necessary to refute incorrect theories and analyze the opinions and suggestions of other authors to correct errors.

Here, regarding student critical thinking, researcher M. Maxammatova states, “Critical thinking means not criticizing shortcomings, but the ability to identify a problem and develop an appropriate strategy for its solution.” It can assess the reliability of the data and can contribute to the formation of a system of analytical approaches for its analysis and justification of conclusions. In our opinion, through reading and analyzing texts in native language lessons in primary grades, students should learn to identify problems, focusing on finding the problem of the story’s protagonist and analyzing ways to solve it. To develop these skills, it is recommended to use group discussions, question-and-answer methods, and role-playing games in lessons, as this teaches students not only to memorize but also to justify their opinions.

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The most renowned author of critical thinking research problems, Harvard University professor M. Scriven, offers the following definition: “the ability to skillfully analyze and evaluate observations, connections, and data, and to put forward precise arguments related to subsequent thoughts and actions” [5]. This definition defines critical thinking as a process of active analysis, evaluation, and drawing well-founded conclusions, which is not limited to passively receiving or suspecting data. This serves as a solid theoretical



foundation for developing critical thinking skills in education, particularly in primary school students' native language and reading literacy lessons.

M. Scriven's definition aligns with cognitive psychology and educational theories (for example, Bloom's taxonomy), as it links critical thinking to the levels of analysis, evaluation, and creation. This definition emphasizes the orderly and systematic nature of critical thinking, presenting it as a general ability that can be applied to elementary school students. Its reliance on "skilled analysis" and "clear arguments" emphasizes the importance of developing students' logical thinking and independent reasoning skills. In our opinion, from the perspective of developing critical thinking skills in primary school students' native language and reading literacy lessons, based on Scriven's definition, the following methodological approach can be applied:

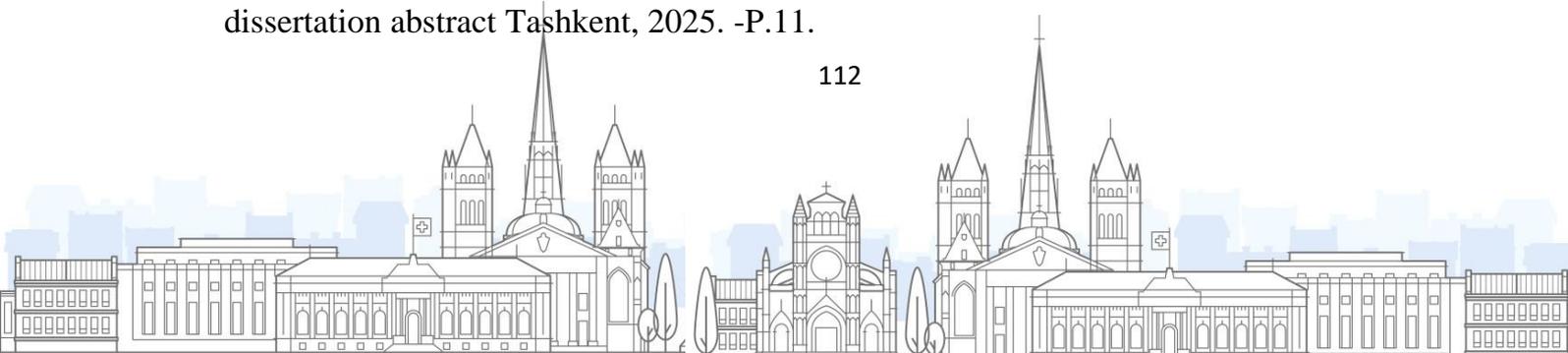
1) In native language lessons: Students can be assigned tasks such as analyzing texts, identifying the author's main idea, and evaluating arguments. For example, "Was the hero's decision right?" Questions like "Why?" are used to teach students how to formulate arguments.

2) Reading literacy: Students are encouraged to assess the reliability of the information in the text, for example, by asking: "Where did this information come from? How can it be checked?" This develops the skill of attentively analyzing information. Through group discussions, role-playing games, question-and-answer methods, and problem-solving tasks, students can develop critical thinking skills. These methods align with M. Scriven's requirement of "putting forward specific arguments."

Analysis of research in the field of the methodology for creating lessons, which includes the formation and development of critical thinking skills, shows that this process includes a whole list of individual abilities, skills, and higher mental processes, among which the following can be distinguished: recognition of conclusions, assessment of the reliability and correctness of information, the ability to distinguish significant and unimportant facts, the ability to distinguish strong and weak facts, the ability to distinguish facts from statements, etc. If we apply all of this to language learning, we can see how these abilities can be developed with its help. For example, recognizing conclusions in reading is a skill that develops in teaching critical reading, while recognizing the speaker's conclusions is nothing more than teaching critical listening.

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