FOSTER CRITICAL THINKING IN CLASSROOMS

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Abstract:

Education is life itself; it is not a means of preparation for life. John Dewey, a well-known 20th-century philosopher, said. This still holds true today as it did during his lifetime. Critical thinking has long been seen as a crucial component of education. It entails reasoning, forming judgments and conclusions, and problem-solving. The fact that India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 places critical thinking at the forefront of research, curriculum and pedagogy, and evaluation is not surprising given this. This paper discusses about the critical thinkers' characteristics and the ways to foster it in the classroom.

Keywords: *Critical Thinking, NEP, Problem Solving*

Introduction:

The phrase "critical thinking" is frequently used in educational contexts. Adult learners are urged to develop these abilities and put them to use in various contexts. Reviewing the ideas generated, deciding tentatively on the course of action or the viewpoint that is most logical, and then analysing and improving that action or viewpoint are all examples of critical thinking (Ruggiero, 2012). It is impossible to compare critical thinking to another ability, such as riding a bicycle. It cannot be acquired and used at will because to its cognitive nature. Certain conditions must be satisfied in order to acquire and practise it, including familiarity with the context, depth of subject-matter knowledge, and mastery of metacognitive techniques like planning and reflection.

Principles of NEP:

The goal of education is to create decent people who are able to reason, act with courage and resilience, show compassion and empathy, have a scientific temperament, have a creative imagination, and uphold moral principles and ideals. In order to create the equal, inclusive, and pluralistic society that our Constitution envisions, it aspires to create active, productive, and contributing citizens. According to the government, National Education Policy 2020's guiding concepts are:

- Flexibility
- No hard separations between subjects, curricular and extra-curricular activities
- Multi-disciplinary education
- Conceptual understanding
- Critical thinking
- Ethical Values Teachers as the heart of the learning process

- The strong public education system

Critical Thinking and NEP

With the implementation of the NEP 2020, we hope to reform education and place a strong emphasis on teaching students how to think critically, solve issues, be creative and multidisciplinary thinkers, as well as how to innovate, adapt, and absorb new information in new and evolving domains. In addition to science and mathematics, the new curriculum will include fundamental humanities, games, sports, and fitness as well as languages, literature, culture, and values to help students develop all of their skills and abilities and to provide a more well-rounded, practical, and satisfying education.

The NEP 2020 places a strong emphasis on helping pupils develop their "creative potential" and "higher-order cognitive capacities." In addition to "social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions," this also includes "critical thinking and problem-solving."

As desirable consequences of the educational system, adaptability and learning to learn are thus recognised by NEP 2020 on the right track. The curriculum will be created with critical thinking as its main focus rather than rote learning. The difficult part will be teaching faculty members how to comprehend and use the new educational approach.

Critical Thinking:

The NEP 2020 emphasises the development of students' "creative potential" and "higher-order cognitive capacities." Beyond "social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions," this also encompasses "critical thinking and problem-solving."

Therefore, NEP 2020 correctly acknowledges the importance of flexibility and learning to learn as desirable objectives of the educational system. The creation of the curriculum will be influenced more by critical thinking than by memorization. Training faculty to comprehend and implement the new educational approach will be difficult, though.

Paul and Scriven continue by saying that the foundation of critical thinking is: "Clearness, accuracy, consistency, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness are universal intellectual ideals that cut across subject matter boundaries. Examining the thinking processes that underlie all reasoning includes looking at the aim, problem or subject at hand, assumptions, concepts, empirical support, reasoning that leads to conclusions, implications and results, challenges from competing viewpoints, and frame of reference. A family of interconnected modes of thinking, including scientific thinking, mathematical thinking, historical thinking, anthropological thinking, economic thinking, moral thinking, and philosophical thinking, includes critical thinking because it is responsive to a variety of subject matter, issues, and purposes."

Richard Paul and Linder Elder created the Paul-Elder critical thinking framework by further developing and refining this understanding of critical thinking. This strategy is currently one of the critical thinking literatures most published and quoted frameworks.

The Paul-Elder paradigm defines critical thinking as: Analysing thinking by emphasising its components or structures ("the Elements of Thought") evaluating thinking by emphasising its calibre ("the Universal Intellectual Standards")

Improving your ability to think by applying what you have learnt ("the Intellectual Traits")

Characteristics of critical thinking:

It's crucial to cultivate critical thinking abilities for both your personal and professional lives. By taking into account several viewpoints, analytical thinking can assist you in problem-solving, conflict resolution, prejudice identification, and empathy. You can improve both your personal and professional life by developing the necessary abilities and attributes by learning how to think critically, clearly, and reasonably. How to develop the traits and skills of a critical thinker.

1. **Curiosity**

   A question and the pursuit of a solution are the foundation of almost all learning processes. Critical thinkers, managers, and leaders who want to learn more about problems, procedures, and people must be naturally curious. Being curious requires being interested in the world around you, asking questions, understanding the "why" behind widely held beliefs, and acknowledging that you don't know everything.

2. **Self-reflection**

   Healthy introspection can be achieved through being aware of one's actions, thoughts, awareness, decisions, and biases. Analytical, research, decision-making, and problem-solving skills can all be improved by being aware of one's emotional and mental condition. A critical thinker's emotional growth and development depend on their ability to see and admit their own biases and learn from them.

3. **Analytical skills**

   The capacity to think critically about a situation and look at the data from several angles is known as analytical thinking. Any aspect of a person's personal or professional life, such as reports, presentations, conversations, or even a relationship, can be examined with the use of analytical skills.

4. **Originality**

   A creative mind aids critical thinkers in coming up with original and inventive solutions to ongoing or recurrent issues. In order to generate fresh ideas, try new things, and bring about change, critical thinkers analyse conventional procedures and strategies. In order to think creatively and use new viewpoints and techniques to make decisions, one must reject conventional ideas and answers. Critical thinkers must be willing to challenge conventional wisdom and consider outlandish concepts.

5. **Decision-making**

   To use their knowledge and discoveries, critical thinkers need to have excellent decision-making and problem-solving abilities. Critical thinkers are able to solve problems through a process that includes reflection, analysis, and objective thought, as well as the capacity to choose the best course of action. Critical thinkers make decisions with clarity and knowledge of the causes and effects of their choices. They typically make selections while also taking efficiency and time into account.

6. **Observation and focus on specifics**

   For critical thinkers to detect minute nuances in their work and discover flaws, observation and attention to detail are essential. Critical thinkers can predict and prepare for future events by being vigilant while analysing problems and coming up with answers.

Importance of Critical Thinking in a Classroom:

Any concept's foundation can become deeply ingrained in kids during their time in school. Students can improve their analytical and logical reasoning abilities by adopting the critical thinking approach to learning. Not only can critical thinking improve one's capacity for objectivity, but it also helps one reach the right conclusions. The potential for pupils' young minds to pick up abilities that will stick with them for the rest of their lives is huge. Thus, by exposing children to the critical thinking process in the classroom, they can get an advantage in all spheres of real life.

A learner can gain the following advantages from the critical thinking exercises that are taught in schools:

Enhances the pupils' capacity for problem-solving while assisting them in making wise selections.

Students improve their creativity.

Students that are capable of critical thinking are also better at time management since they can plan.

Students who use critical thinking are also better able to evaluate the material that is offered to them. They learn to discern between what is right and what is wrong.

Critical thinking skills enable students to adjust successfully in later life. Such abilities are required of students and employees by universities and businesses.

The pupils get better at handling circumstances, even in ordinary life.

Fostering Critical:

Thinking in Classrooms:

The main managers of the classrooms and the students are the teachers. A teacher is in charge of putting numerous things into action in a classroom. The following actions can be taken by educators and instructors to promote a critical thinking learning style in the classroom:

A teacher must first comprehend the fundamental ideas and concepts underlying the critical thinking technique. Then and only then may it be used in a classroom.

Being receptive to the suggestions of the pupils and attending to their worries.

Encourage the kids to take part in the debates and discussions.

Give students the information they need and engage them in activities that test their critical thinking skills.

Rather than giving the kids the answers up front, let them work through some problems on their own first.

Give them frequent feedback.

Use a hands-on learning strategy, as kids retain information better this way.

Present issues to the class and inquire about their proposed course of action. Their capacity for problem-solving and making choices will grow as a result.

Plan events outside of the classroom. Students pick up new skills in an open setting.

Encourage the pupils to be receptive to fresh notions and ideas. Additionally, aid in developing their capacity for cognitive thought and instruct children to respect the thoughts and ideas of others.

Inform the students about other traditions and cultures. Their view of the world will widen as a result.

Educreator Research Journal

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