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THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN ENHANCING CRITICAL THINKING IN CLASSROOMS TODAY

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ABSTRACT

In today's rapidly changing and complex professional landscape, equipping students with the necessary skills to succeed in their chosen careers is critical. Among these skills, critical thinking stands out as a key skill that develops analytical thinking, problem solving, and sound decision-making. Recognizing the importance of critical thinking in professional success, there is a growing need for the education system to focus on developing this skill in students. This article aims to explore strategies for improving the system of preparing students for professional activities by emphasizing the development of critical thinking skills.

KEYWORDS

Educational environment, teaching methodology and technology integration, professional activities.

INTRODUCTION

A comprehensive review of the existing literature from a variety of disciplines, including education, psychology, and business, was conducted to examine the relationship between critical thinking development and career readiness. The analysis aims to identify key theories, frameworks, and empirical studies that emphasize the importance of critical thinking in professional contexts. In addition, a literature review explored effective teaching strategies,assessment methods, and interventions for developing critical thinking skills in students.The role of critical thinking in professional success has been explored by examining its effects on problem solving, innovation, flexibility, and ethical decision making. During the analysis, the impact of such factors as educational environment, curriculum design, teaching methodology and technology integration on the development of students' critical thinking skills was also considered.In this article, a literature review methodology was adopted to synthesize and analyze existing research on

improving the system of preparing students for professional activities through the development of critical thinking skills. The research process includes the following steps:1. Identification of relevant literature: A comprehensive search of scholarly databases such as ERIC, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar was conducted. Key words such as "critical thinking", "professional activity", "career readiness", "education" were used to identify relevant studies.2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria: The selected literature included peer-reviewed articles, books and reports focusing on the relationship between critical thinking development and professionalWhat Is Critical Thinking?

Critical thinking is a higher-order cognitive skill that is indispensable to students, readying them to respond to a variety of complex problems that are sure to arise in their personal and professional lives. The cognitive skills at the foundation of critical thinking are analysis, interpretation, evaluation, explanation, inference, and self-regulation.

When students think critically, they actively engage in these processes:

Communication

Analysis

Synthesis

Problem-solving

Evaluation

Reflection

To create environments that engage students in these processes, instructors need to ask questions, encourage the expression of diverse opinions, and involve students in a variety of hands-on activities that force them to be involved in their learning.Technology fosters engagement and motivation in learners by providing interactive learning tools, gamification, and multimedia resources. These elements make the learning process more enjoyable and engaging, leading to increased knowledge retention and the development of critical thinking skills.22-iy Critical thinking is the ability to analyze, evaluate, and apply logic and reasoning to different situations and problems. It is an essential skill for creative problem solving, as it helps you to generate, select, and implement innovative and effective solutions. Technology can be a powerful tool to enhance your critical thinking skills, if you know how to use it wisely and ethically. In this article, you will learn how to use technology to improve your critical thinking in four ways: by accessing diverse and reliable information, by using digital tools and platforms to collaborate and communicate, by practicing and testing your skills through online games and simulations, and by reflecting and evaluating your own thinking process and outcomes. Access diverse and reliable information

One of the benefits of technology is that it gives you access to a vast amount of

information from different sources and perspectives. However, not all information is equally valid, accurate, or relevant. To improve your critical thinking, you need to be able to filter, verify, and synthesize the information you find online. You can use search engines, databases, and online libraries to find credible and authoritative sources, such as academic journals, reputable news outlets, or official organizations. You can also use tools like fact-checkers, plagiarism checkers, and citation generators to ensure the quality and integrity of the information you use. You can also compare and contrast different sources and viewpoints to gain a deeper and broader understanding of the topic or problem Use digital tools and platforms to collaborate and communicate

Another way to use technology to improve your critical thinking is to use digital tools and platforms to collaborate and communicate with others. Technology enables you to connect, share, and exchange ideas with people from different backgrounds, cultures, and disciplines. You can use social media, online forums, blogs, podcasts, or webinars to engage in discussions, debates, or feedback sessions with others who have different opinions, experiences, or expertise. You can also use online collaboration tools, such as Google Docs, Slack, or Trello, to work on projects, tasks, or challenges with others who have different skills, roles, or perspectives. By collaborating and communicating with others, you can learn to listen, question, challenge, and support your own and others' arguments, assumptions, and evidence. Practice and test your skills through online games and simulations

A third way to use technology to improve your critical thinking is to practice and test your skills through online games and simulations. Technology offers you a variety of interactive and immersive experiences that can stimulate your brain, challenge your logic, and enhance your creativity. You can play online games, such as puzzles, quizzes, riddles, or escape rooms, that require you to use your analytical, deductive, or inductive reasoning skills. You can also use online simulations, such as virtual reality, augmented reality, or artificial intelligence, that allow you to explore different scenarios, environments, or situations that require you to use your decision-making, problem-solving, or innovation skills. By practicing and testing your skills through online games and simulations, you can improve your mental agility, flexibility, and adaptability. Reflect and evaluate your own thinking process and outcomes

A fourth way to use technology to improve your critical thinking is to reflect and evaluate your own thinking process and outcomes. Technology can help you to monitor, document, and review your own thinking patterns, habits, and biases. You can use online tools, such as journals, blogs, portfolios, or podcasts, to record and share your thoughts, ideas, questions, or insights. You can also use online tools, such as surveys, quizzes, rubrics, or feedback forms, to assess and measure your own performance, progress, or improvement. By

reflecting and evaluating your own thinking process and outcomes, you can identify your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or challenges, and learn from your mistakes, successes, or feedback. Peer review activities. Peer review activities enable students to demonstrate communication skills by giving feedback on each other's work, expose students to alternative perspectives, and allow students to question what they are reading. Doing peer review activities online can protects students' anonymity, making students more likely to be honest in their feedback (Lin, S. S., Liu, E. Z. F., & Yuan, S. M., 2001, Web-based peer assessment: feedback for students with various thinking-styles).

Example: Use the peer review assignment feature in Canvas and manually or automatically form peer review groups. These groups can be anonymous or display students' names. Tell students to give feedback to two of their peers on the first draft of a research paper. Use the rubric feature in Canvas to create a rubric for students to use. Show students the rubric along with the assignment instructions so that students know what they will be evaluated on and how to evaluate their peers.

Discussion forums. Discussion forums allow students to communicate with their peers, answer questions that require them to demonstrate both lower-level and higher-level critical thinking skills, and analyze course content.

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