OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPING THE INTELLECTUAL POTENTIAL OF FUTURE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS BASED ON CRITICAL THINKING

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Annotation. *This article analyzes the pedagogical possibilities for developing the intellectual capacity of future primary education teachers based on critical thinking. The concept of critical thinking, its role in the educational process, as well as ways of enhancing intellectual potential through modern pedagogical approaches and opportunities for developing individual intellectual capacity are examined. Intellectuality is not only the possession of knowledge, but also the ability to think independently, solve problems, draw logical conclusions, and create new ideas. The study compares traditional and innovative methods by analyzing factors influencing intellectual development, the role of modern technologies, the education system, and the social environment, and puts forward practical recommendations.*

Keywords: *critical thinking, intellectual development, primary education, pedagogical approach, innovation, intellectuality, modern technologies, education system.*

Introduction.

In the 21st century, the main goal of the education system is to form creative and critically thinking, independent decision-making, and competitive individuals. The primary education stage, in particular, is the foundation of this process, and teachers working at this level must have a high level of intellectual potential. Critical thinking is one of the key factors in developing this potential. Therefore, forming critical thinking competencies in future primary education teachers has become an important scientific and practical issue.

In today's fast-paced information age, a person's intellectual potential plays a central role in their personal and professional success. Intellectuality is not only a level of knowledge but also a combination of thinking style, analytical approach, creativity, and a conscious attitude toward life. For this reason, developing an individual's intellectual capacity is one of the most relevant areas in modern pedagogy and psychology.

In the intellectual development of future primary school teachers, self-activation based on acquired knowledge compels them to master the content necessary for their

future professional activity. Critical thinking is a combination of cognitive abilities and affective qualities. According to experts, critical thinking includes the following cognitive skills: explanation, analysis, evaluation, inference, and self-regulation. Each of these five skills forms the foundation of critical thinking, and its effectiveness can be assessed using specific criteria. Critical thinking skills play a significant role in training intellectually competent specialists.

The main critical thinking skills represent a multifaceted process that can be developed through various methods. Below, we list the key skills characteristic of this process, as well as those that help improve and shape them (Table 1).

Core Skills	**Components of Primary Sub-skills**
1	2
Problem Identification	- formulating unanswered questions; - identifying specific features; - collecting facts; - setting tasks and defining the problem.
Classification	- identifying similarities and differences; - grouping and sorting information; - making comparisons; - distinguishing differences (“what…what”).
Searching for Relationships	- identifying connections between parts and the whole; - creating models; - analyzing and synthesizing; - distinguishing sequence and order; - supporting inductive and deductive reasoning.
Drawing Conclusions	- identifying cause and effect; - distinguishing differences; - making conclusions; - evaluation.

Forming critical thinking skills in the educational process increases future primary school teachers’ interest in their profession, strengthens their knowledge, and fosters a scientific attitude. It plays an important role in preparing competitive, critically thinking, and intellectually developed specialists in the labor market. The main critical thinking abilities include interpretation, analysis, and evaluation.

At the stage of interpretation, the essence of experience, situations, data, events, judgments, agreements, beliefs, rules, procedures, and criteria is understood. From this fundamental interpretive skill, the following sub-skills emerge: classification, decoding meaning, and clarifying meaning.

Another key critical thinking skill is analysis. Analysis is the ability to distinguish deliberate and specific logical relationships among thoughts, questions, concepts, descriptions, or representations intended to express beliefs, judgments, experiences, data, or other forms of reasoning. Internal analytical skills include examining ideas, identifying arguments, and analyzing evidence.

Evaluation is the ability to assess the credibility of statements or other representations that describe or explain a person's perception, experience, condition, judgment, belief, or opinion, as well as to evaluate the logical strength of relationships between statements, descriptions, inquiries, or other forms of representation.

In connection with our research, we identified the main intellectual functions of an individual as a basis for developing the intellectual capacity of future primary school teachers.

Figure 1 — Main intellectual functions for future primary school teachers



The ability of future primary school teachers to think critically, as well as their capacity to fully master and apply its key principles and methods in practice, creates opportunities for the development of their intellectual potential. Within the framework of the higher education modernization program being implemented in our country, the proper use of the fundamental principles and methods of critical thinking, the development of intellectual abilities, and the formation of skills to apply knowledge in real life are recognized as essential.

In our research, we examined the possibilities for developing the intellectual capacity of future primary school teachers based on critical thinking. We conclude that

forming critical thinking skills in the educational process increases students' interest in their profession, ensures high-quality knowledge acquisition, and contributes to preparing competitive, intellectually developed individuals through a scientific approach. This, in turn, helps them assert their professional identity.

Based on the analysis of psychological and pedagogical studies, we found that a future teacher's resourcefulness contributes significantly to the success of pedagogical activity. This is because teaching activity is regulated—time is limited, and unexpected situations often arise during lessons that require quick decision-making without prolonged deliberation. This quality enables teachers to respond promptly and flexibly to pedagogical situations, adapt and transform them, give them a positive, constructive, and purposeful direction, and find new solutions in real educational and upbringing contexts.

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