

EDUCATING FOR DEMOCRACY

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В статті розглядаються цілі і завдання впровадження критичного мислення в навчальний процес, визначається роль критичного мислення в демократизації освіти і суспільства в цілому.

Ключові слова: критичне мислення, демократизації освіти, інтелектуальні навички, ініціативне навчання.

В статье рассматриваются цели и задачи введения критического мышление в учебный процесс, определяется роль критического мышления в демократизации образования и общества в целом.

Ключевые слова: критическое мышление, демократизация образования, интеллектуальные навыки, инициативное обучение.

The paper deals with the goals and tasks of critical thinking implementation into the learning process. Teaching of critical thinking in Ukraine is considered to be a necessary element of teaching democracy under conditions of complex and long-term transition from an authoritarian order to a democratic one. The role of critical thinking in the democratization of education and society at large has been investigated in the article. Educating for democracy means educating citizens who are prepared to act responsibly in the world and can hear the voice of difference and live with it constructively.

In the modern world teaching of critical thinking has become imperative. Students at all levels of education must become more thoughtful, more reasonable, and more judicious. Critical thinking improves reasonableness, and democracy requires reasonable citizens, so critical thinking is a necessary means if the goal is a democratic society. Democratic dispositions such as open-mindedness, reason-giving, cooperative problem solving, and willingness to consider alternatives are all values that are operationalized in the critical thinking classroom. The integration of critical thinking methodology at all levels and across the entire curriculum of the Ukrainian educational system is essential for democratization of Ukrainian society.

Key words: critical thinking, democratization of education, intellectual skills, initiative learning.

What is the main difference between democracy and other political systems? Unlike other political systems, democracy can only evolve; it cannot be imposed. Education can be considered one of the most important factors in the democratization of a society. Through education a society may bring up future citizens to have progressive and democratic outlooks.

The reformation of the Ukrainian educational system—after decades of domination by totalitarian ways of thinking and acting—represents a promising possibility for the Ukrainian society to make a considerable step toward becoming an open democratic society. The majority of people

need to be taught and educated anew to be able to be free and responsible at the same time. “No leader, no matter how brilliant, can lead a democracy if the people are not educated in the practices of citizenship in a democracy” [1:15].

Ukraine today is in need of active and participatory citizens who can think well about matters of importance that affect society. Therefore, the primary responsibility and fundamental purpose of the Ukrainian education is to educate for democracy. What is educating for democracy? It is teaching the ability to hear the voice of difference and disagreement and to live with it constructively. Educating for democracy means educating citizens who are prepared to act responsibly in the world.

The next question then becomes how can students be taught to be prepared for public democratic citizenship? Part of the answer lies in learning from the experience of American universities that are teaching critical thinking. The history of democratization of education in the USA, and one of its accomplishments, the development of a new field and discipline—critical thinking, shows vividly how a democratic society can develop at and through the university level.

While the American experience is a relatively current phenomenon, the connection between critical thinking and democracy has been forged by a great many scholars for centuries. One of them was John Locke, who in his work “Some Thoughts on Education” insisted on the need for reasoned reflection by the citizens on the issues that confronted them [5]. The democratic purpose of American education was grounded in the theory and writings of John Dewey, as reflected in his 1916 publication “Democracy and Education” [2]. The key concept was that a government resting upon popular suffrage cannot be successful unless those who elect and who follow the elected are educated. Mathew Lipman, a founder of the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children at Montclair State University, USA went further. The specific skill of critical thinking, he posited, is an absolute necessity for democracy in education, and therefore should be taught to all students at all levels of education [4].

Nowadays, the course “Critical Thinking” is an essential element of the curriculum in virtually every American University and very many European institutions. Universities with strong international reputations, like Harvard, Princeton and Stanford and other lesser-known like Sonoma State University, Penn State University, University of Texas have been infusing critical thinking across curricula for decades. Montclair State University has become a respected leader in the field, and has been involved in teaching critical thinking at all levels for more than 30 years and has disseminated its experience to 70 countries worldwide.

What is more, some prominent world universities have introduced free online courses on critical thinking recently. One of the most popular course “Philosophy and Critical Thinking” has been offered by the University of Queensland, Australia. In 2016 this course has been translated into Ukrainian and is currently available online to the general public on Prometheus platform.

Speaking about offline formal education in Ukraine teaching for critical thinking has not been fully integrated into its system at all levels. Although the Ministry of Education and Science has included the course “The Basics of Critical Thinking” into the list of recommended elective courses for secondary schools in the academic year of 2016/2017, at the university level critical thinking has been taught as a part of the curriculum only in some institutions. This local and sporadic process needs to be developed and extended, as teaching critical thinking in Ukraine is a necessary element of teaching democracy under conditions of complex and long-term transition from an authoritarian order to a democratic one.

Nowadays it is crucial to study and evaluate the historic and social roots and conditions which presupposed the emergence of “democratic education” in the USA, Australia, Europe, to discover effective strategies, curriculum, evaluation, teaching methodologies, and delivery methods of critical thinking education, to discover obstacles which have been faced in the acceptance and implementation of critical thinking education, and the strategies which have been employed to overcome them, to discover the ways in which curriculum, materials and pedagogy have been adapted to teach critical thinking to different strata, social and ethnic groups, to learn the ways critical thinking is articulated across educational system of democratic countries at elementary, middle and high school, under-graduate, graduate and post-graduate levels, to study and analyze the current issues facing democratization of education in Ukraine and in other developing democracies

across the globe, to elaborate strategies and recommendations on promoting critical thinking in Ukraine to create rhetorical systems (including mass media, marketing, mentoring and lobbying) to encourage the acceptance of the imperative of the critical thinking paradigm by politicians and administrators in Ukraine .

The integration of critical thinking methodology at all levels and across the entire curriculum of the Ukrainian educational system is essential for democratization of Ukrainian society. In our increasingly complex world the teaching of critical thinking has become imperative. Students at all levels of education must become more thoughtful, more reasonable, and more judicious. Critical thinking improves reasonableness, and democracy requires reasonable citizens, so critical thinking is a necessary means if the goal is a democratic society.

There is growing incompatibility between Ukrainian education and the transition world for which it intends to prepare its students. The old system of education does not and will not produce individuals able to cope with the new challenges, as its purpose is to fill in students' brains (supposedly empty *tabula rasa*) with existing knowledge and to make them reproduce it in the classroom. In this construct, when students think for themselves, their experience is neither appreciated nor acknowledged. Students are mostly passive recipients.

We assume that one of the most important purposes of education now is the forming of communities of active learners—persons of responsibility and integrity, capable of making good judgments. To achieve this purpose, education should develop students' critical thinking, initiative learning, challenge them to work out independent perspectives in learning and at the same time encourage them to inquire collaboratively, prepare them for the democratic way of life, equip them with dispositions they need to create new knowledge and make better judgments in their daily lives.

Democratic dispositions such as open-mindedness, reason-giving, cooperative problem solving, and willingness to consider alternatives—are all values that are operationalized in the classroom community of critical thinking. “It is only through critical and reflective practice that real learning takes place, that democracy flourishes” [6:60]. That is why teaching critical thinking is the basic building block of a future citizenry that will actively participate in the transformation of Ukrainian society to democracy.

Given that teachers play a crucial role in the development of a democratic society and that critical thinking is an intricate part of democracy, it becomes evident that teachers must be prepared to practice and foster critical thinking in the classroom. The pedagogical universities of Ukraine, the place where a new generation of teachers is being trained, should bear the primary and critical obligation to prepare their students for educating in democratic practice.

Critical thinking, as an instrument for promoting democracy and human dignity, should penetrate every subject students learn and moreover become the overall methodology in education. It can't be a sporadic practice—it must be an ongoing and universal practice. While conferences, curriculum-planning sessions, teacher-training workshops, computer-based learning, journal articles and even mass media discussions are all necessary for a tectonic shift in a nation's approach to education, pedagogical universities, providing regular teacher-training courses for future teachers, are among the most crucial environments for promoting critical thinking methodology.

The democratization of education offers potential benefits not only for the Ukrainian system of education, but for promoting teaching critical thinking for democracy in other parts of the world as well – especially those that are attempting to transition from autocratic to some form of democratic rule. The integration of critical thinking proposes to study and adapt “western” methodologies that work in a mature free society with deep democratic roots to a different environment with no long-term democratic tradition. New ways of teaching critical thinking, might also energize scholarship and suggest new avenues of study for Ukrainian pedagogy. It can stimulate the development of international dialogue and understanding, has the potential to enrich the teaching of critical thinking in the rest of the developing world and might change the face of world education. At the same time that it enhances internal education inside Ukraine, it can also make a great contribution toward integrating the Ukrainian educational system into the world structure.

Moreover, teaching critical thinking can make Ukrainians competitive at the international job market. According to the Report “The Future of Jobs” made at the 2016 World Economic Forum in Davos critical thinking will take the second place among the most significant skills in future workforce. Over one-third of skills that are considered important in today’s workforce will have changed by 2020. The developments in artificial intelligence, genomics, biotechnology, autonomous transport, and machine learning will transform the way people live and work: some jobs will disappear, others will thrive, the new ones will appear [7].

Taking into account political and economic changes in Ukraine within the last years the matter of teaching critical thinking for democracy according to the needs of the contemporary time is of great significance. In addition, Ukrainian higher education has undergone the process of decentralization and has become more open to democratic changes. The integration of critical thinking across curriculum and at all levels of education can serve to increase the awareness of the principles of education in democratic society and promote the development of a new kind of mentality in Ukraine, the mentality of people who would take initiative to build a democratic society. Promoting critical thinking education for democracy in Ukraine can create a roadmap that will offer a light to show the way and meaningful strategies to create inroads for democracy in education here and abroad.

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ВІДОМОСТІ ПРО АВТОРА

Маргарита Данілко – кандидат філологічних наук, доцент кафедри перекладу, прикладної та загальної лінгвістики Кіровоградського державного педагогічного університету імені Володимира Винниченка.

Наукові інтереси: критичне мислення, демократизація освіти, стилістика англійської мови, порівняльна стилістика, інтерпретація тексту, перекладознавство.