



DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS THROUGH INTERACTIVE TEACHING METHODS

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Abstract

The development of critical thinking skills in primary school pupils is a key objective of contemporary education, as these skills form the foundation for independent learning, problem-solving, and informed decision-making. In early schooling, critical thinking does not emerge spontaneously but requires systematic pedagogical support through appropriately designed instructional approaches.

This article examines the role of interactive teaching methods in fostering critical thinking skills among primary school pupils. Interactive methods are understood as learner-centered approaches that actively engage pupils in dialogue, collaboration, inquiry, and reflection.

The study emphasizes the pedagogical value of interactive learning environments in which pupils are encouraged to ask questions, analyze information, compare ideas, and justify their opinions. Particular attention is given to the alignment of interactive methods with the cognitive and psychological characteristics of primary school learners.

The article argues that the purposeful integration of interactive teaching methods into primary education contributes to the development of critical thinking by promoting active participation, meaningful communication, and reflective learning. The findings highlight the importance of teacher competence, instructional design, and supportive classroom conditions in ensuring the effectiveness of interactive pedagogy in primary education.



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Introduction

In the context of rapid social, technological, and informational change, the ability to think critically has become a central educational priority. Modern education systems increasingly emphasize not only the acquisition of knowledge but also the development of higher-order thinking skills that enable learners to analyze information, evaluate arguments, and make reasoned judgments.

This shift is particularly significant in primary education, where foundational cognitive skills are formed and learning habits are established. Developing critical thinking at an early age creates the conditions for lifelong learning and intellectual independence.

Primary school pupils are naturally curious and receptive to new experiences, yet their thinking is often concrete and dependent on external guidance. At this stage, critical thinking manifests in age-appropriate forms such as asking “why” questions, identifying simple relationships, expressing personal opinions, and offering basic explanations. These abilities require deliberate pedagogical support, as traditional teacher-centered instruction may limit opportunities for active reasoning and reflection.

Consequently, educators are increasingly turning to interactive teaching methods as an effective means of engaging pupils in meaningful cognitive activity. Interactive teaching methods are grounded in constructivist learning theory, which views knowledge as actively constructed through interaction with the environment, peers, and teachers.

In primary classrooms, such methods include discussion-based activities, collaborative tasks, problem-solving exercises, role-playing, and guided inquiry. These approaches create conditions in which pupils are not passive recipients of information but active participants in the learning process.

Through interaction, pupils learn to articulate their thoughts, listen to others, compare perspectives, and refine their understanding. The relevance of



interactive methods in developing critical thinking is further reinforced by educational reforms that promote learner-centered pedagogy and competency-based education.

This article explores the pedagogical potential of interactive teaching methods in developing critical thinking skills of primary school pupils and considers their implications for classroom practice and teacher preparation.

Main Part

The development of critical thinking skills in primary school pupils requires instructional approaches that stimulate active mental engagement and encourage learners to reflect on their learning experiences. Interactive teaching methods provide a pedagogical framework that supports these processes by creating opportunities for dialogue, cooperation, and inquiry.

In primary education, critical thinking is closely linked to pupils' ability to understand tasks, analyze simple problems, and express reasoned opinions in an age-appropriate manner. One of the key advantages of interactive teaching methods is their capacity to involve pupils directly in the learning process.

Activities such as guided discussions and collaborative problem-solving encourage pupils to verbalize their ideas and listen to alternative viewpoints. Through this interaction, pupils learn to compare information, identify similarities and differences, and draw basic conclusions, which form the core of critical thinking.

Interactive methods also support the development of questioning skills that are essential for critical thinking. When teachers encourage pupils to ask questions and explore possible answers together, learning becomes an exploratory process rather than a fixed transmission of knowledge.

In primary classrooms, this may involve discussing stories, solving practical tasks, or analyzing everyday situations, helping pupils understand that problems can have multiple solutions. Another important aspect of interactive teaching is its social dimension.

Group work and pair activities promote cooperation and shared responsibility for learning. As pupils interact with peers, they are exposed to different ways of

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thinking and learn to justify their ideas, which enhances both cognitive and communicative development.

The effectiveness of interactive methods largely depends on the teacher’s role as a facilitator who designs meaningful tasks, provides guidance, and creates a supportive classroom atmosphere. Continuous observation and formative assessment enable teachers to adapt instruction to pupils’ needs and developmental levels.

When implemented systematically, interactive teaching methods contribute significantly to the development of critical thinking skills in primary education.

Conclusion

Developing critical thinking skills in primary school pupils is a fundamental objective of modern education, as these skills underpin intellectual growth and lifelong learning. The analysis presented in this article demonstrates that interactive teaching methods offer significant pedagogical potential for achieving this objective.

By engaging pupils actively in the learning process, interactive methods create conditions in which critical thinking can emerge and develop in age-appropriate forms. Interactive teaching methods support critical thinking by encouraging pupils to participate in discussions, ask questions, and collaborate with peers, thereby promoting deeper understanding and cognitive engagement.

In primary education, where learners are developing basic reasoning skills, such experiences are particularly valuable. The successful implementation of interactive methods depends on the professional competence of primary school teachers, their ability to manage classroom interaction, and their commitment to learner-centered pedagogy.

Teachers should be supported through professional development and access to methodological resources that enhance interactive practice. In conclusion, interactive teaching methods should be regarded as an integral component of primary education aimed at developing critical thinking skills. Their systematic use contributes not only to improved learning outcomes but also to the formation of active, reflective, and motivated learners.



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