ASSESSING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS: DEVELOPING ASSESSMENT TOOLS TO MEASURE CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Developing the critical thinking skills is essential for achieving success in higher education and in all other aspects of social life. In this this thesis, we focused on how to create and verify the tools designed to assess the critical thinking skills of students in higher education. The paper examines the significance of critical thinking in both academic and real-world settings, delineates the procedure for developing efficient evaluation instruments, and offers valuable perspectives on methods to cultivate and improve critical thinking skills. The results indicate that meticulously crafted evaluation instruments can proficiently assess the critical thinking skills effectively, providing significant perspectives for educators and institutions aiming to improve student learning achievements.

Keywords: critical thinking, assessment tools, higher education, validation, skills development

The majority of people are of the opinion that critical thinking is essential to achieving success in both the working sector and in higher education. It encompasses the ability to analyze, evaluate and combine evidence in order to find solutions to challenging conditions and achieve logical conclusions. As Savich (2008) mentioned, Considering that teachers are making efforts to cultivate critical thinking skills in their students, the need for assessment methods that are reliable and legitimate is becoming increasingly important [1].

Based on the literature that we have analyzed, the following ways and methods are recommended to improve the assessment tools to assess critical thinking skills of higher education students.

- Firstly, encourage active learning to analyze the students' critical thinking skills. Engage students in activities that require analysis, evaluation, and problem solving. Case studies, debates, and collaborative projects can help students develop critical thinking skills by applying knowledge to real-world scenarios.
- Foster a growth in students' mindset. Encourage students to embrace challenges and

ISSN 2181-2632 www.involta.uz

view failures as opportunities for growth. By promoting resilience and perseverance, educators can help students develop the confidence to think critically and creatively.

- Provide students with constructive feedback during the classes. Offer specific feedback that encourages students to reflect on their thought processes and consider alternative perspectives. According to Cotter (2009) constructive feedback can guide students toward deeper critical thinking and self-improvement. When given correctly, constructive feedback gives students clear, useful information about their skills and weaknesses that helps them figure out what they need to work on. Students can improve their critical thinking, problem-solving, and general performance with the help of feedback that focuses on the behaviour or work itself rather than the student [2]. Encourage students to ask questions, explore diverse viewpoints, and seek out new information. Curiosity fuels critical thinking by inspiring inquiry and exploration.

According to Mahdi at all. the two effective ways of assessing students' critical thingking skills are considered using 'case studies' and conducting 'problem based' teaching. In the following paragraphs, the two ways of evaluating students' critical thinking skills will be analyzed in detail [3].

Case Studies: Case studies are a great way to test the critical thinking skills of college students. Teachers can test students' ability to think critically about information, spot important problems, come up with answers, and defend their choices by putting them in real-life or complicated situations. Students must use their critical thinking skills to understand the case's details, look at it from different points of view, and make choices based on the evidence they have access to. Case studies help students learn how to solve problems, analyse information critically, and come up with creative solutions to tough issues.

Problem-Based Learning: In higher education, problem-based learning is a good way to test and improve students' critical thinking skills. With this method, students are given open-ended, real-world problems that they need to solve by using what they know, analysing information, working with others, and applying what they've learned. Students are taught to think critically, find underlying problems, look at things from different points of view, and evaluate possible solutions through problem-based learning exercises. This method not only tests students' critical thinking skills, but it also helps them improve skills like working together, talking to others, and making decisions [4]. Through an organised but flexible learning process, problem-based learning pushes students to look at problems as a whole, think about many factors, and come up with new ways to solve them.

By implementing effective strategies for skill development and utilizing well-designed assessment tools, educators can play a pivotal role in nurturing students' critical thinking

ISSN 2181-2632 www.involta.uz

abilities, preparing them for success in academia and beyond.

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