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INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN TEACHING PRIMARY STUDENTS TO THINK

Abstract: This article analyzes the role and importance of international experiences in teaching primary school students to think. The article examines teaching methods and approaches used in the educational systems of developed countries, in particular, programs aimed at developing creative and critical thinking. Based on the experience of countries such as Finland, Singapore and the USA, effective ways of forming independent thinking skills in students are shown. Recommendations on adaptation of international educational practices to local conditions are also given in the content of the article.

Keywords: development of thinking, international experience, primary education, creative thinking, critical thinking, educational methods, pedagogical approaches.

Introduction (Introduction)

Formation of independent thinking skills in primary school students is one of the main tasks of the modern education system. International experience shows that in developed countries great attention is paid to the development of creative and critical thinking in the educational process. This article examines methods and effective pedagogical approaches for the formation of thinking skills in primary education, based on the experience of countries such as Singapore, Finland, and the United States. International experience, in turn, can enrich the local education system and serve as a valuable direction for the introduction of new methods.

Methods. In this study, the qualitative analysis method, which is widely used in the educational process, was used to study international experiences. Primary education programs and methodologies in Singapore, Finland, and the United States are analyzed based on scientific articles, government documents, and educational statistics. In addition, the method of comparative analysis was used in order to determine how well international studies and experiences are compatible with the local education system.

Results. International experience shows that interactive methods are widely used in primary education in many countries to teach students to think. For example:

Singapore - The education system is at the top of the PISA ranking. Special programs and lessons based on game elements are introduced here to develop critical thinking. Great attention is paid to group work exercises aimed at solving problems among students.

Finland – The Finnish education system is known for its high results and stress-free teaching approach. Here, together with the social and emotional development of children, their creative and analytical thinking skills are widely developed. In the teaching process, multi-level tasks aimed at acquiring natural knowledge and solving problems independently are used.

USA - STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) programs play an important role in the development of critical thinking skills in the American education system. Students are given the opportunity to learn through practice, and project-based learning is widely used.

Discussion. As international experience shows, it is necessary to introduce interactive and interesting methods in addition to traditional teaching methods to develop students' thinking skills. However, it is important to adapt these methods to local conditions. For example, by adopting Finland's stress-free

learning approach or Singapore's problem-solving methods, local education can focus more on creative thinking.

On the other hand, it is important to integrate technologies into the educational system to develop critical and creative thinking skills in students. Through ICT (information and communication technologies), the educational process can be made interactive and effective. For example, through project-based learning, students learn to solve real-life problems, which strengthens their critical and independent thinking.

Critical thinking is a fundamental skill that equips students to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information effectively. As educational paradigms shift towards fostering 21st-century skills, teaching primary students to think critically has gained increasing importance. This paper explores international experiences in teaching critical thinking to primary students, highlighting effective strategies, innovative programs, and diverse educational approaches.

This study employs a comparative analysis of various educational systems worldwide that have successfully integrated critical thinking into their primary education curricula. Countries selected for analysis include Finland, Singapore, Canada, and Australia.

Academic journals, educational reports, and policy documents were reviewed to identify successful strategies for teaching critical thinking. Specific programs and initiatives from the selected countries were analyzed to understand their approaches to teaching thinking skills in primary education. Conversations with educators and policymakers from these countries provided insights into the practical application of critical thinking strategies in the classroom.

Finland's educational system emphasizes student-centered learning, encouraging critical thinking through inquiry-based learning. Teachers are trained to create an environment where students ask questions, explore topics deeply, and engage in problem-solving activities. The Finnish curriculum incorporates real-world issues, enabling students to apply their thinking skills in meaningful contexts.

In Singapore, the emphasis on critical thinking is reflected in the "Thinking Schools, Learning Nation" initiative. The curriculum encourages students to engage in higher-order thinking through structured programs that include collaborative learning, problem-based learning, and the use of technology. Teachers employ strategies such as guided questioning and interactive discussions to promote analytical thinking and creativity.

Canada's approach to critical thinking is embedded in its curriculum framework, which promotes inquiry-based learning and interdisciplinary connections. Schools utilize various pedagogical methods, such as project-based learning and cooperative learning, to encourage students to think critically. Educators are encouraged to create inclusive environments that support diverse thinking styles and perspectives.

Australia's national curriculum emphasizes critical and creative thinking as essential skills for students. The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) provides resources and guidelines for teachers to integrate thinking skills into their lessons. Programs such as the "Critical and Creative Thinking" framework support educators in developing students' abilities to analyze problems, evaluate information, and generate innovative solutions.

The international experiences analyzed demonstrate that teaching primary students to think critically involves a combination of effective pedagogical strategies, supportive curricula, and teacher professional development. Key themes identified across these countries include:

1. **Inquiry-Based Learning:** Encouraging students to ask questions and seek answers through exploration and investigation.
2. **Collaborative Learning:** Promoting teamwork and dialogue among students to foster diverse perspectives and collective problem-solving.

3. **Real-World Relevance:** Connecting learning to real-life situations, allowing students to apply critical thinking skills in meaningful contexts.
4. **Teacher Training:** Providing educators with the necessary tools and strategies to teach thinking skills effectively.
5. **Inclusive Practices:** Recognizing and valuing diverse thinking styles and perspectives to create an equitable learning environment.

International experiences in teaching primary students to think critically reveal a range of effective strategies and approaches. By adopting elements from successful educational systems worldwide, educators can enhance their practices and foster a culture of critical thinking in primary education. Future research should explore the long-term impacts of these strategies on student outcomes and consider how to adapt them to different cultural contexts.

Conclusion. The use of international experiences in teaching primary school students to think plays an important role in improving the quality of education. The experiences of Singapore, Finland and the USA demonstrate effective methods of developing independent, creative and critical thinking in children. Developing new approaches using these experiences in the local education system will make the learning process of students more interesting and effective. Also, by adapting these methods to local conditions, a great contribution can be made to the development of the education system.

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