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Critical Thinking as Philosophical and Psychological Category

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Abstract

Background:

The notion “critical thinking” has been used in scientific literature for about 50 years already. Critical thinking development as educational innovation in Ukraine was provoked at the end of the XX century. Thus, in 1996 the Ukrainian scientist Tiaglo emphasised the importance and significance of critical thinking development in conditions of informative society. Nowadays it is evident that education should be focused on prospect in order to form pupils' skills to get orientated quickly in increasing flow of information, analyse and systematise it, as well as to apply it correctly in the teaching process. All this requires from modern pupils the ability to think critically with the aim to search for a grounded conclusion or optimal solution.

The aim of the study is to reveal the essence of the notion “critical thinking” as philosophical and psychological category.

Methods:

The methods of theoretical analysis and generalisation of literature sources has allowed revealing objectively the given notion, whose methodological basis is considered to be groundwork of representatives of philosophy and psychology.

Results:

The notion “thinking” was first introduced by philosophers Aristotle, Democritus, Epicurus, Parmenides, Plato, Socrates. Parmenides considered thinking as a way of cognition that leads to the verity. Socrates became a founder of a heuristic method of teaching, which presupposes that a pupil has to “cognise themselves”, and a teacher has only to direct them to the search. In Plato’s opinion, it is necessary to start fostering interest to cognition in pre-school and primary school age, developing independent way of thinking. Aristotle also followed the idea of an independent way of thinking and development of pupils’ cognitive activity. The philosophers researched critical thinking quite perfunctory, but their ideas in the course of time were actively developed by the modern researchers.

Pompton argues that the modern psychology interprets critical thinking as such that favours formation of a person’s ability to realise their own viewpoint in this or that issue, skills to find new ideas, analyse their own viewpoint in this or that issue, skills to find new ideas, analyse events and assess them critically.

Chaplak described critical thinking as thinking that presupposes the formed skills to estimate events; make

a conscious choice; give arguments; formulate appropriate questions; distinguish between facts and opinions; look for new solutions to problems; determine criteria for analysis; find proofs to support hypotheses; build logical connections. Rubinstein considered that people, who think critically, check deliberately their own hypotheses. Khalpern stated that critical thinking is the use of cognitive techniques or strategies which increase the probability to gain the desired final result. Paul, a leading American specialist in theory and practice of teaching critical thinking, argued that critical thinking is “an organised, rational, self-focused thinking which follows skilfully the aim of thinking in a specific sphere of a person’s knowledge or interests.

As we can see, the role of critical thinking is not to provide realisation of the personal viewpoint at all (there are very rare cases when it is not realised), but to choose the right idea by reconstructing one’s own way of thinking. Namely this was meant by Lipmann; defining critical thinking as such that corrects itself (is self-improved).

Conclusions:

Thus, the analysis of scientific literature allows making a conclusion that critical thinking has been considered by researchers in two directions: as a way of revealing thinking (mind quality) and in a broader sense □ as a personality’s quality. Analysing various approaches to defining critical thinking and understanding its essence we are not aimed at comparison of its interpretation by different scientists, but see the necessity of its development and specification with due regard to socioeconomic situation developed in our country and tasks put forward for education in conditions of New Ukrainian school.

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Research interests: technology of critical thinking development of primary pupils by teaching Mathematics.

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