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SIX THINKING HATS: A PRODUCTIVE TEACHING STRATEGY TO ENHANCE CRITICAL THINKING

Abstract:

This article devoted to the issue of enhancing CT through Six Thinking Hats method. The notion of CT and Six Thinking Hats method are given.

Key words: Critical thinking, Parallel thinking, Six Thinking Hats

Nowadays, it is apparent that critical thinking is the necessary skill in the educational process. In modern European, American countries CT has been implementing into an academic environment more profoundly. Nevertheless, there is a room for improvement for the education system of Kazakhstan regarding this issue. I would like to highlight the fact that the education system of Kazakhstan has been facing tremendous changes in implementing various educational programs with independence, while the issue of CT has not been captured the attention at the appropriate level yet. This article will try to investigate the influence of Six Thinking Hats method in enhancing CT skills of students. There are various understanding concerning CT, and the universal notion of CT hasn't identified yet by authors.

According to Dewey, CT begins with students' engagement with a problem. He asserts that CT is a process that begins with a problem, and ends with a solution and self-interpretation [1], furthermore Pithers and Soden state that 'Critical thinking involves being able to identify questions worth pursuing, being able to pursue one's questions through self-directed search and interrogation of knowledge, a sense that knowledge is contestable and being able to present evidence to support one's arguments [2]'. This suggests that CT can be defined as an individual thought process that begins with the intent to solve a problem or to answer a question, by examining different options and choosing the most suitable and logical one.

From a cognitive psychologist's view, Halpren emphasises that CT is the 'use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome. It is used to describe thinking that is purposeful, reasoned and goal-directed'. Halpren states, 'Critical thinking is purposeful, reasoned, and goal-directed.

It is the kind of thinking involved in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions. Critical thinkers use these skills appropriately, without prompting, and usually with conscious intent, in a variety of settings'[3]. In other words, when people think critically, they evaluate the outcomes of their thought processes, calculate how good a decision is, or identify how effectively a problem has been solved.

Furthermore, Paul states that CT is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication as a rubric to belief and action [4]. Paul and Elder expand on this point of view by defining CT as “the art of analyzing and evaluating thinking with a view to improve it [5]. These definitions indicate that CT is the ability to apply cognitive skills, such as analyzing, applying, and evaluating when thinking.

The basis of the method Six Thinking Hats is the idea of parallel thinking. Parallel thinking is constructive thinking in which different points of view and approaches do not collide, but coexist. Why hats? The hat is easy to put on and take off, also, hats indicate the role. “Trying” on ourselves a hat of a certain color, we learn to think in a given direction. A change of hats makes you see the same subject from different positions, resulting in the most complete picture. This is a universal method, it can be applied by every subject teacher, methodologist.

- Participants in a white hat will look for only the facts in the issue under discussion. No emotions and feelings, only facts.
- Participants in a red hat will analyze the problem from a position of feelings, they need to tell us what they felt, what they experienced emotions.
- In a black hat, the speaker needs to try to warn us, to find possible risks and dangers.
- In a yellow hat, the speakers will seek only the best, will look at the content of the problem under study only from the perspective of an optimist.
- In a green hat, the speaker will try to get away from stereotypes and standard thinking and offer us creative ideas.

Six Thinking Hats, in the process of solving practical problems, help to cope with three main difficulties:

- Emotions. Instead of thinking about a decision, we often limit ourselves to an emotional reaction that predetermines our future actions.

- At a loss. Not knowing what to do and where to start, we feel insecure (this is especially evident either when we are faced with a difficult multi-level task, or when we are faced with something for the first time).
- Confusion. When we try to keep in mind a large amount of information related to the task, we try to be logical, consistent and creatively thinking, to be constructive, and also make sure that the people around us (communicators, colleagues, partners) are like that, usually all of this leads to nothing but confusion [6].

Usually mental work seems boring and abstract. Six Thinking Hats allows you to make it a colorful and fun way to control your thinking. Colored hats are a catchy metaphor that is easy to learn and easy to apply. The six-hat method can be used at any level of difficulty, from kindergartens to boards of directors. By structuring the work and eliminating fruitless discussions, thinking becomes more focused, constructive, and productive. The method avoids confusion, since only one type of thinking is used by the whole group in a certain period of time. Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats method can easily be used in any subject area lesson.

Overall, using this method develops the ability of students to structure information in Six Thinking Hats, the author presents a simple but effective method that allows you to become a better thinker. Implementation of this method in any lesson will assist in enhancing CT skills of students, because this method backs up thinking skills, analyzing, giving arguments and etc.

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