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The Role Of The Integrative Approach In Developing Theoretical Thinking In Future Educators

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Annotation: This article analyzes the role and significance of an integrative approach in the process of developing theoretical thinking among future educators. It reveals how integrative teaching methods contribute to the deep acquisition of theoretical knowledge and its application in practice.

Keywords: theoretical thinking, integrative approach, educator, pedagogical thinking, interdisciplinary connection, critical thinking, creative thinking.

Introduction. The modern preschool education system demands that contemporary educators not only acquire practical skills and competencies but also possess an in-depth understanding of theoretical knowledge and the ability to integrate this knowledge effectively into practice. In this context, the formation of theoretical thinking among prospective educators assumes a vital role.

Theoretical thinking refers to the capacity to critically analyze pedagogical phenomena, identify interrelationships, and make decisions grounded in scientific reasoning.

In modern pedagogy, broad concepts of thinking are regarded as an integrative process aimed at the comprehensive development of an individual's cognitive potential. Within this framework, various types of thinking are interrelated and constitute essential cognitive and reflective competencies in the professional training of future educators. In this context, it is also important to consider critical and creative thinking.

Critical thinking is the ability of an individual to reason logically, analytically, and based on evidence when processing information. It involves re-evaluating existing knowledge and experiences, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, and approaching problems from multiple perspectives. Critical thinking requires not only the reception of information but also its evaluation, analysis, and the formulation of well-founded conclusions [1;450].

Ijodiy tafakkur esa shaxsning yangi, noodatiy, original g'oyalarni yaratish, mavjud muammoni yangicha hal qilish qobiliyatidir. Bu tafakkur turi mustaqil fikrlash, erkin mulohaza yuritish, alternativ yechimlar topishga asoslanadi. Ijodiy tafakkur insonning kognitiv faoliyati bilan bir qatorda estetik va emotsional-intellektual salohiyatini ham qamrab oladi [2;33].

Creative thinking refers to an individual's ability to generate new, unconventional, and original ideas, as well as to solve existing problems in innovative ways. This type of thinking is grounded in independent reasoning, open-minded reflection, and the search for alternative solutions. Creative thinking encompasses not only cognitive activity but also aesthetic and emotional-intellectual capacities of the individual [2;56].

Theoretical thinking serves as a key factor in the professional activities of an early childhood educator, particularly in the following tasks:

- Understanding and analyzing pedagogical phenomena;
- Making scientifically grounded decisions within educational processes;
- Reflectively analyzing and improving one's professional practice.

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An integrative approach is a methodological strategy aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of education by strengthening the interconnections among different disciplines and fields. In the development of theoretical thinking among future educators, the integrative approach leads to the following outcomes:

- Knowledge is formed as a coherent and unified system;
- Theoretical concepts are reinforced through real-life examples;
- Interdisciplinary thinking is cultivated;
- Analytical and critical thinking skills are activated.

Literature Review on the Topic. From a pedagogical perspective, these types of thinking—critical, creative, and theoretical—serve as a foundational basis for the development of the professional-pedagogical thinking of future educators. For instance, through critical thinking, educators can deeply analyze educational challenges, while creative thinking enables them to find innovative and effective solutions. This idea is reflected in A.V. Khutorskoy's concept of "learner-centered education," which emphasizes an individualized approach to the development of each learner's thinking process [3;60].

Scholars of the Eastern intellectual tradition have also contributed significantly to this discourse. Al-Farabi emphasized that "reason and thinking are the foundation of human perfection," while Ibn Sina linked creative thinking to "freedom of thought." These classical views are in harmony with modern pedagogical thinking theories [4;156].

Thus, various forms of thinking are of great significance not only theoretically but also practically in shaping the personal and professional development of future educators in modern pedagogy.

Integration of Teaching Methods involves the adaptation of diverse strategies to serve the goals of instruction, upbringing, and development. For example, forming creative thinking through problem-solving tasks, role-playing activities, and experiential learning can make the educational process more effective. This ensures the synthesis of theoretical knowledge with practical skills and transforms learners from passive recipients into active creators of knowledge.

An integrative approach is particularly important in higher pedagogical education. It fosters the competencies necessary for future educators to organize the educational process effectively, understand children impartially, and develop a distinctive pedagogical stance. Such an approach allows for the organization of education in a learner-centered, creativity-driven, and modern demand-oriented manner.

Human thinking is a complex and multifaceted process that manifests itself in various fields in specific ways. The scientific study of thinking is closely connected with philosophy, psychology, pedagogy, and logic. Among the core forms of thinking is theoretical thinking, while its direct application in educational contexts is referred to as pedagogical thinking.

Theoretical thinking is a form of cognition that involves conscious reasoning, scientific generalization, problem analysis, and the development of theoretical models. Formed on the basis of dialectical and formal logic, as explored by philosophers such as Hegel, Kant, and Aristotle. Explored by scholars like L.S. Vygotsky, J. Piaget, A.N. Leontiev, and S.L. Rubinstein, who examined the mechanisms of theoretical thinking development, particularly in children.Through theoretical thinking, real-world phenomena, objects, and their interrelations are studied on a deep scientific basis. This fosters scientific inquiry and the discovery of theoretical patterns.

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Pedagogical thinking refers to a type of professional thinking that enables educators to understand, analyze, and respond appropriately to pedagogical situations. Scholars such as A.V. Mudrik, V.A. Slastyonin, and N.V. Kuzmina describe pedagogical thinking as a reflective, analytical, and creative approach to solving professional problems.

Pedagogical thinking is grounded in the laws of the learning process, teaching methods, and principles of education. In this process, the educator not only transmits knowledge but also approaches each learner with an individualized perspective. It encompasses critical reflection, the ability to find quick and appropriate responses in problematic situations, and a creative mindset—enriched by a continuous process of self-analysis and professional growth.

Research Methodology. In today's educational system, it is of vital importance to prepare future educators as specialists who meet modern requirements, think independently, and possess a creative approach. In this process, identifying and developing their critical and creative thinking abilities has become one of the main tasks. To assess these abilities, scientifically grounded specific criteria and indicators have been developed, through which the thinking potential of an educator is evaluated comprehensively.

Critical thinking is the ability to analyze information, draw conclusions based on evidence, evaluate different perspectives, and approach problems rationally. Several criteria are used to identify this ability. These include understanding and analyzing problematic situations, critically evaluating sources of evidence, making logical and well-founded conclusions, and demonstrating sensitivity to different viewpoints. For this purpose, the concept of critical thinking proposed by Paul and Elder is effectively used in practice.

At the same time, creative thinking encompasses the educator's capacity to generate new ideas, find non-standard solutions, and use the power of imagination. In assessing this ability, key criteria include fluency (the quantity of ideas), flexibility (diversity of ideas), originality, and the ability to elaborate on ideas. The Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT) are widely used to evaluate the level of creative thinking. These tests help identify students' imagination, fantasy, and creative problem-solving abilities.

The use of critical and creative thinking criteria and indicators plays a significant role in the professional development of future educators, helping to identify and enhance their problem-solving skills and the ability to develop innovative approaches. This, in turn, contributes to increasing the effectiveness of the educational process.

Analysis and Results. Lessons organized based on an integrative approach have a positive impact on the thinking of future educators, as this approach fosters the development of knowledge, skills, and competencies through the organic connection between disciplines, methods, and technologies. Especially in the development of critical and creative thinking, integrative lessons enhance students' intellectual activity, teaching them to connect acquired knowledge with real-life situations, think analytically, and generate creative ideas.

The integrative approach removes artificial boundaries between disciplines and enables the acquisition of knowledge in a harmonized and contextualized manner. In this regard, J. Beane (1997) defined the integrative approach as "the combined application of multidisciplinary knowledge and skills necessary for solving complex problems." For future educators, this approach creates a foundation for linking theoretical knowledge with practical tasks by integrating subjects such as pedagogy, psychology, linguistics, cultural studies, and informatics.

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Through integrative lessons, students learn to apply multiple approaches simultaneously. For example, they connect theoretical knowledge in child psychology with practical activities conducted with preschool children, or they integrate language teaching methods with techniques for developing communicative competencies. As a result, their thinking is trained to comprehend complexity, think contextually, and analyze problems from various perspectives.

For instance, an educator may conduct a scientific study on the topic: "How does play-based activity influence the communication skills of preschool children?" In doing so, the educator analyzes previously studied literature, develops a theoretical model, and draws scientifically grounded conclusions. In this case, the educator's thinking evolves on logical, theoretical, and abstract levels, serving as an example of developing theoretical thinking.

A 5-year-old child isolates themselves from peers during class and starts playing alone. The educator notices this situation, analyzes the child's behavior, reflects on potential causes, and chooses a play-based approach to reintegrate the child into the group. In this case, the educator identifies the pedagogical situation and makes a decision based on practical and emotional-intellectual reasoning. The educator gives the children a life-related task such as "Gallery Walk." Children begin to think about maps, symbols, and directions, attempting to find a solution. Meanwhile, the educator analyzes their thoughts and provides guidance if necessary.

This situation illustrates aspects of pedagogical thinking such as problem-solving, stimulating children's cognitive processes, and making reflective decisions.

Conclusion and Recommendations. In conclusion, developing the critical and creative thinking skills of future educators requires a systematic and comprehensive approach. It is essential to create a psychologically comfortable environment, introduce methodological innovations, and provide organizational support.

Modern pedagogical theories substantiate integrative approaches as effective tools for holistic personality development. This is achieved through contextual adaptation of knowledge, interdisciplinary dialogue, and alignment with practical experiences.

Through such an approach, students not only gain knowledge but also develop critical reasoning, innovation skills, and social competencies.

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