

## HOW CRITICAL THINKING IMPROVES ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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**Annotation:** Critical Thinking has become one of the most important competencies in modern education. It enables students to analyze information, evaluate evidence, solve problems, and make informed decisions. In higher education, critical thinking directly contributes to academic achievement by improving comprehension, research skills, communication, and independent learning. This article examines the role of critical thinking in academic success and discusses pedagogical approaches for its development. The study concludes that integrating critical thinking into university teaching significantly enhances students' intellectual growth and academic performance.

**Keywords:** critical thinking, academic success, higher education, problem-solving, analytical skills, independent learning, research competence

In the twenty-first century, educational systems focus not only on knowledge acquisition but also on the development of higher-order thinking skills. As the language is a dynamic system that evolves in response to social, cultural, and technological changes.<sup>1</sup> Universities expect students to engage actively with information, question assumptions, and construct evidence-based conclusions. In this context, critical thinking has become essential for academic achievement. According to John Dewey, education should encourage reflective thought, which allows learners to connect experience with understanding. This view remains relevant in contemporary education because students face increasingly complex information environments. Academic success depends not only on mastering subject content but also on evaluating and applying knowledge critically.

Critical thinking is generally defined as purposeful and self-regulated judgment that includes interpretation, analysis, inference, and evaluation. It requires learners to examine evidence carefully and reach justified conclusions. Richard Paul and Linda Elder describe critical thinking as disciplined reasoning guided by intellectual standards such as clarity, precision, and fairness.

From a cognitive perspective, critical thinking is closely related to metacognition, or awareness of one's own thought processes. Students who monitor their learning can identify weaknesses, adjust strategies, and improve outcomes. As noted by Diane F. Halpern, metacognitive awareness strengthens reasoning and academic decision-making.

Critical thinking supports academic performance by helping students understand tasks deeply and produce reasoned responses. Students with strong analytical skills tend to perform better in essays, examinations, and research assignments. OECD reports indicate that analytical reasoning significantly influences educational achievement, especially in reading, mathematics, and scientific literacy.

Academic tasks often involve solving complex theoretical or practical problems. Critical thinkers can identify problems accurately, compare alternatives, and select appropriate solutions. This ability improves their effectiveness in coursework and professional preparation.

<sup>1</sup> Iskandarova Sh, R. (2025) New derived words in the English language and their standardization. O'zbekiston olimlarining ilmiy-amaliy tadqiqotlari.



University education requires independent study and self-directed learning. Critical thinking enables students to search for information, evaluate sources, and synthesize knowledge independently. This process promotes lifelong learning and intellectual autonomy. UNESCO emphasizes that such competencies are essential for learners in global knowledge societies. Critical thinkers are usually better communicators. They can organize ideas logically, defend opinions with evidence, and engage in constructive academic discussions. This contributes to better performance in presentations, debates, and written tasks.

Critical thinking plays a central role in academic research. Students engaged in scholarly inquiry must identify research questions, review literature critically, and interpret findings objectively. These tasks require analytical reasoning and evaluative judgment. In fields such as Linguistics, research often involves comparing theoretical frameworks and interpreting cultural or linguistic phenomena. Students who apply critical thinking can conduct more rigorous analyses and produce stronger academic work.

Critical thinking and creativity complement each other. While critical thinking evaluates information, creativity generates new ideas. Together, these skills encourage innovation and deeper understanding. In disciplines such as Stylistics, students must interpret literary devices analytically while also considering multiple perspectives. Edward de Bono argued that effective education should develop both logical and creative modes of thinking. This combination improves students' ability to solve novel problems and produce original research.

Academic reading is a fundamental tool for critical thinking development. Through reading, students encounter scholarly debates, theories, and perspectives. However, effective reading requires analysis rather than passive understanding. Students should question arguments, evaluate evidence, and identify assumptions.

For example, in Lexicology and Semantics, critical reading allows students to compare definitions, examine contexts, and interpret linguistic meaning accurately.

Teachers play a key role in promoting critical thinking. Effective strategies include:

Problem-based learning

Classroom debates

Case studies

Research projects

Reflective journals

Peer review

Open-ended questioning These strategies help teachers to effectively organize the classroom atmosphere.<sup>2</sup>

Stephen D. Brookfield states that challenging assumptions in classroom discussions encourages deeper intellectual engagement. Digital technologies also support critical thinking by providing access to diverse perspectives. However, students must learn to evaluate digital information critically. Despite its importance, critical thinking may be underdeveloped in educational systems that prioritize memorization. Students may rely on rote learning rather than analytical reasoning. Additionally, cultural or institutional factors may discourage questioning and independent expression. Another challenge is limited access to academic resources. Students need exposure to scholarly literature and guidance in research methods to strengthen critical thinking.

Critical thinking is essential for academic success in higher education. It improves problem-solving, comprehension, research competence, and communication. Students who think critically can engage more effectively with academic tasks and adapt to complex learning environments. The development of critical thinking should be a central goal of university education. By

<sup>2</sup> Abdisharipova M, (2026) Nemis tilini xorijiy til sifatida ta'lim jarayoniga integratsiya qilish va uyg'unlashtirish usullari. Xorijiy tillarni o'qitishda integrativ yondashuv: innovatsiyalar va ilg'or tajribalar.



incorporating critical thinking into curricula and teaching methods, institutions can prepare students for academic achievement and future professional challenges.

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