



METHODOLOGY FOR TEACHING FUTURE TEACHERS TO THINK INDEPENDENTLY USING INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES (ON THE EXAMPLE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE MATERIALS)

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Introduction

The methodology of teaching future teachers to think independently through innovative technologies has become one of the central issues in contemporary pedagogy and English language education. Modern educational systems increasingly emphasize learner autonomy, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities rather than passive memorization. In this regard, English language materials provide broad opportunities for implementing innovative approaches because they integrate authentic communication, intercultural interaction, and analytical activities. According to J. Dewey, education should be based on reflective thinking, where students actively investigate problems instead of mechanically reproducing information. Dewey specifically argues that “thinking begins in situations where there is doubt or difficulty,” emphasizing the importance of inquiry-based learning in developing intellectual independence. This theoretical position forms the foundation of many modern innovative methodologies used in English language teaching today.

Main Part

The concept of independent thinking is closely connected with constructivist learning theory. L. Vygotsky states that cognitive development occurs through social interaction and collaborative activity, particularly within the “zone of proximal development,” where learners solve tasks with guidance before becoming capable of independent performance. Based on this theory, innovative technologies in English language teaching create interactive environments that gradually lead future teachers toward autonomous learning. For example, collaborative digital platforms such as Google Classroom or Padlet enable learners to exchange ideas, analyze texts, and formulate independent conclusions while still receiving methodological support from instructors and peers.

Scholars in language pedagogy also emphasize that independent thinking



develops more effectively when students work with authentic materials rather than simplified textbook exercises. J. Harmer argues that authentic English materials expose learners to “real language use” and therefore encourage natural interpretation, analytical reasoning, and contextual understanding . In practical terms, this means that future teachers should analyze real articles, podcasts, interviews, and debates instead of relying solely on artificial grammar-based tasks. For instance, when students analyze a TED Talk related to educational technology, they are required not only to understand linguistic structures but also to evaluate arguments, identify implicit meanings, and compare perspectives critically. Such activities simultaneously improve language proficiency and intellectual autonomy.

The role of innovative technologies in developing independent thinking is particularly evident in WebQuest methodology. B. Dodge, the creator of WebQuest, explains that this approach is designed to engage learners in “higher-order thinking processes such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation” rather than simple information collection. Dodge emphasizes that WebQuest tasks should require learners to transform information critically and produce original outcomes. In English language classrooms, WebQuest activities may involve researching global educational systems, comparing cultural traditions, or investigating contemporary social issues through English-language internet resources. During this process, students independently search for information, evaluate source reliability, and prepare analytical presentations. Therefore, WebQuest technology promotes not only digital literacy but also critical and reflective thinking skills.

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) represents another important methodological approach in developing independent thinking among future teachers. According to J. Savery, PBL is an instructional method in which “learning begins with a problem to be solved,” and students acquire knowledge through the process of investigating that problem. Savery argues that PBL develops self-directed learning because students themselves determine what information is necessary and how it should be applied. In English language instruction, PBL activities may include solving educational or intercultural communication problems through group discussions and research projects. For example, students may investigate the question “How can digital technologies improve language learning in rural schools?” Such a task requires learners to analyze academic literature, compare educational practices, and formulate evidence-based solutions in English. Consequently, language learning becomes intellectually meaningful and professionally oriented.

The significance of collaborative learning in fostering independent thinking is highlighted in the research conducted by D. Johnson and R. Johnson.



Their meta-analysis demonstrates that cooperative learning environments increase academic achievement, critical reasoning, and learner motivation more effectively than competitive or individualistic approaches. The scholars explain that interaction among learners stimulates deeper cognitive processing because students must justify opinions, negotiate meanings, and defend arguments. In English language education, collaborative methods such as debates, role plays, and case studies create conditions where future teachers learn to express independent viewpoints while respecting alternative perspectives. For instance, during debate activities students must critically evaluate evidence before presenting arguments, which directly contributes to the development of analytical thinking skills.

The integration of digital technologies into language education has also been analyzed extensively by M. Prensky, who introduced the concept of “digital natives.” Prensky claims that modern students grow up surrounded by digital technologies and therefore process information differently from previous generations. He argues that educational methods should correspond to learners’ technological experiences and cognitive habits. This perspective explains why multimedia resources, online simulations, interactive applications, and virtual learning environments are particularly effective in motivating students and encouraging autonomous learning. In English language classes, digital storytelling, online forums, and multimedia presentations allow future teachers to create original content independently, which enhances creativity and reflective thinking.

Reflective practice constitutes another important component of independent thinking methodology. J. Richards and T. Farrell emphasize that reflection enables teachers and students to analyze their own experiences critically and improve professional competence continuously. They specifically note that reflective journals and self-assessment activities help learners become aware of their strengths and weaknesses. In English language teaching, students may write reflective essays after presentations or maintain electronic portfolios documenting their learning progress. Such activities develop metacognitive awareness because learners evaluate not only what they learned but also how they learned it. As a result, future teachers become capable of regulating their own educational development independently.

Modern research therefore demonstrates that innovative technologies significantly contribute to the formation of independent thinking through authentic communication, collaborative learning, problem-solving, and reflective practice. English language materials are especially effective in this process because they expose learners to diverse cultural viewpoints and real communicative situations. Through analytical interaction with authentic texts



and digital environments, future teachers acquire not only linguistic competence but also the intellectual flexibility necessary for professional success in contemporary education.

Conclusion

The methodology of teaching future teachers to think independently through innovative technologies and English language materials represents an important direction in modern pedagogy. Interactive methods, digital technologies, problem-based tasks, and reflective practices create a learner-centered educational environment that develops critical thinking, creativity, communicative competence, and professional autonomy. Consequently, future teachers become more prepared to meet the demands of contemporary education and effectively apply innovative approaches in their professional activities.

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