

Reflection as a component of critical thinking

In recent years psychologists, philosophers, educators have been extensively studying the problem of reflection and its place in person's creative thinking, self-development and consciousness. On the one hand, the notion of reflection helps to define the essence of theoretical thinking, crucial levels of its development, and formation of controlling and evaluating actions. On the other hand, studying reflection as a component of the creative thought process gives an opportunity to distinguish individual and intellectual reflections, the interaction of the individual and intellectual parts of person's mentality.

Reflection is considered to be not only a principle of mental development. It is, of course, a part of consciousness and a component of thinking as well – the highest form of active observation of objective reality, consisting in purposive, yet indirect and generalized cognition of existing relationships between subjects and phenomena by an individual. It is also involved in creating new ideas, in predicting the future events, and eventually in actions. From the educational point of view, thinking as such is often considered to emerge in the process of formulating and solving practical and theoretical problems. The contemporary society as well as modern education needs independent and creative personalities with certain rather specific qualities of thinking. The freedom of thought, for example, implies the critical directivity of the thought process aimed at creative and constructive activities. Thus, one of the most important qualities of an independent personality is considered to be the ability to think critically. The technology of critical thinking formation, that necessarily includes the stage of reflection, has become widespread in education. Usually this technology aims at developing an analytical approach to any subject or material, which, obviously, helps to formulate problems. Constructive creativity while searching for a solution is also encouraged. Reflection provides students with a way to look back at their experiences, evaluate them, and apply what is learned in the future.