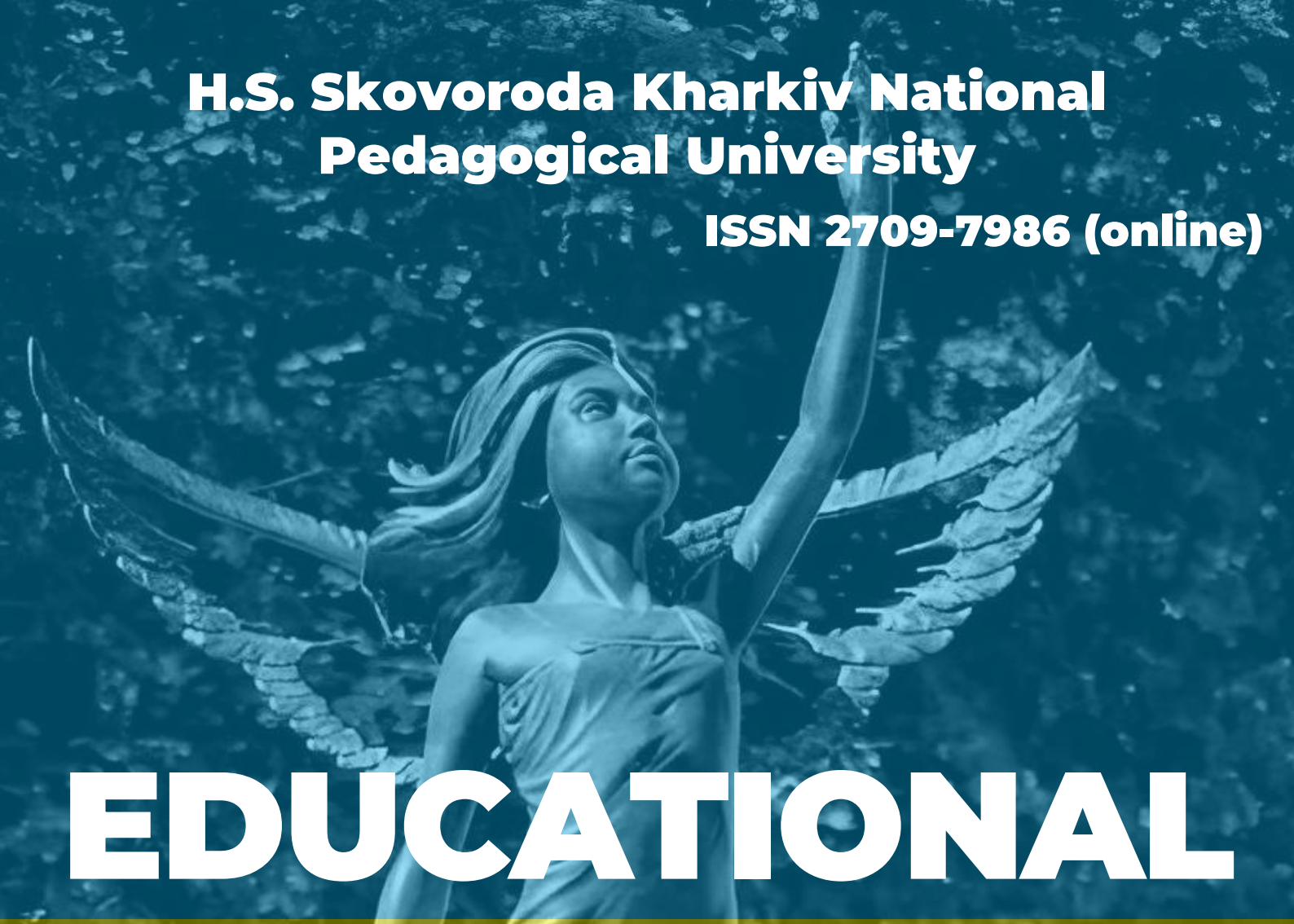
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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THINKING SKILLS IN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE METHODOLOGY CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

*This article focuses on an important aspect of modern education – the development of thinking skills. The **purpose** of this article is to outline the way thinking skills are developed in English as a Second Language (ESL) Methodology. The research was undertaken at Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University.*

*The **methodology** is based on a review of academic literature, analyses of core Curriculum and ESL Methodology course books, and a generalization of our own ESL Methodology teaching experience.*

***Results.** The notion of thinking skills is revealed and their role for language learning is emphasized in the article. It is concluded that the development of thinking skills greatly depends on the quality of instruction, hence the requirement to enhance the ability of preservice teachers to develop thinking skills in their learners. To understand students' readiness to develop thinking skills in their learners the PRESETT Curriculum on Methodology (Bachelor's Level) and ESL Methodology coursebooks were thoroughly studied in terms of the aspects relevant to this research. The general overview of the core Curriculum in terms of the suggested modules, units and learning outcomes proved that the development of higher-order thinking skills is one of its main objectives.*

According to the core Curriculum thinking skills are developed through a range of teaching approaches, among them task-based learning, the use of

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case studies, simulations, group projects and problem solving. Such modes of teaching and learning promote high level interaction as well as the high level of thinking skills development. The analysis of the ESL Methodology coursebooks provides much more detailed overview of the activities practiced during the sessions, thus giving additional support for the research. It is proposed that competencies can be improved by means of HOT skills activities in the ESL Methodology classes.

Conclusions. *The research findings have enriched our understanding of thinking skills and highlighted the importance of their development in preservice teachers so that they are able to develop thinking skills in their future leaners. Taken together, the research results suggest that both thinking skills and life skills, such as communication, teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving, information literacy, creativity, etc., are focused on in both the PRESETT Curriculum on Methodology and in the ESL Methodology coursebooks.*

KEYWORDS: *ESL Methodology, Higher-Order Thinking Skills, Preservice Teachers, PRESETT Curriculum on Methodology, Teacher Training.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been a great shift in teacher training in Ukraine. These changes have been reflected in educational policy, curricular design and teaching practice. The Concept for the Development of Pedagogical Education emphasizes the importance of creating a new model of teacher education which is focused on training teachers of a new generation (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2017, p. 5), ready to implement the key ideas of the New Ukrainian School.

Furthermore, the document states that the contemporary teacher training programs should be based on competence, learner-centered approach, ensuring the formation of soft skills, acquiring skills and experience in forming competencies in students. These ideas coincide with the New Ukrainian School requirements. According to this document "it is not enough to only feed a child with knowledge; it is also necessary to teach how to use that knowledge" (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2016, p. 10).

Thus, the development of life competencies has become essential for successful self-fulfillment in life, education and work as modern society requires "professionals who are able to learn throughout life, think critically, set and achieve goals, work in teams, communicate in a multicultural environment and possess other contemporary skills" (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2016, p. 4).

The analysis of a number of documents on State Standard of Basic Secondary Education, Core Curricular of General Secondary and basic secondary education, Model Curricular on English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching provides the evidence of the necessity for implementing modern approaches and models of teaching and learning: competence approach, communicative approach, task-based approach, learner-centered approach, culturological approach, pedagogy of partnership, interactive teaching, problem-solving learning that develops not only language skills, but key life competences: communication in the national language (and mother tongue, if

different); communication in foreign languages; mathematical literacy; competencies in Science and Technology; ICT and digital competencies; lifelong learning skills; sense of entrepreneurship; social and civic competencies; cultural awareness; environmental awareness and healthy lifestyles.

In this perspective, the role of thinking skills has been greatly increased. It is especially important to teach preservice teachers to think so that they can develop these skills in their students. The necessity for critical thinking skills development in preservice teachers is supported by Furqon, Sinaga, Liliasari, & Riza (2023), who consider them essential in the 21st century.

Similar ideas are expressed by other distinguished authors. In their opinion, developing thinking skills significantly increases language learners' speaking and listening exams scores (Yang et al., 2013), writing and speaking skills (Sanavi & Tarighat, 2014), vocabulary learning (Allahverdi & Gholami, 2014), and reading comprehension performance (Fahim et al., 2012). Together, these studies emphasize the importance of thinking skills development in preservice ESL teachers.

METHODOLOGY

The **purpose** of this article is to outline the way thinking skills are developed in the ESL Methodology classroom. The research was done at Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University. The following research questions were formulated:

1. What is the role of thinking skills for preservice ESL teachers?
2. How well does the ESL Methodology develop thinking skills in preservice teachers?

Data was collected through several methods throughout the study. Among them were the following: a review of academic literature, core Curriculum analysis, ESL Methodology course books analysis, generalization of our own ESL Methodology teaching experience.

The study comprises two stages. In the initial stage of the research the notion of thinking skills was investigated through the analysis of a vast range of literature on the problem. Together these studies provided important insights into the structure of thinking skills and their role for language learning. The second stage of the research was devoted to the analysis of the materials: PRESETT Curriculum on Methodology (bachelor level) and ESL Methodology course books. Our own ESL Methodology teaching experience was also generalized at this stage. The findings made it possible to describe the way thinking skills are developed in the ESL Methodology classroom.

RESULTS

First of all, the research requires an understanding of the notion of thinking skills. The literature review showed that there is a vast number of definitions, the essence of which is always the same. In our opinion, the notion of thinking skills is best revealed by William & Burden (1997). They define thinking skills as "a cognitive process in which the students are emerged to use their minds to observe, think, categorize, and hypothesize".

The notion of thinking skills is more complex than it may seem at first sight because thinking skills are composed of some sub-skills. Thinking skills were first systemized in 1956 by educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom and his team who created the

eponymous taxonomy, at the core of which is a series of skills that teachers should develop in their learners in order to make their students learn more effectively. The taxonomy challenged traditional rote learning in education and encouraged "higher-order thinking". Bloom's Taxonomy is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Bloom B. S (1956) A Taxonomy of Educational Objectives

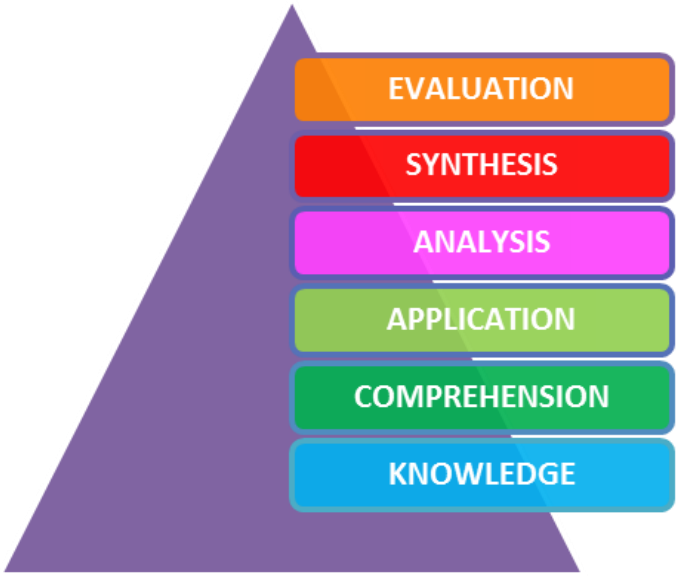
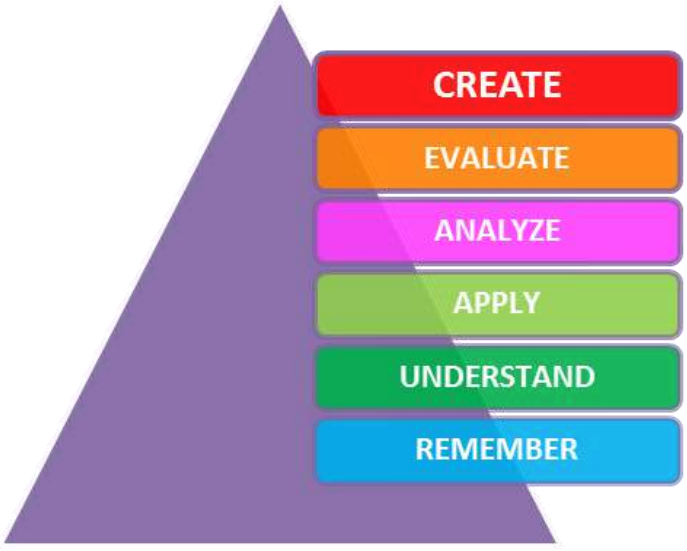


Figure 2 demonstrates the revised version of Bloom's Taxonomy proposed by David Krathwohl and Lorin Anderson in 2000.

Figure 2

Anderson, L.W. & Krathwohl, D.R. (2000). A taxonomy for learning, teaching and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives



In this schema, the different thinking skills are described using verbs rather than nouns, and are no longer seen as cumulative and hierarchical but of equal value, which can be

employed at various times in learning. Considering the fact that learning does not always run smoothly, in Anderson and Kratwohl's opinion, the sequence of the steps might change depending on the circumstances. That was the central idea behind the revision of Bloom's taxonomy.

As we can see their classification is closer to classroom practice. Teachers can initiate tasks that practice different thinking skills at different times, and sometimes more than once, in no particular order, thus teaching students to use their knowledge in the real world.

Among the six levels of thinking, higher order thinking skills (HOT skills) are of utmost importance as they help students to transfer their knowledge into actual use. They are analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Many educators split HOT skills into four groups: applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Thus, HOT skills include problem-solving, analyzing, imagining and making connections. Without them, students may know a lot of vocabulary or grammar rules, but be unable to use them in a meaningful way.

The higher-order thinking involved allows students to immediately use the language in a practical or creative way, mimicking how they may need to use it in the future. For students hoping to move on to university level studies, these skills are not only helpful, but essential to their success. The extent of thinking skills development is largely dependent upon the teacher, that is why it is important to train preservice teachers to develop thinking skills in their learners. Preservice teachers will benefit from exposure to HOT skills activities in the ESL Methodology classes.

To answer the second research question: *How well does the ESL Methodology develop thinking skills in preservice teachers?* we analyzed the core Curriculum and ESL Methodology course books. It gave us an understanding of preservice teachers' readiness to develop thinking skills in their learners.

First of all, the PRESETT Curriculum on Methodology (Bachelor's Level) (2020) was thoroughly studied in terms of the aspects relevant to this research. Of specific interest were learning outcomes, as they demonstrate what students have learned as a result of a module or unit.

The list of verbs used in the description of the learning outcomes were identified and compared to the Bloom's Taxonomy verb chart in order to see to whicht levels of thinking they relate. So, the most frequently used verbs in the learning outcomes are "reflect', "identify", 'give recommendations", "analyse", "choose", 'select", "design", "plan", "evaluate", "assess", "exploit", "write". Comparing these verbs to the Bloom's Taxonomy verb chart (https://tips.uark.edu/blooms-taxonomy-verb-chart/) we can state that all of them are focused on the development of higher-order thinking skills, such as: analyzing, evaluating and creating.

Besides, these are measurable action verbs which prompt the way students are assessed. At the same time, they are intended to develop important skills for preservice teachers, such as: the ability to select, to analyze, to evaluate, to recommend, to design, to plan, etcetera.

According to the core Curriculum (2020) these skills are developed through "a range of teaching approaches, among them task-based learning, the use of case studies, simulations, group projects and problem solving" (p. 17). Such modes of teaching and

learning promote interaction of high level as well as high level of thinking skills development. As a result, we can state that a higher-order thinking skill is one of the main objectives of the core Curriculum. It is obvious that with this skill students will be prepared to cooperate successfully, think critically, communicate effectively and solve problems efficiently in their workplace. As a result, they will be more successful in their future work performance.

The analysis of the ESL Methodology course books (Bevz et al., 2020; Bevz & Gembaruk, 2021) provides much more detailed overview of the activities practiced during the sessions, thus giving additional support for the research. We analyzed the coursebooks specially designed by the ESL Methodology teachers of Palvo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University on Modules 3 and 4.

These modules are taught to the third-year students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages. First of all, the coursebooks were thoroughly studied in terms of their structure. Each of the coursebooks is devoted to teaching a particular module. Each unit within the module is marked by a similar structure, number of hours allocated for contact study (18) and self-study (12).

The beginning of each unit gives students a clear understanding of its assessment specifications: the description of the item for assessment and assessment criteria. A self-assessment check list sums up students' work on the unit and identifies areas they can already do as well as areas which require further consideration. Sessions within the units are also marked by a similar structure. Being based on the constructivist approach, sessions rely on Kolb's Experiential Learning theory which suggests a four-phase learning cycle connected with doing, sensing, observing, reflecting, thinking and planning.

This learning cycle structures learning sequence and provides the development of both thinking skills and life skills (communication, teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving, information literacy, creativity, etc.) which is the aim of the core Curriculum (Gembaruk, 2022). Providing students with different opportunities to share their ideas, reflect on their learning, and engage in extended communication with peers and teachers, classroom activities make the learning process more active. Active learning involves students in various activities (dialogue, debate, writing, and problem solving, etc.) as well as in analyzing, evaluating and creating.

The analysis reveals that classroom activities provided by the ESL Methodology coursebooks are well focused on thinking skills development, especially higher-order thinking skills. Nevertheless, more detail about the activity types and their correspondence to Bloom's taxonomy levels of thinking is needed. Table 1 represents the major activities used in teaching ESL Methodology along with the thinking skills they employ.

We are focused on HOT skills as they require more cognitive processing than others and involve the learning of complex judgmental skills such as critical thinking and problem solving. Though application refers to the low-order thinking skills (LOT) we consider it important as it enables students to apply their existing knowledge and experience to various situations. On the other hand, many educators refer application to the HOT skills.

Table 1

Coursebook Activities and Thinking Skills Employed

Thinking skills employed	Activities
Applying	**Understanding listening** **Instruction:** Share your viewpoints on the questions: *How do you understand listening? What is meant by listening (skills)? Do hearing and listening mean the same things Why? or Why not?* **Different sources of listening** **Instruction:** Discuss the following questions and fill in the table below. Questions: *What do we listen to in learning a foreign language? Why do we listen? Where do we listen?* **Practice in identifying activity types and their purposes** **Instruction:** Read the course book extract and identify each activity and its purpose. **Course book metaphor** **Instruction:** Working in groups, come up with a metaphor for a coursebook relating it to some of the functions that coursebooks perform and present it on the poster.
Analyzing	**Coursebook analysis** **Instruction:** Read four coursebook passages on the same topic: food. Identify the differences between texts in terms of level, complexity, density, vocabulary and authenticity. Put down your answers in the table below. **Curriculum requirements for teaching reading** **Instruction:** Working in 3 groups, study National Curricular and identify curricular requirements for teaching reading for all the grades (1-11). Summarize your findings in chart format. **Spot the differences** **Instruction:** Spot the differences between: – *Extensive and intensive reading* – *Skimming and scanning* **Lesson plans analysis** **Instruction:** Read the examples of lesson plans based on different approaches, and analyse them using the Table above. Define which approach the lesson is based on. Discuss the results in plenary **Practice in coursebook evaluation and selection** **Instruction:** Evaluate 2-3 on-line coursebooks for the same level against the agreed criteria. Select one, following the steps and taking into account the guidelines for coursebook evaluation.
Evaluating	**While-listening activities and their purposes**

	Instruction: Read the listening activities 1-16 on the listening text. Choose those which apply to the *While-listening stage*. Justify your choice. **Types of speaking activities** **Instruction:** In your groups try two activities out one after the other, allowing about five minutes for each. Share your viewpoints on the questions: *Which was more successful in producing good oral fluency practice? Why? What do you think the types of activities are?* **Approaches to teaching reading** **Instruction:** Read the statements about reading. Agree or disagree to them. Justify your point of view.
Creating	**Practice in Teaching Listening** **Instruction:** Design a sequence of tasks for the following recorded text, including at least one pre-listening, one or more while-listening tasks, and one post-listening task. Present your ideas to the whole group. **Follow-up task** **Instruction:** Prepare Item 2 from Assessment Specifications **Item 2.** Evaluate a unit from a coursebook for a specified educational context (secondary school, grade …) according to the set criteria. Write a report (250-300 words), justifying your decisions and giving evidence that this unit suits / does not suit learners' needs and the requirements of the curriculum. Prepare PowerPoint presentation of your report using "Dos & Don'ts Doc" and presentation tips. Present it in class.

Table 1 provides an overview of the activities which illustrate the employment of the higher-order thinking skills. The activities were randomly chosen in order to create a general understanding of the way thinking skills are developed. The first level of thinking, applying, refers to the ability to use learned material in new and concrete situations. According to the constructivist approach the knowledge is not given but constructed by the students themselves. So, the activities employing this skill are usually practiced at the beginning of the session. They include sharing experience on the topic learnt and then applying it to the new content.

As is evident in Table 1 there is a rough balance between the activities offering students' exposure to higher-order thinking: analyzing, evaluating and creating. Though, sometimes it is difficult to identify the skill employed in the activity, as there is a slight overlap between the skills or some skills are developed within one activity. As, for example, *While-listening activities and their purposes* (Table 1), when students first analyze the activities in order to choose those which apply to the while-listening stage.

Then they are to justify their choice by expressing their opinion or giving arguments. Each session ends with students' reflection on its key issues. Reflection employs evaluating the topic by giving sound arguments, using good evidence or support.

Analysing core Curriculum and ESL Methodology coursebooks we were attracted by the assessment specifications which include a wide range of assignment types, among them: essay, reflective writing, reports, presentation, quiz, lesson plan, case study, materials and test design, professional development plan, portfolio (PRESETT Curriculum on Methodology (Bachelor's Level) (p. 27). These are typical examples of creative tasks which involve all levels of higher-order thinking skills.

DISCUSSION

Thinking skills are cognitive processes that are used to solve problems, make different decisions, asking questions, making plans, organizing and creating information. Thinking skills are crucial at every career level in every industry. Those who have well-developed thinking skills can work well both with others and independently to address different problems. For this reason, companies value and prefer applicants who show strong thinking skills. Everybody has thinking skills, but not everyone uses them effectively. Effective thinking skills are developed over a period of time. In this context, the development of thinking skills has become crucial in education.

The importance of thinking skills development is emphasized in state documents on education. The New Ukrainian School, a key reform of the Ministry of Education and Science, pays special attention to teaching critical thinking. According to it students are to be taught to think critically, not to be afraid of voicing their views and be responsible citizens (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2016).

The central place in the system of education belongs to the secondary school. It is at school that children's personality, their attitudes to the society and their professional qualities form. So, the new school requires new teachers who are able to introduce changes, to effectively implement innovative approaches and techniques (Kostikova & Miasoiedova, 2022) as well as different activities which provide thinking skills development.

CONCLUSIONS

The research findings have enriched our understanding of thinking skills and highlighted the importance of their development in preservice teachers so that they could be able to develop thinking skills in their future leaners. The analysis of the PRESETT Curriculum on Methodology in terms of modules, units and learning outcomes clearly shows that higher-order thinking skills are one of its main objectives. Recommended by the curriculum modes of teaching and learning promote interaction of high level as well as high level of thinking skills development.

The analysis of the ESL Methodology coursebooks reveals major activities used in the classroom along with the thinking skills they employ. Taken together, the research results suggest that both thinking skills and life skills, such as communication, teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving, information literacy, creativity, etc., are focused on. It makes possible to conclude that thinking skills are well-developed in the ESL Methodology classroom.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

There is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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АНОТАЦІЯ / ABSTRACT [in Ukrainian]:

РОЗВИТОК НАВИЧОК МИСЛЕННЯ НА ЗАНЯТТЯХ З МЕТОДИКИ НАВЧАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

Мета. *Стаття присвячена вивченню важливого аспекту сучасної освіти – розвитку мислення. Мета цієї статті – окреслити спосіб розвитку навичок мислення на заняттях з методики навчання англійської мови. Дослідження виконано в Уманському державному педагогічному університеті імені Павла Тичини.*

Методологія. *У процесі дослідження було використано такі методи: огляд наукових і академічних статей, аналіз типової навчальної програми «Методика навчання англійської мови (рівень бакалавра)», аналіз підручників з методики навчання англійської мови, узагальнення власного досвіду викладання методики навчання англійської мови.*

Результати. *У статті розкрито поняття «навички мислення» та підкреслено їх роль у навчанні мови. Зроблено висновок, що рівень розвитку навичок мислення значною мірою залежить від учителя, тому дуже важливо готувати студентів до розвитку навичок мислення у своїх учнів. Для того, щоб зробити це належним чином, необхідно розвивати навички мислення у студентів на заняттях з методики навчання англійської мови. З метою перевірки готовності студентів до розвитку навичок мислення було проаналізовано типову програму «Методика навчання англійської мови» (рівень бакалавра) та навчальні посібники з методики навчання англійської мови з точки зору аспектів, пов'язаних з цим дослідженням. Загальний огляд типової програми, здійснений на рівні навчальних модулів, розділів та очікуваних результатів навчання, довів, що розвиток навичок мислення вищого рівня є однією із пріоритетних цілей цієї програми. Відповідно до типової програми навички мислення розвиваються за допомогою низки підходів, серед яких навчання на основі завдань, використання тематичних досліджень, моделювання, групові проєкти та вирішення проблем. Доведено, шо такі режими викладання та навчання сприяють взаємодії високого рівня, а також сприяють розвитку навичок мислення вищого рівня. Аналіз підручників з методики навчання англійської мови, сфокусований на різноманітних діяльностях, що практикуються під час навчальних сесій, надав додаткову та вагому для дослідження інформацію.*

Висновки. *Результати дослідження збагатили наше розуміння сутності поняття «навички мислення» та підкреслили важливість їх розвитку для майбутніх учителів. У сукупності результати дослідження свідчать про те, що розвитку навичок мислення та життєвих навичок, як то: спілкування, робота в команді, критичне мислення, вирішення проблем,*

інформаційна грамотність, креативність тощо, надається значна увага як у типовій програмі «Методика навчання англійської мови» (рівень бакалавра), так і в проаналізованих нами підручниках з методики навчання англійської мови.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: *майбутні вчителі, методика навчання англійської мови, навички мислення вищого рівня, підготовка вчителя. програма додипломної методичної підготовки вчителів.*

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