



## ENHANCING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN DEBATING CLUBS

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### KALIT SO‘ZLAR

Tanqidiy fikrlash qobiliyati, oliy ma'lumot, bahs-munozara klublari, analitik fikrlash, samarali muloqot.

### КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА

Навыки критического мышления, высшее образование, дискуссионные клубы, аналитическое мышление, эффективная коммуникация.

### KEY WORDS

Critical thinking skills, higher education, debating clubs, analytical thinking, effective communication.

### ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu maqolada oliy ta'lim talabarlari o'rtasida tanqidiy fikrlash ko'nikmalarini oshirishda bahs-munozara klublarining roli o'rganilgan, bugungi o'zgarib borayotgan dunyoda tanqidiy fikrlashning ahamiyati va ta'lim muassasalari o'quvchilarida bu ko'nikmalarni rivojlantirish va oshirish uchun imkoniyatlar yaratish zarurligini ta'kidlangan. Maqolada, shuningdek, bahs-munozara klublarida ishtirok etishning analitik fikrlashni yaxshilash, samarali muloqot va argumentlarni tanqidiy baholay olish kabi afzalliklari haqida so'z boradi. Muallifu talabalar duch keladigan muammolarni o'rganib, munozara klublarining tanqidiy fikrlash qobiliyatiga ta'sirini maksimal darajada oshirish bo'yicha tavsiyalar beradi.

### АННОТАЦИЯ

В данной статье рассматривается роль дискуссионных клубов в улучшении навыков критического мышления среди студентов высших учебных заведений, подчеркивается важность критического мышления в современном быстро меняющемся мире и подчеркивается необходимость предоставления образовательным учреждениям возможностей для студентов развивать и совершенствовать эти навыки. В статье также обсуждаются преимущества участия в дискуссионных клубах, такие как улучшение аналитического мышления, эффективная коммуникация и способность критически оценивать аргументы. Автор анализирует проблемы, с которыми сталкиваются студенты, и даёт рекомендации по максимизации влияния дискуссионных клубов на навыки критического мышления.

### ABSTRACT

This article explores the role of debating clubs in improving critical thinking skills among higher education students. It also highlights the importance of critical thinking in today's rapidly changing world and emphasizes the need for educational institutions to provide opportunities for students to develop and enhance these skills. The article also discusses the benefits of participating in debating clubs, such as improved analytical thinking, effective communication, and the ability to evaluate arguments critically. It also examines the challenges faced by students and provides recommendations for maximizing the impact of debating clubs on critical thinking skills.

**Introduction.** In today's fast-paced and complex world, the ability to think critically is a vital skill for success in higher education and beyond. As higher education institutions strive to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century, there is a growing recognition of the need to enhance critical thinking skills among students. One effective way to achieve this goal is through participation in debating clubs. Debating clubs offer a unique and engaging platform for students to develop and sharpen their critical thinking abilities while also honing their communication and persuasion skills. This paper explores the potential impact of debating clubs on enhancing critical thinking skills in higher education students, examining the benefits and challenges associated with integrating debating activities into the academic environment. Through an in-depth analysis, this study aims to

shed light on the significance of debating clubs as a valuable tool for nurturing critical thinking skills in the higher education setting.

**Literature review.** Critical thinking is a crucial skill that enables individuals to analyze information, evaluate arguments, and make informed decisions. Debating clubs have been recognized as an effective tool for enhancing critical thinking skills among students in higher education. According to Smith, participation in debating clubs encourages students to think critically by engaging with diverse perspectives and constructing well-reasoned arguments [1; 78]. Through the process of researching, preparing, and presenting arguments in debates, students develop the ability to assess evidence, identify logical fallacies, and formulate coherent responses.

Moreover, debating clubs provide a platform for students to practice effective communication and persuasion skills. As highlighted by Johnson et al., engaging in debates helps students improve their ability to articulate ideas clearly, listen actively to opposing viewpoints, and respond thoughtfully to counterarguments [2; 102]. By participating in structured debates, students learn to communicate persuasively while also honing their ability to think on their feet and adapt their arguments in real-time.

In addition to fostering critical thinking and communication skills, debating clubs offer students a valuable opportunity to enhance their research and analytical abilities. According to Brown, preparing for debates requires students to conduct thorough research, evaluate sources critically, and synthesize complex information into coherent arguments [3; 45]. This process not only deepens students' understanding of the topics under discussion but also equips them with the skills necessary to analyze information critically and draw evidence-based conclusions.

Despite the numerous benefits of debating clubs in promoting critical thinking skills, challenges exist in integrating debating activities into the academic environment. Jones noted that limited resources, time constraints, and varying levels of student engagement can hinder the effective implementation of debating programs in higher education institutions [4; 33]. Overcoming these challenges requires a concerted effort to provide adequate support and resources for debating clubs while also promoting a culture that values critical thinking and intellectual discourse.

Overall, the literature suggests that debating clubs play a significant role in enhancing critical thinking skills among higher education students. By providing a structured platform for students to engage in debates, research complex topics, and communicate persuasively, debating clubs contribute to the development of well-rounded individuals capable of analyzing information critically and making informed decisions.

**Discussion and results.** In the ever-changing environment of higher education, the development of abilities of critical thinking has become an increasingly important aspect of overall success. In order to successfully overcome difficult challenges, students should make decisions based on accurate information, and actively contribute to society. In this process, it is vital for them to have the critical thinking skills. According to Nurakhir et al., after becoming aware of this requirement, educational institutions are investigating a variety of different approaches to improve the critical thinking skills of their pupils [5]. One of these methods is the involvement in debating clubs, which provides students with a one-of-a-kind opportunity to engage in reflective discourse, analyse arguments and enhance their capacity for critical thinking.

First of all, we should mention that, debating clubs serve as initial opportunity for nurturing critical thinking skills among higher education students. Engaging in debates requires participants to critically evaluate arguments presented by both themselves and their opponents. As Suter declared, this process encourages students to question assumptions, examine evidence, and construct well-reasoned arguments [6]. By actively engaging with diverse perspectives and defending their own viewpoints, students develop a deeper understanding of complex issues and strengthen their analytical thinking abilities.

Furthermore, debating clubs provide an environment that fosters effective communication skills. Participants must articulate their thoughts clearly and persuasively while considering counterarguments and addressing potential objections. Through regular practice in debating clubs, students refine their ability to express ideas coherently and logically, enhancing their overall communication proficiency. This skill is invaluable in academic settings, professional environments, and everyday life [7; 40-41].

It should be also mentioned that participation in debating clubs also improves the capacity to evaluate arguments critically. Students learn to identify fallacies, biases and logical inconsistencies within arguments presented during debates. They acquire the skills necessary to analyze evidence critically, weigh different perspectives objectively and make informed judgments, mentioned Lai in his article [8]. These abilities are crucial for differentiate accurate information from misinformation and developing well-rounded opinions based on sound reasoning.

While the benefits of debating clubs are substantial, some challenges may also arise during the process. Some students may initially struggle with public speaking or feel uncomfortable expressing their opinions in a competitive environment. However, debating clubs often provide a supportive atmosphere that encourages growth and learning. By offering constructive feedback and mentorship, these clubs help students overcome their apprehensions and build confidence in their critical thinking abilities [5].

To maximize the impact of debating clubs on critical thinking development, educational institutions should consider implementing a structured curriculum that integrates debate training into the academic program. This approach ensures that all students have equal access to these opportunities and receive guidance on critical thinking techniques. Additionally, collaboration between faculty members and debating club coaches can facilitate the alignment of club activities with academic goals and promote a holistic approach to skill development.

**Conclusion.** Debating clubs can play an important role in enhancing critical thinking skills of higher education students. These clubs provide a platform for students to be engaged in meaningful discourse, refine their analytical thinking skills, develop effective communication skills and learn to evaluate arguments critically. By recognizing the value of debating clubs and implementing strategies to maximize their impact, educational institutions can empower students with the essential skills needed to thrive in an increasingly complex world. Furthermore, the literature reviewed underscores the significant impact of debating clubs on the development of critical thinking skills among higher education students. Participation in debating activities not only fosters critical thinking but also enhances communication, research, and analytical abilities. While challenges exist in integrating debating programs into academic environments, the benefits of promoting intellectual discourse and critical analysis through debating clubs are evident. As such, fostering a supportive environment for debating clubs and recognizing their role in nurturing well-rounded individuals capable of informed decision-making is crucial for higher education institutions. Further research and concerted efforts to address implementation challenges can contribute to maximizing the potential of debating clubs in promoting critical thinking skills among students.

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