

Bill to change the legislation of public education in children's classrooms to include Chess

Education is a key aspect of a child's basic upbringing all over the world. Also, with globalization taking over every mode of communication over, critical thinking and analytical skills have become more important than basic classroom rote knowledge for students to perform well.

The education system in US is no less different than many other in Europe, however, it still has a lot to do to pave the way for implementing the art of analytical skills as a basic coursework for the child's early education.

What is critical thinking and why should we care?

Critical skills help us develop patterns and social skills; analyze our decisions and their possible consequences quickly, improve problem solving skills and develop meaningful connection with our peers.

Author of the book, 'Mind in the Making', Ellen Galinsky, lays down the importance of integrating analytical skills in today's classrooms. She emphasizes critical thinking as one of the 7 basic skills in children. Critical thinking lays down the foundation for students to take in new information, analyze it and make judgments about it through imagination and quick inquisitiveness.

For this purpose chess has been a part of the Russian classrooms since almost over 70 years now. Since its origination from the 6th century in India, it has trained lots of thinkers, researchers, scholars and students critical and analytical skills worldwide.

Chess and analytical skills

According to a research by Adrian De Groot, a psychologist, adolescents who were encouraged to play chess at an early age had not only lesser chances of falling behind in academics, but were seen to have increased problem solving and reasoning skills at an early age than those of their peers.

Recent research in the US in the 1980s and 1990s found out similar patterns of positive inquisitiveness in children who played chess regularly. US researches found out that patterns developed in the form of memory networks in children which then provided the tools for immediate recall when faced with a different pattern. So, the children were able to use the already known patterns to solve completely new, unseen situations in chess.

In [chess](#), these chunks of visual memory configurations prove useful when facing new problems in the game. This often relates to old cues and successful patterns developed by trial and error – hence, what looks like an instant decision is more often a long sequence of useful patterns developed in the brains of the chess players as useful 'solutions' or 'patterns' to solve new situations in 'one go'.

Since the goal of an education is to enable students to think critically, let us see where the US stands on this.

Inclusion of Chess in the US education system

In US, every state has its own department of education and laws regulating decisions based on education so there is huge variation among schools regarding courses, subjects, and other activities. Recently, the General Assembly of Pennsylvania passed a bill titled, 'An [act](#) amending the Act of March 10, 1949' to bring about much needed changes in the outdated education system in children. The bill aims to consolidate and make editorial changes to in the 'old act' to integrate new activities such as the inclusion of chess as an essential part of children's classroom activity to develop and enhance their critical and analytical skills as mentioned above.

Whether the bills passes or not, it is safe to say that there is a major scholastic effort in the US to incorporate chess education as basic skills in the classroom. A similar bill passed in New Jersey by the US Chess Trust volunteer signatories , states the importance of chess as:

- a) chess increases strategic thinking skills, stimulates intellectual creativity, and improves problem-solving ability, while raising self-esteem;
- b) when youngsters play chess they must call upon higher-order thinking skills, analyze actions and consequences, and visualize future possibilities;
- c) in countries where chess is offered widely in schools, students exhibit excellence in the ability to recognize complex patterns and consequently excel in math and science; and
- d) instruction in chess during the second grade will enable pupils to learn skills which will serve them throughout their lives

As rightly said by the US Chess Grandmaster, *"Chess must no longer remain a civilized luxury of the leisure class in either appearance or fact; rather, chess must assume its fundamental role as a mental integrator and motivational activator"*.

For more information on importance of Chess in Children's basic skills, please visit us [here](#).