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TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS
THROUGH THE SUBJECT “READING LITERACY”

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Abstract

In primary education, the subject “Reading” plays an important and leading role in the intellectual development of students. Its didactic potential contributes to the development of key life skills, abilities, and competencies in students. Specifically, reading improves literacy, enriches speech, develops thinking skills, shapes worldviews, and refines communication skills. Therefore, ensuring the effectiveness of teaching “Reading” should be considered one of the most important pedagogical tasks aimed at developing students' intellectual potential. This article explores the importance of "Reading" in the intellectual development of elementary school students.

Key words: “Reading”, elementary school students, development, intellectual development, key areas of intellectual development in elementary school students.

Introduction. The formation of personality is considered an important stage in primary education. It is precisely during this period that the initial foundation is laid, ensuring that a child becomes literate, informed, and knowledgeable. It is known that the stronger the foundation, the more solid the structure built upon it will be. From a pedagogical point of view, the continuity of the educational process being implemented is effectively ensured, acquiring a dynamic, evolutionary, and dialectical character. In order for primary school students to become literate, enrich their speech, and communicate effectively with others, reading lessons play an important role in creating a vocabulary “reserve.”

In the process of intellectually developing primary school students, the following tasks are solved when teaching the subject “Reading” (Figure 1):

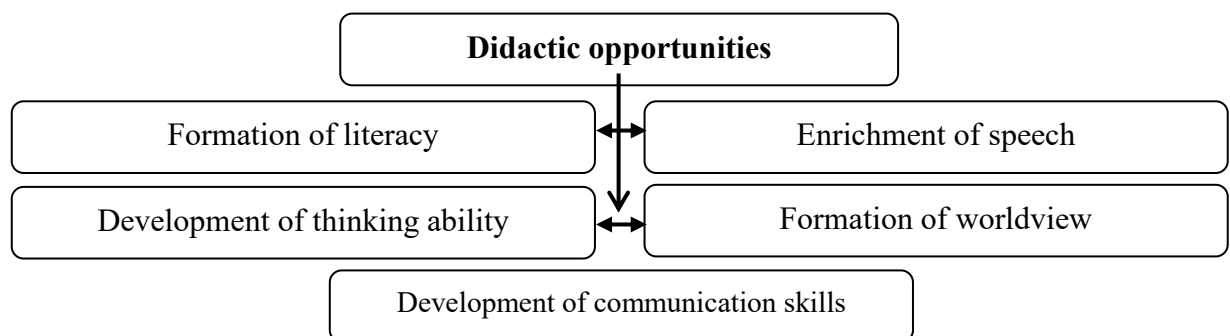


Figure 1. Didactic opportunities of the subject “Reading”

Literature review. In solving the tasks related to the intellectual development of primary school students through the subject “Reading” in the educational process, attention is paid to the following:

I. Formation of literacy. According to its lexical meaning, the concept of “savod,” derived from the Arabic word “سواد,” is interpreted as “awareness of reading and writing” [12, p. 416]. In primary grades, although students acquire reading and writing skills through “Alphabet” lessons,

the subject “Reading” serves to ensure the continuous, consistent development and gradual improvement of the reading and writing skills mastered with the help of “Alphabet” lessons. Students not only read short texts fluently, at a certain speed, and with comprehension, but also acquire important life skills such as retelling the content, expressing their opinions about the described event or phenomenon, and demonstrating their attitude. This situation serves as a foundation for the subsequent stages of continuous education.

II. Enrichment of speech. Speech is interpreted as “a specific form of existence of language as a distinct type of social activity” [5], and according to its lexical meaning, as “the functioning of language in the process of expressing and exchanging ideas” [12, p. 67]. In enriching the speech of children, including primary school students, the main focus is on expanding their vocabulary and ensuring the assimilation of new words and expressions.

In Uzbek, the concept “speech development” is also used. Theoretically, this term has a broader meaning than “speech enrichment” and refers to developing students’ abilities to speak, think, express ideas correctly, and construct coherent speech. However, for some reason, pedagogical staff working in preschool and primary education often make mistakes in using these two concepts. That is, the expression “speech development” is applied to preschool children. Even at the final stage of primary education, students only master the elementary foundations of speaking, thinking, expressing ideas correctly, and constructing coherent speech. Therefore, using the concept “speech enrichment” in primary education is methodologically correct.

The learning materials presented through the “Reading” textbook, based on their topics, introduce students to social processes, natural phenomena, seasons, descriptions of various professions, patriotism, the importance of acquiring knowledge, national history, and samples of folklore. Naturally, this creates wide opportunities for students to learn new words on diverse topics and understand their meanings. Using them during communication leads to the enrichment of students’ speech. A rich vocabulary helps students express their ideas clearly, fluently, and understandably.

For primary school (grade 4) students, quantitative indicators in the subject “Reading” include the ability to read 80–90 words per minute while observing pronunciation and other requirements, and to express ideas by creating a text consisting of 8–10 sentences based on a given topic within 30 minutes; knowledge elements in phonetics, spelling, pronunciation, punctuation, word and meaning, grammar; word structure, root, affix, independent and auxiliary parts of speech, speech culture; literary and colloquial speech [8, p. 30] are required to be demonstrated. In one source, the requirements for reading technique for all primary grades are indicated as “25–30 words per minute in grade 1, 40–50 words in grade 2, 60–70 words in grade 3, and 80–90 words in grade 4” [9, pp. 44–46].

In “Reading” lessons, by reading texts aloud or silently, students acquire new words and expressions, which expands their opportunities to participate freely in communication. As a result of correctly pronouncing words of varying complexity, their oral and written speech becomes richer, and they learn to express ideas fluently.

III. Development of thinking ability. In psychology, the process of “organizing thoughts, using them appropriately, and managing them” [4, p. 6], as well as “reasoning through comparing objective events and phenomena and drawing conclusions about them” [2], ensures the realization of thinking operations in an individual’s consciousness. Every person possesses thinking skills. However, this process occurs differently in each individual. Some people arrive at certain conclusions by comprehensively and deeply analyzing and evaluating events, phenomena, and processes, while another group analyzes and evaluates them superficially but

does not draw conclusions. This indicates that social subjects possess different levels of thinking ability. The thinking process is also referred to as “cognition” (tafakkur).

In modern conditions, the approach of providing students with ready-made knowledge and ensuring its memorization is being completely rejected. In an information society, memorizing ready-made knowledge is beneficial neither for the individual nor for society. This is explained by the intensity of information flow, the rapid updating of content in the media environment, and the risk of an individual “getting lost” in a vast information space. Therefore, today it is increasingly important to develop in students not the ability to accept and memorize ready-made knowledge, but rather the skills of working effectively with learning information, analyzing the content of didactic materials, comparing them, generalizing the ideas presented, and drawing final conclusions.

Research Methodology. According to the age and psychological characteristics of primary school students and the specific features of the relevant stage of continuous education, the following qualities are manifested in the basis of their thinking ability (cognition) (Figure 2):

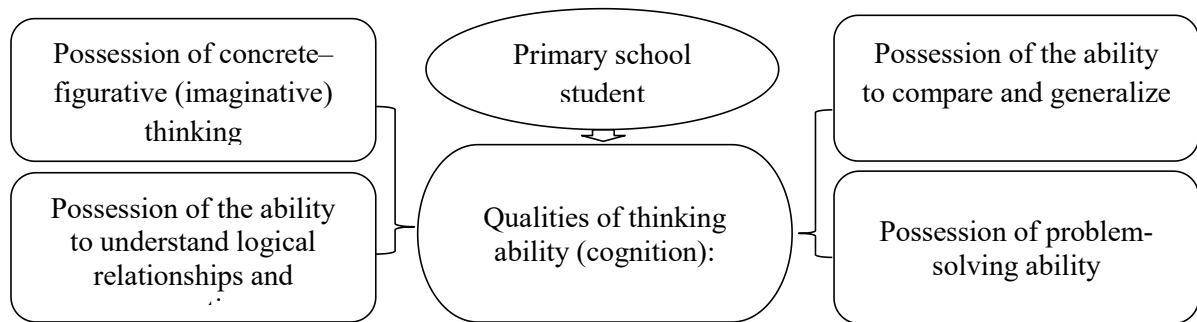


Figure 2. Qualities characteristic of primary school students’ thinking ability (cognition)

1. Possession of concrete–figurative thinking. Children of this age mainly think based on phenomena they have seen, heard, and felt, that is, relying on pictures, toys, or real-life situations. Introducing students to artistic devices such as metaphor, simile, and epithet in “Reading” lessons strengthens their figurative thinking ability.

2. Possession of the ability to understand logical relationships and connections. Based on evolutionary (step-by-step) development, primary school students begin to understand the meaning of cause-and-effect relationships between the structural elements of events, processes, and objects they witness or read about. In particular, by asking questions such as “Why is snow white?”, “Why are snowflakes different in shape?”, “Why does it rain?”, “How do plants grow?”, “Where do sparrows sleep at night?”, “Don’t animals get cold in winter?”, “Why do adults go to work?” and receiving answers to them, they understand the cause-and-effect connections between structural elements and comprehend their meaning.

3. Possession of comparison and generalization skills. Knowledge (concepts) acquired by primary school students is formed on the basis of comparing characteristics of various objects, events, phenomena, processes, and relationships, and generalizing information about their similar features. Comparisons and grouping based on similarities carried out by children of this age are expressed in evaluating features of social and natural reality as big–small, good–bad, fast–slow, high–low.

4. Possession of problem-solving ability (finding solutions). One of the characteristic features of children of this age is that they ask many questions; the main reason for this behavior is their desire to understand social and natural reality. Through the answers received, their cognitive needs are satisfied. Children of this age try to solve simple problems independently by solving tasks and making correct decisions during games. An effective way to encourage such actions is to prompt them to find answers by asking short and concise questions related to the topics being studied, and even if the proposed solution is incorrect, it is important not to diminish their enthusiasm and motivation. Most importantly, it is necessary to encourage them to propose as many possible solutions as they can, and under the teacher's guidance and positive reinforcement, help them find the correct answer; this process also increases their interest in the studied problem.

IV. Formation of worldview. Worldview is considered a philosophical category expressing "a system of views, beliefs, life experiences, and activity principles that determine a person's attitude toward nature, society, their place in the social environment, themselves, and various realities" [7, p. 85]; "a system of general views about the world and the human's place in it, people's attitudes toward surrounding reality and themselves, as well as beliefs, ideals, and principles of cognition and activity based on these views" [1]; "a complex form of consciousness covering the most diverse layers of experience" [3, p. 18]; and "a system of ideas and knowledge about the world and the human's place in it" [10, p. 612].

The basis of a person's worldview reflects structural elements consisting of knowledge (scientific, religious, socio-political, psychological, pedagogical, spiritual-moral, ecological, legal, etc.); beliefs (a person's confidence in a certain idea); ideals (a person's dreams, life goals, aspirations); and a system of values (socio-moral, aesthetic, ecological, legal norms). Accordingly, relying on their worldview, each individual solves tasks such as determining the direction of learning and cognition, evaluation, action or activity, and setting life goals. Thus, possessing a worldview creates a foundation for the formation of a certain attitude toward the environment, social relations, labor activity and production processes, and subjects, as well as for a person to fully understand their social duties and develop a sense of responsibility in fulfilling them.

Since textbooks created for the subject "Reading" are formed on the basis of literary and scientific texts, through familiarity with them students acquire initial ideas about nature, society, human beings, and life. Stories, fairy tales, and poems included in the textbook promote ideas such as the struggle between good and evil, kindness and wickedness, diligence, honesty, justice, truthfulness, and patriotism, which helps students assimilate concepts of universal and national values. At the same time, this awakens respect in students for national and universal traditions, customs, and values.

Texts on diverse topics, especially those related to nature, seasons, and natural phenomena, expand children's views about the environment and effectively shape their worldview. This, in turn, serves as a basis for the solid mastery of academic knowledge in the subsequent stages of continuous education.

"In shaping worldview, familiarizing students closely with works of fiction and art forms that glorify national and universal values—films, theater performances, concert programs—forms a positive attitude toward themselves and the environment" [6, pp. 56–141].

V. Development of communication skills. Derived from the Arabic word "مُتَلَقَّاة" (meeting, seeing, contacting, accepting), the term "communication" according to its lexical meaning is interpreted as "meeting, conversation" [11, p. 636]; and as "a method of interaction between two or more individuals characterized by interpersonal information exchange, choosing a unified path of interaction, understanding, perceiving, and evaluating others" [6, p. 141].

Analysis and results. In terms of its social significance, communication—considered “one of the social factors ensuring personal development” [7, p. 56]—occupies an important place in the daily, labor, play, and learning activities of primary school students. Through communication, students understand the content of social relations, comprehend the essence of natural laws, and express their wishes, goals, and experiences.

One of the main social needs of children of primary school age is undoubtedly communication. Therefore, when organizing primary education, it is necessary to involve students in active communication.

In primary grades, “Reading” lessons organized in the classroom have very significant didactic potential in forming and developing students’ communicative competence. These opportunities are manifested in the following aspects: the interaction organized in the lesson process between teacher and student, as well as between students themselves, continuous dialogues, question-and-answer activities form children’s communication culture; students gradually acquire communicative skills and competencies through reading texts, understanding their content, retelling them, and expressing their own opinions about the events, occurrences, and relationships described in the text; the use of role-playing games, theatrical performances, and discussions based on texts during lessons helps develop students’ dialogic and monologic speech; evaluating the actions of characters described in texts and expressing personal attitudes enable students to develop independent thinking and the ability to defend their own point of view; listening to the teacher or peers teaches students to understand others’ opinions and respond to them (this is an important part of interpersonal communication); based on clarifying questions and methodological instructions given by the teacher, as well as completing creative tasks, students demonstrate the ability to compose stories, continue texts, and take on characters’ roles (such approaches effectively develop students’ free communication skills).

Conclusion/Recommendations. Thus, in the primary education system, the subject “Reading” occupies a leading place in the intellectual development of students. Its didactic possibilities serve to form essential life skills, competencies, and basic abilities in learners. In particular, during the reading process, tasks such as developing literacy, enriching speech, improving thinking skills, shaping worldview, and developing communicative competence are systematically implemented. Therefore, when organizing “Reading” lessons, it is necessary to define the development of students’ intellectual potential as a priority pedagogical task. This process requires a scientifically based, goal-oriented, and systematic pedagogical approach.

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