INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO STIMULATING THE INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN A TRANSFORMATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract. This article examines the importance of cognitive abilities in older preschool-aged children, the development of cognitive abilities as an important factor, and ways to integrate this process into the preschool education system.

Keywords: older preschool-aged children, education, process, cognitive abilities, abilities, development, problem, intelligence, interest, idea, attention, task, interest.

Introduction

The development of cognitive abilities in older preschool children is much more than a stage of preparation for school. It forms the foundation of a child's future educational achievements and personal development. In the context of modern educational transformation—where increasing emphasis is placed on the quality of education, innovation, digital competencies, and critical thinking—the development of these abilities has become especially important.

Why Preschool Age Is Critical for Cognitive Development

The age of 5–7 years (older preschool age) is a crucial developmental period during which the fundamental cognitive structures are formed, including attention, memory, language, thinking, generalization, and logical reasoning.

At this stage, a child's brain is particularly receptive to new experiences, impressions, and learning opportunities. The use of appropriate developmental methods—such as educational games, experiments, and inquiry-based activities—significantly enhances learning outcomes.

Missing this important developmental stage may make it more difficult for children to acquire more complex skills later in life, such as abstract thinking, planning, self-regulation, and independent learning.

Key Cognitive Abilities to Be Developed

When educating and teaching older preschool children, particular attention should be paid to the development of the following cognitive skills:

Attention and concentration – the ability to focus and maintain attention during play, learning activities, or conversations.

Memory – the development of both working memory and long-term memory, which are essential for acquiring new knowledge, language, and rules.

Thinking and logical reasoning, as well as analysis and generalization skills – the ability to identify relationships, provide simple reasoning, analyze information, and draw conclusions.

Creative and inquiry-based thinking – fostering curiosity, a willingness to experiment, and the ability to discover new solutions through exploration and research.

Speech, language, and communication skills – expanding vocabulary, developing oral communication, expressing ideas clearly, and understanding speech and instructions, all of which are essential for future academic success.

Emotional resilience and learning motivation – the ability to regulate emotions, maintain curiosity and interest, and sustain motivation for learning.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the context of educational reforms and modernization, it is essential that the younger generation entering school and later professional life possesses not only knowledge but also the ability

to think critically, learn independently, adapt to changing conditions, and generate innovative ideas. The development of cognitive abilities in preschool children contributes to the following outcomes:

Improved quality of learning – Cognitive development enables children to master new concepts more effectively, maintain attention, organize information, and apply logical reasoning during their school education.

Development of future leaders, innovators, and professionals – Cognitive flexibility, creative thinking, and independent learning skills are among the key competencies required in today's rapidly evolving society, economy, and technological environment.

Social maturity and emotional development – Children with a strong cognitive foundation demonstrate better communication skills, adaptability, and resilience to stress, enabling them to grow into confident and emotionally balanced individuals.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Contemporary research in **neuropedagogy** demonstrates that educational approaches based on an understanding of brain functioning—including individualized instruction, play-based learning, inquiry-based methods, and emotionally supportive environments—significantly improve the effectiveness of preschool education.

The implementation of **play-based and inquiry-oriented activities** in preschool institutions, such as educational games, simple experiments, practical tasks, and problem-solving activities, enhances children's thinking abilities, curiosity, and cognitive engagement.

Diverse learning activities—including not only reading and drawing but also music, movement, and role-playing—promote the development of multiple forms of intelligence, consistent with the principles of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences.

An **individualized approach** involves considering each child's unique characteristics, including learning pace, interests, learning style, and emotional state, and adapting educational activities accordingly.

Creating an **emotionally safe, stimulating, and comfortable learning environment**, with sufficient space for both independent and collaborative activities, supports children's cognitive, social, and emotional development.

Professional development for teachers and parental involvement are equally important. Educators should be familiar with modern pedagogical approaches, including neuropedagogy, play-based learning, and inquiry-based education, while families should actively encourage and support children's natural curiosity and motivation to learn.

Conclusion

The development of cognitive abilities in older preschool children is not merely an important stage of childhood; it is an investment in the future of society. For countries undergoing educational transformation and striving toward innovation, high-quality education, and sustainable social development, it is essential to foster, from the preschool years, the competencies that will serve as the foundation for lifelong learning, successful professional careers, and active participation in society

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