THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING DIDACTIC TOOLS BY PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN THE PROCESS OF THEIR ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the effectiveness of using didactic tools in the educational and developmental activities of preschool children. The relevance of the study is determined by the increasing importance of creating a developmental educational environment that supports children's cognitive activity, creativity, independence, and interest in learning. Didactic tools serve as important pedagogical resources that help preschool children acquire knowledge through visual, practical, game-based, and interactive activities. The article analyzes the pedagogical potential of didactic games, visual materials, construction sets, puzzles, cards, models, educational toys, and other learning resources in the development of preschool children. Particular attention is paid to the role of didactic tools in developing children's creative thinking, imagination, observation, memory, communication skills, and ability to solve simple problems independently. The study is based on person-centered, activity-based, developmental, and competency-based approaches. The results indicate that systematic and purposeful use of didactic tools increases children's interest in activities, encourages their active participation, and creates favorable conditions for the development of creative abilities. The article also emphasizes the importance of selecting didactic tools according to children's age, individual characteristics, interests, and developmental needs.

Modern preschool education, the development of children's intellectual, creative, emotional, social, and practical abilities is considered one of the important pedagogical priorities. Preschool age is a particularly significant period in human development because children's cognitive abilities, imagination, curiosity, communication skills, and personal qualities develop intensively during this stage. Therefore, creating an educational environment that encourages children to explore, ask questions, experiment, communicate, and express their ideas is an important condition for effective preschool education.

The effectiveness of the educational process largely depends on the methods, forms, and tools used by educators. Among these, didactic tools occupy a special place. Didactic tools are educational resources that facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, the development of skills, and the formation of practical abilities through purposeful pedagogical activities. They may include pictures, cards, models, puzzles, educational toys, construction materials, natural objects, digital resources, didactic games, and various visual and practical materials.

For preschool children, learning is closely connected with direct experience and activity. At this age, children understand many concepts more effectively when they can see, touch, manipulate, compare, construct, classify, and experiment with objects. Consequently, the use of didactic tools makes the educational process more concrete, understandable, interesting, and engaging.

Didactic tools also have significant potential for developing children's creativity. When children are provided with opportunities to use educational materials in different ways, they can create new objects, construct models, develop stories, solve problems, and propose alternative solutions. Such activities contribute to the development of imagination, flexibility, originality, independence, and initiative.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the effectiveness of using didactic tools in the activities of preschool children and to identify their pedagogical potential in developing children's cognitive and creative abilities.

Literature Review and Methodology

The issue of children's development through purposeful educational activities has been extensively studied in pedagogy and developmental psychology. The theoretical foundations of preschool education emphasize the importance of active learning, children's direct experience, play, communication, and interaction with the surrounding environment.

J. Piaget's theory of cognitive development highlights the importance of children's active interaction with objects and the environment in the development of cognitive structures. From this perspective, didactic materials can provide children with opportunities to explore objects, compare their characteristics, classify them, and discover relationships through practical activity.

L. S. Vygotsky emphasized the social and cultural nature of child development and the importance of interaction and pedagogical support. From this perspective, didactic tools can be effectively used in collaborative activities where the educator guides children's actions, asks questions, provides explanations, and encourages independent thinking.

J. Guilford's ideas concerning divergent thinking are also relevant to the development of children's creativity. Creativity involves generating multiple ideas, finding different solutions, and approaching a problem from various perspectives. Didactic tasks that allow more than one possible solution can therefore contribute to the development of flexible and creative thinking.

E. Torrance's research on creativity emphasizes the importance of encouraging children to ask questions, identify problems, generate ideas, and test possible solutions. In preschool education, these processes can be supported through creative didactic games, construction activities, visual tasks, puzzles, and problem-based situations.

The methodological basis of this study consists of person-centered, activity-based, developmental, competency-based, and creative approaches. The person-centered approach requires educators to consider children's individual abilities, interests, learning pace, and developmental characteristics when selecting didactic tools. The activity-based approach focuses on learning through practical actions rather than passive reception of information.

The study uses theoretical analysis, observation, comparison, generalization, analysis of pedagogical practices, and examination of children's activity products. Observation makes it possible to identify children's levels of participation, independence, interest, and creative activity during the use of didactic tools. Analysis of children's products provides information about their ability to apply acquired knowledge in practical and creative activities.

Results and Discussion

The analysis shows that didactic tools can significantly improve the organization of educational activities in preschool education organizations. Their effectiveness is particularly evident when they are used systematically and in accordance with clearly defined educational objectives.

One of the main advantages of didactic tools is their ability to make abstract concepts more concrete and understandable. For example, children can learn concepts related to shape, color, size, number, spatial relationships, and classification through cards, blocks, models, puzzles, and other visual materials. Instead of receiving information only verbally, children interact directly with learning objects and acquire knowledge through practical experience.

Didactic games are particularly effective in this regard. Games such as "Find the Difference," "Match the Picture," "What Is Missing?", "Build a Shape," "Sort and Classify," and "Complete the Story" encourage children to observe, compare, analyze, and make decisions. At the same time, these activities create an emotionally positive learning environment and increase children's motivation.

Another important result is the contribution of didactic tools to the development of children's creative abilities. Creativity develops more effectively when children are not limited to reproducing a ready-made example but are encouraged to create something independently. For instance, construction materials can be used not only to reproduce a particular structure but also to create an original building based on a child's own idea.

Visual materials can also be used to stimulate imagination and storytelling. An educator may show children several pictures and ask them to create a story based on the images. In this situation, children select characters, establish relationships between events, and create their own narrative. Such activities develop imagination, verbal expression, logical thinking, and originality.

Puzzles and problem-based didactic tasks also have considerable developmental potential. When children try to complete a puzzle or find a solution to a problem, they learn to analyze the situation, identify relationships, test different possibilities, and correct their mistakes. This process contributes to the development of persistence, independent thinking, and problem-solving skills.

Construction activities are another effective area for using didactic tools. Blocks, geometric shapes, construction sets, and modeling materials provide opportunities for children to create various objects and structures. During such activities, children develop

spatial thinking, fine motor skills, imagination, and planning abilities. They also learn to evaluate the results of their work and make modifications when necessary.

The effectiveness of didactic tools is closely related to the role of the educator. The educator should not simply provide materials to children but should organize meaningful activities around them. Asking open-ended questions, encouraging children to explain their ideas, offering alternative tasks, and allowing children to experiment can significantly increase the developmental value of didactic tools.

For example, instead of asking a child to construct a predetermined object, the educator may ask: "What can you build using these shapes?" or "How can you make your construction stronger?" Such questions encourage children to search for different solutions and develop creative thinking.

The age and individual characteristics of children should also be considered. Didactic tools designed for younger preschool children should be simple, visually attractive, safe, and easy to manipulate. Older preschool children can be provided with more complex puzzles, construction tasks, classification activities, problem-based situations, and creative projects.

The educational environment is another important factor. Didactic tools become more effective when children have free and regular access to age-appropriate materials. A well-organized learning environment allows children to independently select materials, organize their activities, cooperate with peers, and evaluate their results.

The following pedagogical conditions are particularly important for ensuring the effectiveness of didactic tools:

1.selecting tools according to children's age and developmental characteristics;

2.establishing a clear connection between didactic tools and educational objectives;

3.combining individual, pair, and group activities;

4.encouraging children to use materials creatively;

5.providing opportunities for independent choice and experimentation;

6.using open-ended and problem-based tasks;

7.providing positive pedagogical feedback;

8.regularly analyzing children's progress and activity results.

The systematic implementation of these conditions can increase children's engagement in educational activities and support the development of their cognitive and creative abilities.

It is also important to emphasize that didactic tools should not replace direct communication between the educator and the child. Their main function is to enrich the educational process and create additional opportunities for practical and creative learning. Therefore, the effectiveness of didactic tools depends not only on their quality but also on the pedagogical methods through which they are introduced and used.

Conclusion

The analysis demonstrates that didactic tools represent an important pedagogical factor in organizing effective activities for preschool children. Their purposeful use creates favorable conditions for developing children's cognitive abilities, creativity, imagination, independence, communication skills, and problem-solving abilities.

Didactic games, visual materials, construction sets, puzzles, models, educational toys, and other learning resources allow children to acquire knowledge through direct experience

and active participation. They make the educational process more interesting, concrete, interactive, and development-oriented.

The effectiveness of didactic tools increases when they are selected according to children's age, individual characteristics, interests, and developmental needs. The educator's role is particularly important because the same didactic tool can produce different educational outcomes depending on the methods of its application.

Therefore, preschool education organizations should systematically integrate didactic tools into educational, play-based, creative, communicative, and practical activities. Creating opportunities for children to independently select, manipulate, combine, and creatively use learning materials can contribute significantly to the development of their creative potential.

In conclusion, the effective use of didactic tools should be considered not merely as a means of presenting educational information but as an important component of a developmental educational environment. Their systematic and pedagogically purposeful application can support the formation of active, independent, curious, creative, and socially engaged preschool children.

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