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DIDACTIC POSSIBILITIES OF THE “READING” SUBJECT**Zulfiyaxon To'ychiyeva Abdulxamid qizi**

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Abstract

In the effective organization of primary education, the subject “Reading” occupies a central place. The importance of teaching this subject at this stage of continuous education is determined by the breadth of its didactic potential. In particular, the process of teaching reading addresses a range of tasks aimed at developing students’ literacy, enriching their speech, improving thinking abilities, broadening their worldview, strengthening communication and socialization skills, fostering artistic imagination and creativity, and forming skills for working with information, as well as cultivating a reading culture. The article highlights the characteristics of the didactic opportunities manifested in the teaching of the subject “Reading”.

Key words

“Reading” as a subject, primary classes, primary school students, didactic potential, didactic potential of the subject “Reading”

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 to ensure that a learner becomes literate, informed, and knowledgeable. It is well 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, and it acquires a dynamic, evolutionary, and dialectical character. “Reading” lessons play an important role in creating a vocabulary “reserve” so that primary school students become literate, enrich their speech, and are able to communicate effectively with others.

The inclusion of the “Reading” lesson in the primary grades’ curriculum is based on consideration of students’ age and psychological characteristics, social skills and competencies, as well as the “life” experience specific to them. The place and role of this subject as an important component of the primary education system are determined by its didactic possibilities. Indeed, this subject, along with forming students’ reading skills and competencies, serves to enrich their spiritual and moral qualities, worldview, and life experience in the field of social relations.

Literature review. Based on the general description of the “Reading” subject, its didactic possibilities can be systematized as follows (Figure 1):

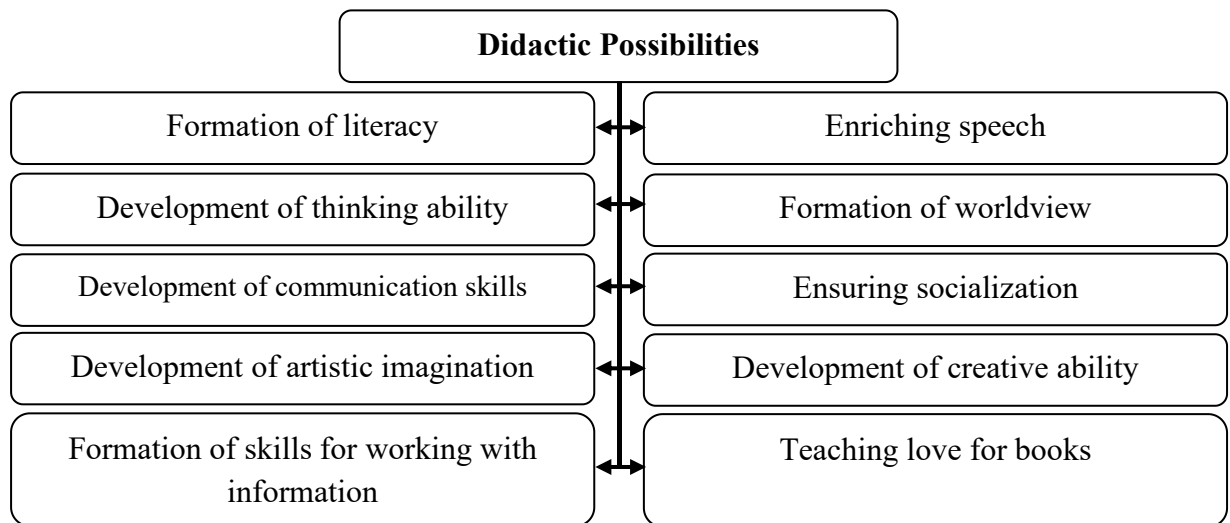


Figure 1. Didactic possibilities of the “Reading” subject

Research Methodology. The purposeful use of the existing didactic possibilities of “Reading” lessons in the educational process makes it possible to achieve the following results:

I. Formation of literacy. According to its lexical meaning, the concept of “literacy,” derived from the Arabic word “سواد,” is interpreted as “awareness of reading and writing” [15, p. 416]. In primary grades, students acquire reading and writing skills through “Alphabet” lessons. The “Reading” subject, in turn, serves for the continuous and consistent development and gradual improvement of the reading and writing skills mastered by students through “Alphabet” lessons. Students not only read small texts fluently, at a certain speed, and with comprehension, but also acquire important life skills such as retelling the content, expressing their own opinions about the described events or phenomena, and demonstrating their attitudes. This situation serves as a foundation for the subsequent stages of continuous education.

II. Enriching speech. Speech is interpreted as “a specific form of existence of language as a special type of social activity” [8], and lexically as “the functioning of language in the process of expressing and exchanging ideas” [15, p. 67]. In enriching the speech of children, including primary school students, the main attention is focused on increasing their vocabulary and ensuring the acquisition of new words and expressions.

The learning materials presented through the “Reading” textbook, depending on their themes, introduce students to social processes, natural phenomena, seasons of the year, descriptions of various professions, patriotism, the importance of acquiring knowledge, national history, and samples of folklore. This naturally creates broad 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 thoughts clearly, fluently, and understandably.

For primary school (grade 4) students, quantitative indicators in the “Reading” subject include the ability “to read 80–90 words per minute while observing pronunciation and other requirements, to create a text of 8–10 sentences within 30 minutes based on a given topic, and to demonstrate necessary theoretical knowledge elements such as phonetics, spelling, pronunciation, punctuation, words and their meanings, grammar; word structure, root and affixes, independent and auxiliary parts of speech, speech culture; literary and colloquial speech” [11, p. 30]. One source also indicates that reading technique requirements for all primary grades should be “25–

30 words per minute in grade 1, 40–50 in grade 2, 60–70 in grade 3, and 80–90 in grade 4” [12, pp. 44–46].

During “Reading” lessons, by reading texts aloud or silently, students learn 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. Every individual possesses thinking skills. However, this process occurs differently in each person. Some individuals analyze and evaluate events, phenomena, and processes comprehensively and deeply before arriving at certain conclusions, while others analyze them superficially and do not draw conclusions. This indicates that social subjects have different thinking abilities. The thinking process is also referred to as “thought” or “cognition.”

Considering the age and psychological characteristics of primary school students, as well as the features specific to the corresponding stage of continuous education, the following qualities are expected to manifest in the development of their thinking ability (cognition):

(see Figure 2).

1. Possession of concrete-figurative thinking. Children of this age mainly think based on events they have seen, heard, and felt, that is, relying on pictures, toys, or real-life situations. Introducing students in “Reading” lessons to artistic devices such as metaphor, simile, and epithet 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 content of cause-and-effect relationships between the structural elements of events, processes, and objects they observe or read about. In particular, by asking and receiving answers to 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 freeze in winter?”, “Why do adults go to work?”, and similar questions, they understand the interdependence based on cause-and-effect relationships between elements and grasp their meaning.

3. Possession of comparison and generalization skills. Knowledge (concepts) acquired by primary school students is formed on the basis of comparing features of various objects, events, phenomena, processes, and relationships, and generalizing information related to similar characteristics. Comparisons made by children of this age and grouping according to similarities are carried out in the form of evaluating social and natural phenomena 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 is their desire to understand social and natural reality. Through the answers received, their cognitive needs are satisfied. Children at 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 studied topics, 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 problem being studied.

IV. Formation of worldview. Worldview is considered a philosophical category that expresses “a system of views, beliefs, life experience, and principles of activity that determine a person’s attitude toward nature, society, their place in the social environment, themselves, and various realities” [10, p. 85]; “a general system of views about the world and a person’s place in it, people’s attitudes toward surrounding reality and themselves, as well as the beliefs, ideals, and principles of cognition and activity based on these views” [3]; “a complex form of consciousness

covering the most diverse layers of experience” [4, p. 18]; and “a system of ideas and knowledge about the world and the place of a human in it.”

Since the textbooks created for the “Reading” subject are formed on the basis of literary and scientific texts, students gain initial ideas about nature, society, human beings, and life through acquaintance with them. The promotion of ideas such as the struggle between good and evil, kindness and cruelty, diligence, honesty, justice, truthfulness, and patriotism in the stories, fairy tales, and poems included in the textbook contributes to students’ understanding of universal and national values. At the same time, it fosters in students a sense of respect for national and universal traditions, customs, and values.

Texts on diverse topics, especially those related to nature, seasons, and natural phenomena, broaden children’s views about the environment and effectively shape their worldview. This, in turn, serves as a foundation for students to successfully master academic knowledge in the subsequent stages of continuous education.

V. Development of communication skills. Derived from the Arabic word (“ملافاة” – meeting, seeing, contacting, receiving), the term “communication” lexically means “meeting, conversation” [14, p. 636]; and “a method of interaction between two or more persons characterized by interpersonal exchange of information, choosing a common way of interaction, understanding, perceiving, and evaluating others” [9, p. 141].

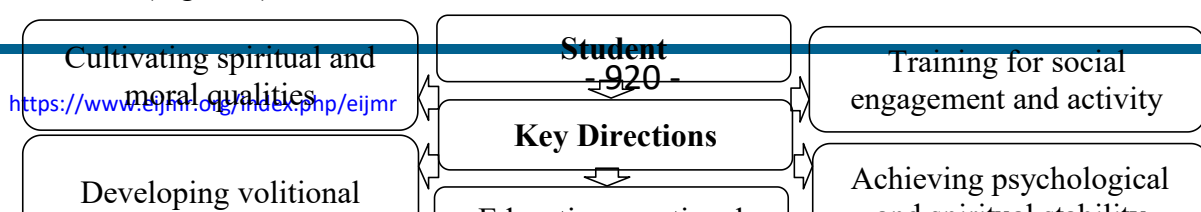
Analysis and results. One of the main social needs of children of primary school age is communication. Therefore, when organizing primary education, it is necessary to involve students in active communication.

“Reading” lessons organized in primary grades have great didactic opportunities for forming and developing students’ communication (communicative) skills. These opportunities are manifested in the following aspects: interaction between teacher and students, as well as among students themselves, ongoing dialogues, and question-and-answer activities during the lesson form children’s communication culture; students acquire communicative skills by reading texts, understanding their content, retelling them, and expressing their opinions about events, realities, and relationships described in the text; the use of role-playing games, dramatizations, and organizing conversations based on the text helps develop students’ dialogic and monologic speech; evaluating the actions of characters described in texts and expressing personal attitudes enable students to acquire independent thinking and the ability to defend their viewpoints; listening to the teacher or peers teaches students to understand others’ opinions and respond to them (which is an important part of interpersonal communication); clarifying questions, guiding methodological instructions, and creative tasks given by the teacher lead to the development of students’ abilities to compose stories, continue texts, and assume roles (such an approach effectively develops students’ free communication skills).

VI. Ensuring socialization. The “Reading” subject has great potential for successfully socializing primary school students. First of all, through texts on various topics, students are introduced to moral norms and rules. Understanding the essence of traditions, customs, and ethical rules accepted by society through texts helps students adapt effectively to society.

During “Reading” lessons, children of primary school age are gradually taught how to behave in society and in public places (transport, healthcare institutions (clinics and polyclinics, hospitals, rehabilitation centers), markets, parks, squares, cultural institutions (theaters, cinemas, concert and performance halls, venues), recreation and leisure areas, and other places), to follow established rules, and to treat others with respect.

The socialization of primary school students is carried out in several directions. Based on the study of characteristics specific to children of the corresponding age, the pedagogical possibilities of “Reading” lessons, and pedagogical observation of students’ learning and cognitive activities, it was concluded that their socialization is implemented in the following directions (Figure 3):



VII. Development of artistic imagination. One of the characteristics of primary school age children is the breadth of their imagination, through which they gain the ability to create new images in their mind, motivate themselves toward practical action, support themselves, and develop self-confidence, as a result of which an independent personality is formed. The subject "Reading" has broad didactic opportunities for directly developing students' artistic imagination.

Primary school age children not only imagine based on the external appearance, behavior, and actions of various fairy-tale characters, but also imagine themselves in their place and mentally reproduce their actions. From a psychological point of view, this situation encourages students to overcome difficulties in real-life situations and to be patient and resilient. Becoming familiar with fairy tales, stories, and poems, as well as completing tasks such as retelling the content of a text in their own words or continuing it, creates various images and scenes in students' minds and, in addition, enriches their imagination, especially their creative imagination (fantasy).

The concept can be defined as follows: imagination is an image of social and natural reality reconstructed or capable of being reconstructed in a person's mind through external factors and psychological influence.

Visualization (Engl. "visual") – something that can be seen, visible [2]; the representation of real reality in "imaginary, symbolic image, picture, schema, model, etc." [5, p. 15]; the perception and reflection of social and natural reality through visual (perceptible by the eye) images in a certain form. Visualization is "the process of converting mental and verbal images into visual representations" [1]. Visual imagination is an image of social and natural reality reconstructed or capable of being reconstructed in a person's mind in a visual (formal-representational) form through external factors and psychological influence.

The possession of visual imagination by primary school students is manifested in the following skills and abilities: the ability to see the environment and express it through certain symbolic forms and visual images; the ability to "see" ideas expressed in stories, fairy tales, or poems in their imagination, to imagine characters' appearances, clothing, actions, and events, and thereby create new images; the ability to remember visual materials (pictures, objects, or people) and later reproduce or depict them again using drawings; the ability to construct and arrange objects using cubes, Lego, mosaics (pattern-like constructions), puzzle shapes, as well as construction games, sand, clay, and plasticine; recognizing geometric shapes, distinguishing integrated geometric figures, or forming new shapes by combining separate geometric figures; spatial thinking ability (understanding concepts such as "right," "left," "up," "down," and orienting correctly in geographic space).

VIII. Development of creative ability. Every individual possesses a certain level and type of underlying ability. The task of parents and educators in the pedagogical process is to realize the abilities that a person has. Their sufficient pedagogical and psychological knowledge helps to timely recognize, strengthen, and further develop the learners' existing abilities.

Creative ability is the process in which new qualities emerge through the synthesis of an individual's psychological-physiological characteristics, thinking, and activity (changes in thinking, perception, life experience, motivation), leading to the successful completion of a

process and the emergence of a new product of subjective or objective nature (idea, object, work of art, etc.) [6, p. 6].

The primary education period is considered the most favorable stage for forming and developing creative abilities in students. Accordingly, the psychological characteristics and personal capacities of children at this age—such as curiosity, activity, and the richness of their imagination—create opportunities to actively engage them in creative activities.

The didactic potential of the subject “Reading” in developing students’ creative abilities is very broad and is manifested in the following aspects: development of thinking ability; enrichment of imagination; improvement of speech, ability to express ideas, and independent thinking skills; fostering aesthetic taste; and expanding vocabulary. Therefore, attention must be paid to enhancing children’s creative abilities both at school and at home.

IX. Formation of information literacy skills. In order to function effectively in the modern media environment, every individual is required to successfully acquire information-handling skills, competencies, and abilities. Teaching students to work with information rationally from the primary grades helps them save time, acquire only useful information, and enrich their knowledge and worldview. Therefore, one of the directions of primary school teachers’ pedagogical activity today is increasingly focused on forming students’ information literacy skills (later information culture).

The subject “Reading” develops students at all stages—from receiving information to analyzing, evaluating, and expressing it. Therefore, it is an important didactic tool in forming information-handling competence. Lessons organized within this subject at the initial stage of general secondary education serve as a first step in introducing students not only to printed literature but also to practical and methodological knowledge related to working with digital content, helping them develop a culture of interacting with information in the media environment.

Due to its didactic potential, “Reading” lessons help form the following qualities underlying students’ information-handling abilities: understanding and receiving information; analyzing information; selecting and systematizing information; processing information; working with sources; critical evaluation; and expressing information.

X. Teaching reading culture. In “Reading” lessons, special attention is paid to developing reading culture in primary school students by forming their skills in reading texts and understanding their content. In this process, it is essential to ensure that both the texts being read and the reading process itself are enjoyable. When texts being read, and later independently read literature intended for primary school children, have the capacity to “interest, delight, amaze, and excite children” [13, pp. 72–74], reading culture develops effectively in them.

Researcher D.A. Muminova defines the concept of “reading” (or “reading activity”) as a set of actions consisting of selecting a book, reading it, analyzing the idea and content of the work, evaluating it, drawing conclusions, and expressing attitudes toward the plot of the work [7, p. 41]. Indeed, reading, as noted by D.A. Muminova, serves to reveal the content of an activity consisting of a combination of these actions.

The subject “Reading” is the main tool for teaching students reading culture. It develops not only reading techniques but also love for books, independent reading habits, and a culture of reading. This plays an important role in the intellectual and spiritual development of the learner.

The didactic potential of the subject “Reading” in teaching students reading culture is manifested in the positive solution of the following tasks: arousing interest in books and reading; forming reading skills (reading correctly, fluently, and with comprehension; understanding the main idea of a text; perceiving the content of a text); acquiring the ability for independent reading; developing a culture of selecting books for reading; understanding and evaluating the idea and content of a read work; expressing opinions about literary works intended for children (samples of children’s literature); and developing a reading culture.

It should also be noted that in fostering reading culture among primary school students, extracurricular activities organized within the subject “Reading” also play an important role. In

these activities, students' engagement in reading additional literature and participation in events such as "Reading Hour" (discussions on read books/works), "Fast and Expressive Reading," "Class Reader" ("Reader of the Year"), "We Compete in Reading!", "My Favorite Book," and "We Create a Class Library" further strengthen their interest in reading.

Conclusion. In conclusion, within the primary education system, the subject "Reading" serves as a foundational pillar of the educational process. It not only forms students' literacy skills but also contributes to the development of their oral and written speech, enhances independent thinking abilities, and broadens their understanding of the environment. At the same time, through this subject, students' skills in social interaction, communication culture, artistic taste, and creative approach are formed. The development of information search, analysis, and effective use skills is also strengthened within this subject. Most importantly, the subject "Reading" serves as a key pedagogical factor that fosters students' love for books and guides them toward independent learning.

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