THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATIONAL-DIDACTIC GAMES IN DEVELOPING THE CREATIVE ABILITIES OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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Annotation: This article explores the role and importance of educational-didactic games in developing the creative abilities of preschool children. Based on modern pedagogical approaches, it analyzes how these games influence imagination, thinking, communication skills, and problem-solving abilities. The psychological impact of the play environment is also discussed as a factor that fosters creativity in early childhood.

Keywords: didactic games, preschool education, creative thinking, psychological development, modern pedagogy, Vygotsky, STEAM.

Today, special attention is paid to the personal development of children in the field of education. Especially in the preschool education system, the formation of creative thinking, imagination, thinking and independent thinking skills is of great importance. Educational and didactic games are an important tool in this process. This article analyzes the impact of educational and didactic games on the creative abilities of preschool children. The educational process for preschool children is carried out through play. Play is an effective means for a child not only to relax, but also to gain knowledge, develop social skills, and form creative thinking. Modern educational approaches, especially constructivism, place play at the center of the educational process. This article analyzes the role of games in the development of creative abilities, their

psychological and pedagogical foundations, as well as scientific research on their practical application. Play plays an important role in the psychological development of a child. L.S. Vygotsky, in his work "Children's Imagination and Creativity", described play as a child's "zone of proximal development". This means that through play, a child can perform at a level above his current capabilities and acquire new skills. Play develops a child's imagination, logical thinking, and problem-solving skills.[1]

As Piaget noted, children are in the "preoperational" stage between the ages of 2 and 7, during which they develop the ability to imagine, think symbolically, and express themselves. Play is an important tool in shaping a child's creative potential during this period.

What is creative ability and how is it formed?

Creativity is a child's ability to come up with new ideas, take unconventional approaches to problems, and work freely with images and concepts. These skills are developed during childhood through play, visual arts, musical activities, and theater.

Content and types of didactic games

Didactic games are specially organized play activities that help children acquire knowledge, skills, and competencies. They are divided into the following types:

- Mental (intellectual) games – develops logical thinking.
- Visual games – enhances the ability to work with color, shape and image.
- Word games – increases vocabulary, teaches expression.
- Role-playing games – helps to understand social roles and think creatively.

The role of didactic games in the development of creative abilities

Didactic games develop the following creative skills in children:

- Independent thinking – children look for new ways and solutions in play.

[1] Vygotskiy, L.S. (1978). *Imagination and Creativity in Childhood*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press

- Imagination – creates realistic images in game situations.
- Communicative skills – communicate through group play.
- Problem solving – tries to find solutions to various challenges in the game.

Example: In the game “What am I thinking about?” children describe things and the others try to find them. This develops imagination and logical thinking.

The role of games in modern educational approaches

Modern pedagogical approaches set as their main goal the development of 21st century skills in children, such as independent thinking, problem solving, collaboration and creativity. In such approaches, play is considered not only as a game, but also as an important means of education and upbringing. Constructivist educational theory (Piaget, Vygotsky) emphasizes that a child does not receive knowledge in a ready-made form, but acquires it through activity. Play activity is the process of constructing this knowledge, that is, creating it. During play, children experiment, discover, make mistakes and correct them - this is the basis of creativity.

STEAM approach and creative games

The STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) approach can also be used to combine children's practical and imaginative thinking in preschool education. For example, "building a city" using construction sets, role-playing games related to natural sciences, and interactive tasks with elements of drama can form not only an interest in science in children, but also a creative approach.[2]

The STEAM approach, through creative play, helps children:

- Observation and analysis (for example, the "what sinks in water, what floats?" experiment)

[2] Turdiyeva, S.B. (2023). "STEAM yondashuvi asosida maktabgacha yoshdagi bolalarning ijodiy fikrlashini rivojlantirish". *Ta'lim va innovatsion tadqiqotlar jurnali*, 3(4), 115–120

- Modeling (designing a city from LEGO or simple building materials)
- Image creation (free art work with sand, clay, paint)
- Use counting and measuring (counting components, measuring)

These games engage the child in thinking, creating, expressing, and learning all at the same time—creating an ideal environment for creative development.

Practical examples

- “Nature Lab”: Children learn using leaves, rocks, soil, and microscopes. This combines science and fine arts.
- “ "Let's Build a Space Rocket": Children design their own "rocket" using paper, a box, and string and try to launch it. This game combines engineering, technology, and art.
- “Raqamlar bilan hikoya”: Bolalar sanash orqali ertak tuzadi — bu matematika va til o‘yinidir.

STEAM asosida o‘yin qurish tamoyillari

1. Observation – drawing the child's attention to their surroundings.
2. Asking questions – what if...? playful problems.
3. Experiment – testing a problem through play.
4. Analysis – evaluate and draw conclusions about their results.

Creation – making an independent invention or project.

STEAM integration is the process of integrating disciplines into an educational process. This approach involves studying subjects together, based on real-life problems, rather than studying them separately. It develops skills such as complex thinking, creative problem-solving, hands-on experimentation, and initiative in children..

Key features of STEAM integration:

Interdisciplinary approach - children learn by connecting several areas at once.

Stimulating creative thinking - through the element of art, the child expresses his project in an aesthetic way.

Experiential learning – every activity is based on practical work.

Collaboration and problem-solving – children work in groups, express their ideas through questions and answers, and projects.

As an example: Children create an "Underground Metro" project:

- SCIENCE: They learn about the underground structure of the Earth.
- TECHNOLOGY:They monitor the construction process through pictures, videos or an app.
- ENGINEERING: They make a subway model from ordinary materials.
- ART: They draw aesthetic designs for passengers and stations.
- MATEMATIKA: Masofa, vaqt va harakat jadvalini hisoblashadi.

Developing divergent thinking through games

A key element of creativity is divergent thinking, the ability to find multiple solutions to a problem. Games are the most effective tool for developing this skill. For example, fantasy games like "If I could fly..." and tasks like "What could be used differently?" encourage a child to constantly innovate.

Today, constructivism, activity-based approaches, and STEAM educational models are distinguished by their innovative approach. The common feature of these approaches is that the child learns based on his own experience, consolidating knowledge and skills through experimentation. Didactic games serve this very process.

For example, through LEGO sets, interactive educational apps, and dramatic role-playing games, children can experience the topics they are learning in action. This not only develops their creative potential, but also 21st century skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration.

Psychological approach

The creative development of children is directly related to their psychological state. In a free, pressure-free and positive environment, a child behaves freely, expresses his thoughts openly, tries to put forward new ideas. Through play, a child expresses his worldview and feelings.[3]

As L.S. Vygotsky noted, play is the "zone of proximal development" for a child, that is, the child can achieve results in the game that exceed his own capabilities. Therefore, didactic games create a psychologically favorable environment and lead the child to creativity. They connect the creative development of children with their "zone of proximal development". That is, through the game the child goes beyond his current capabilities and develops his intellectual and creative potential. In his opinion: "Creativity is the ability to imagine something that does not yet exist in life and turn it into a new reality." In the process of play, the child imagines, creates new He assumes roles, changes events, and thereby transforms his inner world into external activity.

The importance of emotional environment and freedom

A psychologically favorable environment is necessary for the formation of creative thinking in a child.:

•Trustworthy and free atmosphere

• Criticism-free environment

• Interest-based approach

• Opportunity for free self-expression through play

In conclusion, the role of educational and didactic games in the development of creative abilities of preschool children is incomparable. Through these games, children not only learn, but also create, express their thoughts and understand the world around them. Therefore, the correct organization and effective use of game activities in preschool educational institutions is an important pedagogical task**.**

[3] Abdullaeva, N.R. (2021). *Bolalar psixologiyasi*. Toshkent: O‘zbekiston pedagogika nashriyoti.

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