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METHODOLOGY OF INTRODUCING PRESCHOOL CHILDREN TO FOLK TALES

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Abstract. This article discusses the pedagogical and psychological methods of introducing preschool children to folk tales as an essential component of early childhood education. Folk tales serve as a rich source of linguistic, moral, and imaginative development, offering children opportunities to explore universal human values and emotional experiences through narrative form. The study highlights effective strategies such as dramatization, visual storytelling, dialogic reading, and art-based activities that facilitate children's comprehension and emotional engagement.

Keywords: preschool education, folk tales, storytelling, child development, pedagogy, cultural heritage, imagination.

INTRODUCTION

Folk tales have always occupied a special place in the cultural and educational history of humankind. They are not only carriers of collective wisdom and moral values but also serve as powerful tools for intellectual and emotional development in early childhood. In preschool education, the use of folk tales helps children enter the world of imagination and symbolism while simultaneously developing speech, reasoning, and social understanding. A well-chosen folk tale can awaken curiosity, teach empathy, and establish a connection between individual experience and collective memory [1].

Introducing folk tales in preschool settings requires a thoughtful pedagogical approach. Since children at this age perceive the world vividly and emotionally, educators must present folk narratives in ways that engage their senses, emotions, and imagination. The teacher's role extends beyond reading — they become a mediator between the story and the child's world, helping children interpret symbolic meanings, identify moral lessons, and express personal reactions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The process of introducing folk tales to preschool children begins with creating an emotional connection to the story. At this age, children's understanding is more intuitive than logical; they grasp ideas through tone, rhythm, and imagery rather than abstract reasoning. Therefore, storytelling should be expressive, rhythmic, and accompanied by gestures, facial expressions, and changes in voice. The teacher's intonation helps children experience joy, fear, surprise, and empathy, which deepens comprehension and emotional memory.

One of the most effective methods is dramatization. When children act out scenes from folk tales — portraying heroes, animals, or magical creatures — they internalize values such as courage, kindness, and justice through personal experience. Dramatization develops imagination, cooperation, and speech fluency while fostering empathy and moral awareness. Group performances also strengthen communication skills and social cohesion among children [2].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Another key approach is dialogic reading, which transforms storytelling into an interactive dialogue. Instead of passively listening, children are encouraged to predict events, ask questions, and comment on characters' actions. For instance, after reading "The Little Red Hen", the teacher may ask, "Why do you think the hen did all the work herself?" or "What would you have done if you were her

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friends?” Such questions promote reasoning and reflection, essential components of cognitive development.

Visual storytelling is also crucial for preschoolers, who rely heavily on sensory perception. The use of illustrations, puppets, and multimedia enhances attention and comprehension. Visual cues help children associate abstract narrative concepts with concrete images, bridging the gap between fantasy and reality. Story boards and picture cards can be used for sequencing activities, enabling children to retell the story in their own words and thereby develop linguistic structure and narrative thinking.

Integrating art-based activities such as drawing, modeling, and crafting after reading a folk tale helps children express emotions and ideas creatively. For example, after listening to “The Three Little Dogs”, children can build their own houses from paper or clay, experimenting with shapes and materials. This activity reinforces the story’s moral lesson about perseverance while encouraging spatial reasoning and fine motor coordination [3].

Another important pedagogical tool is folk music and rhythm. Many traditional tales are closely linked to songs, chants, and rhythmic expressions. Including these elements helps children internalize the cultural tone of the narrative and develop auditory sensitivity. Singing or clapping in rhythm with the story enhances attention and emotional regulation, making the storytelling experience multisensory and memorable.

Introducing folk tales should also include discussion of moral and cultural themes appropriate to the child’s age. Folk narratives often address universal issues — honesty, generosity, bravery, respect — through simple yet powerful symbols. Teachers should guide children in interpreting these moral lessons without imposing rigid conclusions. The aim is to help them understand that human behavior involves choice, consequence, and compassion. Through such guided discussions, children begin to form ethical awareness and empathy, both of which are vital for emotional intelligence.

Equally significant is the use of folk tales from different cultures. Multicultural storytelling promotes tolerance and broadens children’s understanding of the world. Hearing tales from various traditions — Uzbek, Russian, African, or Japanese — allows children to see that despite cultural differences, all people value kindness, honesty, and wisdom. This approach nurtures intercultural awareness and respect for diversity from an early age [4].

CONCLUSION

Folk tales are among the most effective means of nurturing emotional, linguistic, and intellectual development in preschool children. They allow children to experience the world through imagination, to understand social norms, and to express emotions freely. Through methods such as dramatization, dialogic reading, visual storytelling, and art-based activities, educators can transform folk tales into powerful tools for holistic education.

Introducing children to folk narratives also preserves cultural continuity, connecting new generations with their heritage while promoting empathy and moral awareness. When children encounter folk tales in an engaging and emotionally safe environment, they not only learn about heroes and adventures but also begin to understand themselves and others.

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